

# Twelve Steps of Humility

## Introduction

Several years ago a short document entitled *On Humility* had been posted here on, the Lectio Divina homepage. It dealt with the first of the twelve steps of humility in the **Rule of St. Benedict** (when referring to the **Rule**, it will be abbreviated as **RSB**) and hadn't progressed further. What we have in the current document takes up where that earlier one left off, that is, it covers all twelve steps of humility in the **Rule**. As for Benedict, he was born in the year 480.

Nowadays humility is little discussed because considerable misunderstanding about it exists. This is unfortunate because it's a desirable attribute which has the added attraction of being a virtue. However, for the majority of people humility has negative overtones and is deemed an uncomfortable topic, even perceived as a defect, which won't get you very far in society. Also it can smack of a certain disingenuousness and devious character cultivated deliberately in order to get something from someone. This would be true if humility is feigned and has a self-centered end in mind.

Perhaps the greatest though least understood impediment concerning a proper understanding of humility is a low self image. Despite glowing images of the good life which the media bombards us unceasingly, now more than ever a negative self image afflicts more people than in past generations. The roots to this are many but have one thing in common. Once we've been put down, especially in public, it's pretty hard to stand up again on our own two feet. A pall of shame has descended...difficult to shake...which can give birth to a permanent state of depression.

A large part of negative self-esteem derives from the stressful environment we inhabit. The precision and complexity of technological devices plays a role here. Such devices require a demanding protocol and precise sequence of steps to follow in order that the project in which we're engaged comes off properly. Should a person fail to follow through or miss any one of these steps, everything is thrown out of whack. Most of us are able to handle these situations, but it comes with the added cost of increased mental strain. On top of this, technology is getting more pervasive and will cause tension to rise with no limit in sight. That means we're required to be on guard constantly in order to keep focused. Throw in multi-tasking, and we've got serious problems.

Another unexpected ramification arises: the tension just described sets the stage for

instant gratification. Should we not get what we want because of some delay, we throw a tantrum and take it out on someone else, even violently. So when we come home from a day marked by these recurring experiences which can demean us, no small wonder we're totally beat and are open to manipulation. Working in the background as we reflect on the day is an anxiety about the future, that things are bound to get worse, hence the apocalyptic atmosphere so familiar to us.

Added to this mix is the religious side of humility, the cultivation of which is almost completely misunderstood. Not long ago it was considered a valuable asset, indeed a necessity, to strive after in the search for God. Now it's perceived to have an air of artificiality as when coupled with religious-speak. In fact, constant exposure to religious texts and services can foster a false humility, and this happens unknowingly because it's spread out over time. Thus among the general public humility suffers from a misunderstanding at two ends, the secular and the religious. No small wonder it has fallen into disrepute.

The last two paragraphs give a general overview of how humility has suffered an abundance of misconceptions. Even the sound of this word lends a distinct character which isn't especially attractive, that is, the stressed "u" has a downward air about it as well as being somewhat drawn out whereas the "m" drags out the first two letters, "hum." You can almost hear someone using it in a scornful manner, *hew-mm-ility*.

Despite the pitfalls to humility, there exists one bright shining light, St Benedict's **Rule**. It has the advantage of having been composed in an age not unlike our own and is a guide for a life style unlike anything else for the time. That is to say, it appears at the collapse of the Roman Empire (always a favorite subject of debate) when Europe began its long slide into relative darkness and disarray. Thus the **Rule** is one of the key charters *par excellence* destined to preserve Western Civilization. It's essential to monasticism, and monastery became centers of learning around which sprang up cities. So why not begin there, that is, with Chapter Seven, On Humility?

The focus upon humility is important as a safe place to take up residence, if you will, as opposed to seeking the presence of God. Putting it this way is deliberate, not to set the two in opposition to each other. Unless you live in relative isolation or are independently wealthy where you can afford considerable silence and be removed from the invasive-ness of technology, practically speaking the search for God is a daunting enterprise. Most of us striving to find God discover that he gets ever more remote. Such is the experience of living in a secular culture which relentlessly closes in on us from all sides and from which we feel no escape. Classical spiritual texts don't take this into account, having been written in a completely different and

simpler time. Awareness of this fact makes our efforts seem more futile, and we wonder if there's a viable alternative.

So here's one which lays within our reach. Instead of going after God, maybe we should shift our attention to what's transpiring inside us and remain with that, pure and simple. Immediately a red light goes off. Although we're conscious of a lot of negative stuff rolling around in our heads, compounding the situation by inviting more garbage seems downright dangerous. It's like opening the floodgates which can't be closed. The first impulse is to run away...in short, to seek distractions which is what our culture would love us do. And these distractions never cease, even when we apply ourselves to prayer which we hope will quiet our minds. Although similar assaults have afflicted previous generations of God seekers, today's generation pretty much has lost the ability to deal with them effectively. Hence we're more at their mercy compared to even more recent generations. Unfortunately this isn't an exaggeration. It's bound to get worse with relentless improvements in technology.

So when confronted by so many formidable obstacles in seeking God, wouldn't it be advisable to give it up? Living in today's world and trying to cultivate his presence just doesn't work even though the enterprise sounds nice. Of course, all along we've been wondering if there is a God and what that implies. Instead of going this route we may wish to try another approach. The option initially seems extreme but is not the more we get used to it. That consists in focusing attention upon defects in our character and to hold them as continuously before our eyes as humanly possible. Sounds like a recipe for disaster. However, it turns out that we're on solid ground even though everyone around us might disagree and do so strongly. Again, it's easy to make an association with a pervasive negative self image which is not the case.

In sum, we don't have to worry about sinking lower. "Lower" intimates that levels exist above us. No matter how hard we try to shake the idea, we think we can rise further which ultimately turns out to be a waste of time. More often than not, we fall right back to where we had started. The best thing to do is stay on the ground (after all the *humus* of humility means earth or ground) and to do so with fierce but not stubborn intent. In this position we discover a newly found freedom where we can observe that endless flow of junk emanating from within our heads. The power of such observation had been with us all along, but only now do we realize it. This flow intensifies at night when we're more passive and vulnerable, for despite the value placed in dreams, they too turn out to be quite worthless. This isn't to debunk the value of dreams but to intimate we're dealing with something more far reaching and profound.

Now we can turn attention to actually putting humility into practice. That doesn't mean going out and "bringing it on," or looking for trouble when there's no need to. When coming to grips with one's inner junk considerable care is needed else we'll fall into deep trouble quickly. That's why the steps of humility in Benedict's **Rule** are right on the money for such an enterprise. Therefore this document will present each Latin sentence followed by a commentary. After going through a given step, for example, we can pause before moving on to see if we're comfortable with this approach.

A brief but important note. What's offered here is not done in any professional manner. Instead, focus is upon reading the steps (*gradus* is the Latin word used which suggests movement or passage on a path) of humility from the point of view of *lectio divina*. That, of course, is intended to dispose us to rest in God. Such is the case with all other documents on this home page. If that approach isn't taken, there's no need to go further.

Scriptural references, whether direct or implied, will be noted. It's a temptation to develop them on their own, but that would be going off in a tangent. However, the idea is alluring for a follow-up on the current document. That would consist in listing all scriptural references and examining them in the light of **RSB**, of how Benedict read scripture and formulating his rule of life. For a starter, all scriptural references are at the end of this document, the majority being from the Psalms. This is significant, for the Divine Office is built around singing or recitation of the Psalms. Just giving them a quick glance offers insight into how Benedict formulated his reflections upon them.

For those with color monitors as well as color printers, **both the Latin text (italicized) and the English translation are in brown** to distinguish them more clearly. Also **Ariel font** is used for this same purpose. Sometimes a given English sentence is longer than the Latin one. In this instance the English form of the sentence will be followed. It should be noted that insertion of the Latin words enable a quick search forward or backward (or both) to see where they occur elsewhere.

The Latin verse for each section will be numbered for reference throughout the text. That means a word found in a given verse can be referred to more easily. For example, the "Preface" just below has the letter P with a hyphen and the verse number. Each of the twelve steps will have a number for that step with a hyphen and a number for that section or sentence. The English translation comes from the following website: <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/rbejms3.html#7>

## Preface

“Preface” isn’t found in the **RSB** is but inserted for the following section which comes before the first and succeeding grades of humility. It consists of introductory remarks about the subject at hand.

P-1. *Clamat nobis scriptura divina, fratres, dicens: Omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur et qui se humiliat exaltabitur.*

Holy Scripture, brethren, cries out to us, saying, "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

*Clamo* is an excellent starting point insofar as it’s a cry from the heart before anything else is uttered. Reference is to scripture almost as a living person which is *divina* or divine origin as opposed to being *sacer*, dedicated to God. Thus this adjective is more potent insofar as it refers to scripture. In addition to scripture are the *frates* or those who assist their fellow monk with the *clamo* at hand, the two working hand in hand. Because such persons accompany him, he doesn’t do *clamo* in isolation even if he is physically alone. *Clamo* is reminiscent of Wisdom where she shows the same urgency: “Does not wisdom call, does not understanding raise her voice?”

Reference to the second half of this sentence is Lk 14:11 and 18:14, the two running in full as follows: “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other (tax collector and Pharisee); for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The paradox involved here is: *exaltat->humiliabitur* and *humiliat->exaltabitur*. Note the reflexive *se* or “himself” in both instances. Attempting to live on the *exalto* plane results in *humilio* for the monk or for him to be cast down to where he had started from, the *humus*...the hum-ility...or ground. Should the monk come to recognize that he is on the *humus* or his native soil, if you will, automatically he will encounter *exaltabitur* but one radically different from the one he had entertained. Also note the passive *humilio* and *exalto* with respect to the active *exalto* and *humilio*. The agent causing the first two is God whereas the agent for the second two is the monk. Nothing is said of the consequence of both, but that can be implied by reading all the twelve steps...the *gradus*...of humility.

P-2. *Cum haec ergo dicit, ostendit nobis omnem exaltationem genus esse superbiae. Quod se cavere propheta in dicat dicens: Domine, non est exaltatum cor*

*meum neque elati sunt oculi mei, neque ambulavi in magnis neque in mirabilibus super me.*

In saying this it shows us that all exaltation is a kind of pride against which the Prophet proves himself to be on guard when he says, "Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are mine eyes lifted up; neither have I walked in great matters nor in wonders above me."

"This" refers to Lk 14 and 18.14, the first scriptural passages to back up further reflections upon humility. *Ostendo* is broader in meaning than the translated verb "teaches," more as to stretch out or appear. It serves to lay before the monk that *exaltatio* = *superbia*, exultation = pride not just each in and by itself but *omnis*, every. However, the latter also means loftiness, arrogance or conceit distinguished by being of a particular *genus* or race, stock (of pride). The prophet or King David, the author of Ps 131.1, takes care to avoid this by citing the psalm verse directly. It runs in full as "O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me."

The verb *caveo* (to guard against) contains by way of implication the English "avoid." It's put in negative terms which are three in number: 1) heart or *cor* as seat of feeling and emotion isn't lifted up, *exaltatus* being the same as *exaltatio* here, 2) eyes aren't haughty, *elatus* being similar to *exultatus* but emphasis is more upon the act of raising and 3) *ambulo* or walked, implying frequenting places by foot. They are *magnus* and *mirabilis*, both of which are literally above or *super* the prophet. If he were to frequent such places, quickly he'd find himself stumbling about and therefore lost.

P-3. *Sed quid si non humiliter sentiebam, si exaltavi animam meam?—sicut ablactatum super matrem suam, ita retribuēs in animam meam.*

But how has he acted? "Rather have I been of humble mind than exalting myself; as a weaned child on its mother's breast, so You solace my soul."

The rhetorical question in English is drawn out in the Latin, *sed* or "but" used by the prophet/psalmist (David), more an expression of relief at having avoided a dangerous pitfall. He quotes the second verse of Ps 131 split into two parts, the first forming that rhetorical question he asks himself: 1) *sentio* meaning to discern chiefly by employing one's senses which is done with *humiliter*, an adverb and 2) *exalto*, a lifting up which is more serious in nature because it involves one's very soul, *anima*.

Instead of lifting himself up, the prophet states clearly that because he is weaned or *ablactatus* from (*ab-*) milk upon or *super* the breast of his mother, so the Lord comforts his *anima*, second use of this noun. Note the "as" or *sicut* which sets up a result signified by *ita* or "so." This *ita* pertains to solace or *retribuō*, to give back or

to give afresh. In other words, the prophet is making an analogy.

P-4. *Unde, fratres, si summae humilitatis volumus culmen attingere et ad exaltationem illam caelestem ad quam per praesentis vitae humilitatem ascenditur volumus velociter pervenire, actibus nostris ascendentibus scala illa erigenda est quae in somnio Iacob apparuit, per quam ei descendentes et ascendentes angeli monstrabantur.*

Hence, brethren, if we wish to reach the very highest point of humility and to arrive speedily at that heavenly exaltation to which ascent is made through the humility of this present life, we must by our ascending actions erect the ladder Jacob saw in his dream on which angels appeared to him descending and ascending.

The precise reference to Jacob's ladder isn't given here but is Gen 28.12 (etc.): "And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!"

Compare *unde* or whence with *sed* or introducing the section above, that is, but-whence. Here we have a paradox deliberately put, *humiliatio* and *culmen*, the lowest part of an object with the highest part. Between the two everything else is situated. And so the *culmen* at hand is like an inverted pyramid with the peak in the ground...the *humus*...and the base in the sky. Similar to this *culmen* is an *exaltatio* or exultation called *caelestis* or celestial which normally is associated with God above, not the *humus*.

Note the two verbs relative to the two nouns *culmen* and *exaltatio*, *atingo* as to come in contact with and *pervenio*, to arrive, literally as to come-through (*per-*). The later has *velociter*, rapid or speedily, an important adverb which speeds up the *pervenio* which can be slower or more halting. So *atingo* and *pervenio* are going on simultaneously in two apparently opposite directions. As for the exaltation which is *caelestis*, it is attained by and ascent, *ascendo* which goes through or *per humiliatio*.

The consequence of *si* (if) which comes at the beginning of this sentence leads to the necessity of taking action put in terms of *actibus ascendentibus* (acts which are in essence characterized by ascending; the verb *ascendo* already associated with humility. Such acts take the form of *erigo* forming a *scala* or ladder which also can mean a flight of steps. Thus it ties in with words relative to going up as found in this section: *culmen*, *exaltatio*, *caelestis*, *ascendo* and *ascensus*. This ladder/staircase is modeled after Jacob's dream at Bethel, Gen 28.12. On it (*per quam*, literally through which) angels are both descending and ascending. I.e., first comes the descent followed by a stay upon the earth and then an ascent.



P-5. *Non aliud sine dubio descensus ille et ascensus a nobis intellegitur nisi exaltatione descendere et humilitate ascendere.*

By that descent and ascent we must surely understand nothing else than this, that we descend by self-exaltation and ascend by humility.

*Sine dubio* or without a doubt pertains to the value of humility. Note the passive *intellegitur*, “it is understood by us” which implies plenty of experience or trial and error from experimenting with it. Again, the paradox of *descensus* and *ascensus* (descent and ascent): doing the former is effected by *exaltatio* (‘self’ not in the Latin) and doing the latter is effected by *humilitio*.

P-6. *Scala vero ipsa erecta nostra est vita in saeculo, quae humiliato corde a Domino erigatur ad caelum.*

And the ladder thus set up is our life in the world which the Lord raises up to heaven if our heart is humbled.

The *scala* (ladder/staircase) had been erected already, *erectus* implying having been raised up not just with regard to life but life in the *saeculum* or world which also applies to an age which covers a certain period of time. The way it’s stated here reveals *nostra vita* or our life is alien to it. The verb *erigo* or set up is passive, it being effected by the Lord and suggestive of a certain withdrawal by him or having been put in place already. However, *erigo* is conditional. It won’t happen...be *erigo*...in the direction of heaven or *caelum* unless through humility of heart. So the image is of the Lord in heaven above waiting to let down this *scala*, depending upon that above mentioned exultation or humility.

P-7. *Latera enim eius scalae dicimus nostrum esse corpus et animam, in qua latera diversos gradus humilitatis vel disciplinae evocatio divina ascendendo inseruit.*

For we call our body and soul the sides of the ladder, and into these sides our divine vocation has inserted the different steps of humility and discipline we must climb.

The *scala* (ladder/staircase) has two sides or *later* (also as a brick), that is the vertical *corpus* and *anima*, body and soul, they being in a vertical position, if you will. To form a ladder their being apart from one another means they have to be connected by horizontal beams, the actual steps. The agent doing this is *evocatio divina* or divine vocation, the calling our or summons (*ex-* or from). *Inseruo* is the way the steps are formed which means a bringing or putting in (*in-*). I.e., here we have on one hand an *ex-* and on the other, an *in-*.

The steps are called *gradus*, a noun applied to the twelve steps of humility. In addition to the expected humility we have *disciplina* or discipline which means instruction, tuition or teaching. Following both is an ascent (the ladder) which



involves climbing, *ascendo* having a more palatable air about it, ascending.

### First Degree of Humility

1-1. *Primus itaque humilitatis gradus est si, timorem Dei sibi ante oculos semper ponens, oblivionem omnino fugiat.*

The first degree of humility, then, is that a person keep the fear of God before his eyes and beware of ever forgetting it.

Like the outset of any journey, the text at hand has to begin by taking the first step forward or *gradus* as is the case at hand. While *primus* certainly means first, it suggests a beginning which contains all other *gradus* and intuits the end to which they flow. The notion of primary-ness is born out by *timor* or fear with respect to God, this word also applicable to anxiety as well as alarm. Its theological sense as respect has Prov 1.7 in mind: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” Note “beginning” which is similar to the *primus* at hand as pertaining to humility.

As for the fear at hand, one is to hold it, *poneo* suggesting that the monks actually takes up fear by the hands and stretches it out before his eyes. He is to do this not just once but always, *semper*. Viewing fear in this physical way is important because *memor* or memory of it can be lost quickly, *oblivio* being the frightful antithesis or more than that, a complete blotting-out. Such is implied also by the English word derived from it, oblivion. The verb *fugio* or flee makes such forgetfulness all the more frightening.

1-2. *et semper sit memor omnia quae praecepit Deus, ut qualiter et contemntes Deum gehenna de peccatis incendat et vita aeterna quae timentibus Deum praeparata est animo suo semper evolvat.*

Let him be ever mindful of all that God has commanded; let his thoughts constantly recur to the hell-fire which will burn for their sins those who despise God and to the life everlasting which is prepared for those who fear Him.

Here *memor* and *semper* (the latter, an adverb, is mentioned a second time with *evolve*) or “to remember” and “always” form a pair opposite to the one in the last section, *oblivio* and *fugio*. The two pairs are linked by the connective *et* or “and.” *Praecipio* or “commanded” literally reads as to take or seize beforehand and hence suggests anticipation. It ties in with *omnis* or all things, that covering both what God has commanded in the Old and the New Testaments. Although *omnia* is all-inclusive, *memor* or being mindful doesn’t preclude losing track of each one of them, this being assisted by the cultivation of humility.

*Qualiter* is equivalent to “just as” or “in what manner” and serves to show how the vital importance of *memor* is paralleled by the verb *evolve* meaning to roll in the sense of unfold. The adverb *semper* is found here a second time, “always.” Such an unfolding concerns thinking lightly of God, *contemno*. Note the juxtaposition of opposites in the text, *Deum gehenna* or God and hell. The latter burns unceasingly, *incendo* suggestive of kindling a fire...getting it started...which is done by one’s sins, *peccatum* also meaning transgressions as well as blunders.

1-3. *Et custodiens se omni hora a peccatis et vitiis, id est cogitationum, linguae, manuum, pedum vel voluntatis propriae sed et desideria carnis,*

Let him keep himself at every moment from sins and vices whether of the mind, the tongue, the hands, the feet, or the self-will, and check also the desires of the flesh.

*Custodio* or to keep in the sense of guard and protect has an indefinite time limit, if you will, that being *omni hora* or every hour which includes night as well as day. So it turns out that such *custodio* does away with the sense of time passing by when you doing it, with the perception of space receding into the background. This verb is put in a negative way, the warding off as pertaining to *peccatum* and *vitium*, sins and vices, the latter also as fault, blemish or imperfection.

Sins and vices are effected by five parts of the body, if you will, most notably *cogitatio* and *voluntas* or mind and will which are distinguished for the physical nature of the other three. The former is where *peccatum* and *vitium* have their origin, this noun implying careful deliberation. Once this has taken root, it spills over into the will which has the adjective *proprius* or one’s own, this narrowing down responsibility for taking up and following what the former proposes.

The last part is introduced by *sed*, usually rendered as but or yet, added not so much as an after-thought but as indicative of including the bodily members of tongue, hand and feet. They are instruments of *desideria carnis* or something pursued ardently by *carnis* or the flesh meaning the body. Such desires represent a lack to be fulfilled and can be completely immune to *cogitationum* and *voluntatis* or the mind and will. And so addition of this phrase at the end is a sharp warning of what can overwhelm us in an instant.

1-4. *aestimet se homo de caelis a Deo semper respici omni hora et facta sua omni loco ab aspectu divinitatis videri et ab angelis omni hora renuntiari.*

Let a man consider that God is always looking at him from heaven, that his actions are everywhere visible to the divine eyes and are constantly being reported to God by the Angels.

*Aestimet* connotes appraising or putting a value on something, so when applied to

God who is located *de caelis* or from heaven, this estimation assumes a huge distance between earth and heaven. Despite the distance, God's gaze is constant, that is, *semper* with the verb *respicio*, literally as to look about as well as behind. It involves both *omni hora* and *omni loco*, two elements comprising time and space which here are as one.

Note in addition to the verb *respici* the one of *videri* or to see as it pertains to God's eyes or *aspectu divinitatis*, a looking at or glance by the divinity; compare this noun with *Deo* and the verb *respicio*. Despite God seeing all *de caelis*, he has the angels involved. That is to say, they report back to him, *renuntio*, the *re-* in light of the *de* (back-from) concerning the divine *respicio* just mentioned. In sum, the angels have the ability to span the space between earth and heaven, this being reminiscent of the image of a ladder in Gen 28.12. As for ladder, refer to "our body and soul the sides of the ladder" found above.

1-5. *Demonstrans nobis hoc propheta, cum in cogitationibus nostris ita Deum semper praesentem ostendit dicens: Scrutans corda et renes Deus; et item: Dominus novit cogitationes hominum;*

This is what the prophet shows us when he represents God as ever present within our thoughts in the words "Searcher of minds and hearts is God" and again in the words "The Lord knows the thoughts of men."

*Demonstro* or showing involves a pointing out as well as describing done by the prophet or King David, author of the Psalms. Although David is not a prophet per se, his role as author of the Psalms makes him one in that these Psalms comprise the Divine Office performed daily by the monks.

The object of *demonstro* is God who always is *praesens*, literally as before or at hand. Such presence is in what we'd consider the most unlikely place, our thoughts or *cogitatio* which means deliberation, opinion or judgment. In other words, this is where for the most part we live our lives. The problem is putting two and two together, God and *cogitatio*.

By being *praesens* in *cogitatio* God is in a position, a very intimate one, to show or *ostendo* (to point out, to expose) from there what the above mentioned prophet says in Ps 7.9 which reads in full: "O let the evil of the wicked come to an end but establish the righteous, you who try the minds and hearts, O righteous God." The verb *scrutans* means to explore or search thoroughly, the object being *cor* and *renes* or heart and literally kidneys or loins.

*Scrutor* parallels *nosco* meaning to become acquainted, to take cognizance, the object

being *cogitatio* which ironically is where God already is present. The verse from Ps 93.11 runs in full as “The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath.”

1-6. *et item dicit: Intellexisti cogitationes meas a longe; et: Quia cogitatio hominis confitebitur tibi.*

and again he says, "You have read my thoughts from afar" and "The thoughts of people will confess to You."

The first quote from Ps 139.2 runs in full as “You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.” *Intellego* means to perceive as well as to understand which here is *longe* or a long distance off. This is reminiscent of the sentence 1-4, “Let a man consider that God is always looking at (*respicio*) him from heaven (etc.).” Thus the two verbs are one and the same with regard to this element of distance.

The second quote is from Ps 76.11 which reads in full: “Make your vows to the Lord your God and perform them; let all around him bring gifts to him who is to be feared.” Such is the **RSV** version whereas the **Vulgate** runs as: “For the thought of man shall give praise to you, and the remainders of the thought shall keep holiday to you.” The concluding part of this verse is added: *et reliquiae cogitationis diem festum agent tibi.*

*Cogitatio* is found in 1.5 meaning deliberation, thought or thinking. Such deliberations are both random and deliberate which the Lord can read or *confiteor* or to confess, acknowledge or grant. This verb gives the sense that the Lord is simply taking notice as an observer which at first glance appears disinterested. However, the idea is that we are to participate in that impartial observation with regard to the ebb and flow of thoughts we entertain.

1-7. *Nam ut sollicitus sit circa cogitationes suas perversas, dicat semper utilis frater in corde suo: Tunc ero immaculatus coram eo si observavero me ab iniquitate mea.*

In order that he may be careful about his wrongful thoughts, therefore, let the faithful brother say constantly in his heart, "Then shall I be spotless before Him, if I have kept myself from my iniquity."

*Sollicitus* or being careful is a difficult word to nail down. It connotes being careful with regard to what can be stirred up, if you will. The sentence at hand narrows it with regard not just to (*circa* also means around, in the neighborhood) *cogitatio* as just noted in 1-6 but those which are *perverto*. This word means literally turned around or turned in the wrong way implying that there's a natural correct way for

them to be directed.

To effect this correct turning, if you will, a person must be *utilis* which means useful, beneficial, adapted or proper. He is to have converse within his heart (the simple verb *dico* meaning to say) which is done in light of Ps 18.24: "Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight." *Immaculatus* or without stain is the result provided that one refrains from iniquity, *obseruo* meaning to take notice which concerns *iniquitas*, literally as unevenness or inequality. *Immaculatus* has a location or *coram* meaning in the presence of the Lord.

1-8. *Voluntatem vero propriam ita facere prohibemur cum dicit scriptura nobis: Et a voluntatibus tuis avertere. Et item rogamus Deum in oratione ut fiat illius voluntas in nobis.*

As for self-will, we are forbidden to do our own will by the Scripture which says to us, "Turn away from your own will," and likewise by the prayer in which we ask God that His will be done in us.

*Vero* is an important word in this context, something like "indeed" to draw special attention to *voluntas* and *proprius*, will and one's own, the adjective meaning what is particular. It describes the propensity to favor that which is personal to the detriment of a larger good. *Prohibeo* or forbidding to follow it is prescribed, this verb meaning to hold back, to keep in check.

Sir18.30 is cited as a remedy against favoring one's own will and runs in full as: "Do not follow your base desires but restrain your appetites." In the sentence at hand, the verb *averto* or to turn from is with *voluntas*, the plural of the singular *voluntas* just above showing that it is almost endless in possibilities. Because we're assaulted continually, there's a need for the *voluntas* of God to be operative. We ask or *rogo* God in prayer for this, *rogo* also meaning to ask a question. *Oratio* for prayer also as discourse, utterance. As for this happening, *fiat* suggests a wish which may or may not come true.

1-9. *Docemur ergo merito nostram non facere voluntatem cum cavemus illud quod dicit sancta scriptura: Sunt viae quae putantur ab hominibus rectae, quarum finis usque ad profundum inferni demergit, et cum item pavemus illud quod de negligentibus dictum est: Corrupti sunt et abominabiles facti sunt in voluntatibus suis.*

And rightly are we taught not to do our own will when we take heed to the warning of Scripture: "There are ways which seem right, but the ends of them plunge into the depths of hell;" and also when we tremble at what is said of the careless: "They are corrupt and have become abominable in their will."

*Doceo* means to teach as well as to inform or prove and here is in the passive, the teacher, if you will, being the Proverbs verb at hand. It's with the adverb *merito*, according to, deservedly, which is added for emphasis as not to do our own will or *voluntas*, the verb *facio* as in 1-8. The warning is put in terms of being heedful or *caveo* of Prov 16.25 which reads in full as "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

The verse under consideration speaks of *via* or ways...modes of life...which seem *rectus* or correct, this from the verb *rego* meaning to keep or to lead straight. That is to say, the *via* appear such, *putao* meaning to reckon, to count, and is passive suggesting that the *via* at hand are normative whereas in reality they are not. So it turns out that the *via* (the plural form) perceived as *rectus* or leading straight ahead have an end (*finis* also means a boundary or border) like all roads do. However, their end consists of a plunge...an excellent word...for *demergo* straight to the depths of hell, *profundum inferni*. The first word means the deepest part of anything, something like an abyss, and the second not unlike it or what lays beneath, the lower part of anything.

The quote from the second part of this sentence isn't given but is close to Ps 53.1: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none that does good."

The verb *paveo* or tremble means to be struck with terror and concerns those who are careless, *neglens* meaning to be without concern for anything. Such persons are first *corruptus* or corrupt after which immediately comes (*facti sunt*, are made such) *abominabilis* or made an abomination. This is made worse by being located in the will, *voluntas*.

1.10. *In desideriis vero carnis ita nobis Deum credamus semper esse praesentem cum dicit propheta Domino: Ante te est omne desiderium meum.*

And as for the desires of the flesh, let us believe with the Prophet that God is ever present to us when he says to the Lord, "Every desire of mine is before You."

The way the preposition *in* is used intimates the close and personal nature of *desiderium* or desires, "in the desires of the flesh." It's almost as though a person cannot escape from them because they are so intimate. If we take what's being said here seriously, it sets the stage for a truly remarkable way of viewing God's presence. That is to say, desires are what we consider the furthest removed from God, actually opposed to him. The verb *credo* implies a committing or consigning to someone or something, a handing over of one's allegiance as to the truth of God being within (*praesens* or present ) our desires. Not only does this turn out to be true, it's true

*semper* or all the time, namely, that God is *praesens* in such desires.

The prophet (King David) backs up this unusual way of perceiving God's presence with a quote from Ps 38.9: "Lord, all my longing is known to you, my sighing is not hidden from you." *Ante* or before suggests more than standing there but in the presence of God. What is *ante* to him are not just *desiderium* but *omnis* or them all, as though they were lined up in a row. Nothing is said what happens next which is presumed.

1.11. *Cavendum ergo ideo malum desiderium quia mors secus introitum delectationis posita est. Unde scriptura praecepit dicens: Post concupiscentias tuas non eas.*

We must be on our guard, therefore, against evil desires, for death lies close by the gate of pleasure. Hence the Scripture gives this command: "Go not after your concupiscences."

*Caveo* or beware implies watchfulness as applicable to desires which are *malus* or evil. What they consist of isn't spelled out but suggested by reason of *delectatio*, pleasure, which also applies to delight or amusement. Such pleasure is a gateway or entrance (*introitus*) for death which has the connotation laying in wait close at hand as at a city gate. *Secus* translates as otherwise or differently. In other words, we have the image of an ambush by death in the guise of pleasure.

The passage to describe this stealth comes from Eccl 18.30 which reads in full as "Do not follow your base desires but restrain your appetites." Note *praecipio* which means to take beforehand implying to stand in the way of a threat of ambush. And that which is set before is the command not to follow one's *concupiscentia* which consist of eager desires tinged more or less with lust.

1.12. *Ergo si oculi Domini speculantur bonos et malos et Dominus de caelo semper respicit super filios hominum, ut videat si est intellegens aut requirens Deum, et si ab angelis nobis deputatis cotidie die noctuque Domino factorum nostrorum opera nuntiantur, cavendum est ergo omni hora, fratres, sicut dicit in psalmo propheta, ne nos declinantes in malo et inutiles factos aliqua hora aspiciat Deus et, parcendo nobis in hoc tempore quia pius est et exspectat nos converti in melius, ne dicat nobis in futuro: Haec fecisti et tacui.*

So therefore, since the eyes of the Lord observe the good and the evil (Prov. 15:3) and the Lord is always looking down from heaven on the children of earth "to see if there be anyone who understands and seeks God" (Ps. 14.2), and since our deeds are daily, day and night, reported to the Lord by the Angels assigned to us, we must constantly beware, brethren, as the Prophet says in the Psalm, lest at any time God see us falling into evil ways and becoming unprofitable (Ps. 14.3); and lest, having spared us for the present because in His kindness He awaits our reformation, He say to us in



the future, "These things you did, and I held My peace" (Ps. 50.21).

This extended sentence is the conclusion of the first degree of humility and consists of a quote from Proverbs (15.13) and three from the Psalms. Because the four comprise one sentence, they are presented in full as such:

Prov 15.13: The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Ps 14.2: The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who act wisely, who seek after God.

Ps 14.3: They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; there is none who does good, no not one.

Ps 51.21: These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.

*Oculus* or eyes continues the general notion of God watching one's behavior, that is, engaged in *specular* which has the connotation of spying as well as examining. It's directed toward those who are *bonus* and *malus*, good and bad, which brings up the quote from Prov 15.13. The *specular* at hand is from heaven or *de caelo* which more specifically refers to the vault or doom of heaven. Actually it's presumed as going on all the time (*semper*) and without forming any judgment. However, *respicio* follows, a looking upon (*super*) people followed by a plain seeing or *video*. The focus of this *specular*->*respicio*->*video*? It's twofold as pertaining to God, *intellego* and *requiro*, or to come to know, to perceive and to seek again.

Accompanying the *intellego* and *requiro* are the angels to whom are reported our deeds, the verb being *deputo* which means literally to cut off or to prune as well as to count as. In other words, these (guardian?) angels have been assigned to each person. Assigned to them is the task of *nuntio*, to announce or declare which is similar to their nature as messengers. The time frame for them to do this is *cotidie* or on a daily basis where day and night are mentioned pretty much for emphasis of the inescapability from this *nuntio* of our works, *opera* connoting exertion.

In light of this constant scrutiny is the need to beware constantly (literally, 'at every hour'), *caveo* as to be on guard much like a watchman. A second mention of *hora* or hour...and that includes day or night...is in conjunction now with God, not the angels, seeing or *aspicio* as beholding us not so much falling but declining. *Declino* is the verb meaning to bend aside, this in a gradual but consistent manner. Such a slope, if you will, leads to *malus* (evil) and that which is *inutilis* or not worthy of service, useless.

The “present time” is noted which reads literally as “in this time” God spares us, *parco* also meaning to refrain from. The motive rests in his kindness which is rendered by the adjective *pius*, a loaded term difficult to translate adequately. It centers around fulfilling one’s duty in a proper manner whether to God, the state or one’s family. The just mentioned divine *intellego* and *requiro*, in conjunction with the reporting by angels, also consists of God awaiting our reformation, *expecto* and *converto*, the latter meaning to turn around. Hopefully this will be for (literally *in*) the better. If this doesn’t happen, God will say in the future, using direct language, that he remained silent (*taceo*, also as to hold one’s peace) while we have done this, “this” referring to evil ways and being unprofitable.

### Second Degree of Humility

2-1. *Secundus humilitatis gradus est, si propriam quis non amans voluntatem desideria sua non delectetur implere, sed vocem illam Domini factis imitemur dicentis: Non veni facere voluntatem meam, sed eius qui me misit. Item dicit Scriptura: Voluntas habet poenam et necessitas parit coronam.*

The second degree of humility is that a person love not his own will nor take pleasure in satisfying his desires but model his actions on the saying of the Lord, "I have come not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." It is written also, "Self-will has its punishment, but constraint wins a crown."

The following two verbs stand in opposition to God: 1) *amo* as to take pleasure in, to have delight which is with respect to one’s own will or *voluntas*. The adjective *proprius* suggests that which isn’t common with anyone else. 2) *Delecto* or to allure or to attract is more passive and seductive than *amo* as it pertains to desires, *desiderium*. The force of this verb is emphasized by another, *impleo* to fill in the sense of to satiate.

Both *amo* and *delecto* (with *impleo*) are to be exchanged for the act of imitating, *imitor* as to represent, to copy. Imitating is done spontaneously, not out of duty or compulsion. That means it takes up *amo* and *delecto* (with *impleo*) and transforms them essentially with ease even if some difficulty may be involved. *Factus* (*facio*) or that which is done by us is the object of this *imitor*.

Compare the human association of *facio* with the divine *facio* as it pertains to Christ, he refraining from it’s *facio* or in favor of the Father who sent (*mitto*) him. The context is Jn 6.38 which runs in full as: “For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

The last part the second degree has a quote which isn't specified, perhaps alluding to or taking parts of a book such as Proverbs. *Voluntas* or will as *proprius* is suggested as in just above though not mentioned. It has a punishment or *poena* (also means vengeance) which is left unspecified, more as a threat. On the other hand we have *necessitas* which implies a certain binding force under whose pressure, if you will, a crown is prepared, *pario* meaning to produce or to accomplish. A certain time frame is required which is secondary to the *imitor* or spontaneously imitating of one's actions on what the Lord says in Jn 6.38 quoted above.

### Third Degree of Humility

3-1. *Tertius humilitatis gradus est, ut quis pro Dei amore omni oboedientia se subdat maiori, imitans Dominum, de quo dicit Apostolus: Factus oboediens usque ad mortem.*

The third degree of humility is that a person for love of God submit himself to his Superior in all obedience, imitating the Lord, of whom the Apostle says, "He became obedient even unto death."

Here *amor* and *oboedientia*, love and obedience, are equivalent with respect to a monastic superior, *maior* being comparative ('greater') of the adjective *magnus* or great. Note that *omnis* (all) is attributed to obedience, a total form of listening, *oboedientia* having as its root *audio* or to listen. Such listening is *ob-* or for the purpose of, on account of, which here is God. It is a precise form of listening equivalent to being under this superior (abbot), *subdo*, literally as to place under.

The basis for this obedience to another person rests in a quote from Phil 2.8 which runs in full as "And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." Note the present tense of *imitor* or to represent, to express with respect to God. It parallels the *oboedientia* to a man, the present form *oboedio* meaning to obey, to yield. Such listening lasts a lifetime, that is, to death which releases one from such listening because no longer is there a need for it.

### Fourth Degree of Humility

4-1. *Quartus humilitatis gradus est, si in ipsa oboedientia duris et contrariis rebus vel etiam quibuslibet inrogatis iniuriis, tacite conscientia patientiam amplectatur et sustinens non lassescat vel discedat,*

The fourth degree of humility is that he hold fast to patience with a silent mind when in this obedience he meets with difficulties and contradictions and even any kind

of injustice, enduring all without growing weary or running away.

*Ipsa* or “this” obedience here in the fourth *gradus* (again, it suggests a step or stage as on a journey) refers to the third *gradus* with respect to a superior (abbot). The difficulty of submitting to another person is taken into account, hence the use of such adjectives as *durus* and *contrarius*, the former meaning what is hard or tough and the latter as being over against or opposite. Both modify *res*, a general word meaning matter, thing or affair...not unlike the common use of “stuff.”

If this wasn't demanding enough we have *iniuria* or anything contrary modified by *irrogo* (*irrogatus*) or to propose as well as to inflict. The idea seems to be that such *iniuria* are imposed with some deliberation, not haphazardly. *Quibuslibet* means something like in what manner or anything, and applied to *iniuria*, it opens up a wide range of arbitrary impositions.

*Taceo* or to keep silent is to be kept in one's *conscientia* or conscience as well cognizance. Use of this noun is important with regard to maintaining silence because if *conscientia* is taken literally as a knowing together (*con-*, with) in the face of what's *durus* and *contrarius* as well as *iniuria* (hard, contrary and injustice), it's to be silent before all three. The task is close to impossible which is why *patientia* or literally, suffering, is involved. In order to take effect to some degree or other, this knowing together needs to be done through *amplector*, to twine around, to encompass or to embrace.

The result of *amplector* or this embracing is the ability to endure (‘all things’ isn't in the Latin text), not grow weary nor run away: *sustineo* (to hold upright, to support), absence of both *lassesco* (to grow tired) and *discedo* (to part asunder). In this way the *con-* or the with-ness of *conscientia*, if you will, can remain intact.

4-2. *dicente Scriptura: Qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit. Item: Confortetur cor tuum et sustine Dominum.*

For the Scripture says, "The one who perseveres to the end is the one who shall be saved;" and again "Let your heart take courage, and wait for the Lord."

The two scriptural verses read in full as 1) “and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved” [Mt 10.22]. 2) Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord” [Ps 27.14]!

*Persevero* means to continue steadfastly, the preposition *per-* as through suggestive of such endurance. This through-ness lasts a lifetime, death being signified by *finis* or end. Use of *usque* or “until” adds a bit of drama, if you will. Most importantly, the

through-ness at hand will result in *salvo*, being saved...from what not being specified.

*Item* or “again” implies that the second scriptural verse is similar to the first one. *Conforto* and *sustineo* are similar here. The former has the preposition *con-* indicative of being with and the latter means to hold up, to sustain from below, if you will, *sus-* being equivalent to *sub-*, under. To the former belongs *cor* or heart and to the latter, *Dominus* or the Lord.

4-3. *Et ostendens fidelem pro Domino universa etiam contraria sustinere debere, dicit ex persona sufferentium: Propter te morte adficimur tota die, aestimati sumus ut oves occisionis.*

And to show how those who are faithful ought to endure all things, however contrary, for the Lord, the Scripture says in the person of the suffering, "For Your sake we are put to death all the day long; we are considered as sheep marked for slaughter."

The two scriptural verses read in full as 1) “Nay, for your sake we are slain all the day long and accounted as sheep for the slaughter” [Ps 44.22]. 2) “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep for the slaughter” [Rom 8.36]. The second is Paul lifting the first in his epistle.

*Ostendo* means to stretch or stretch before and is used as a participle to indicate continuous action by the Psalm verse in itself and as quoted by Paul. It pertains to *fidelis*, those trustworthy and sincere, more specifically their ability for *sustineo* which is noted in the last sentence as to bear in the sense of being able to hold up from below. What’s being born are all things which are *contrarius* or over, against or opposite, “all” as *universus*, everything taken collectively.

The word “scripture” isn’t in the Latin text and speaks of a person who is suffering, *suffero* meaning to take upon oneself. To such a person the two quotes apply, that is, *adficio* or *afficio* meaning to exert an influence, *af-* or *ad-* suggestive of forward movement. Here it applies to being subject to death in a continuous fashion, that is, for the length of an entire day or in this context, *dies* representing one’s life. This is equivalent to be considered or *aestimo* meaning to determine or value as sheep to be slaughtered, that also perhaps involving for sacrifice.

4-4. *Et securi de spe retributionis divinæ subsecuntur gaudentes et dicentes: Sed in his omnibus superamus propter eum qui dilexit nos.*

Then, secure in their hope of a divine recompense, they go on with joy to declare, "But in all these trials we conquer through Him who has granted us His love."

The scriptural verse at hand comes right after vs. 36 cited in the previous section and reads in full as “ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him

who loved us” [Rom 8.37].

*Securus* or *secure* means to be untroubled and thus is based upon (*de* as concerning) hope of a *retributio* which is divine or a repayment. That means *securus* rests not in the present but in the future. Between now and then this *securus* makes one advance or *subseco*, literally as to cut under or cut away from under (*sub-*). It’s done joyfully, *gaudio* being the verb, and involves the person speaking the scriptural verse at hand. “Trials” isn’t in the Latin text but as *omnis* or “all” which we conquer, *supero* as to rise above or to go over (*super-*). This happens only because of Christ who has loved us, *diligo* which means to value or to esteem highly.

4-5. *Et item alio loco Scriptura: Probasti nos, Deus, igne nos examinasti sicut igne examinatur argentum; induxisti nos in laqueum; posuisti tribulationes in dorso nostro.*

Again, in another place the Scripture says, "You have tested us, O God; You have tried us as silver is tried by fire; You have brought us into a snare; You have laid afflictions on our back."

The scriptural verse in full: “For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. You laid affliction on our loins” [Ps 66.10-11].

*Probo* as to test means to be the judge of something which is done by God. The agent, if you will, is fire which does the *examino*, to weigh or to be in equilibrium with. Silver is the precious metal involved which is fairly malleable.

God has brought us into a snare or *laqueus* which suggests being strangled. Also while in that place of strangulation, if you will, God has placed afflictions upon us, *tribulatio* meaning distress or trouble. More specifically, it is placed *in* our back or *dorsum* which also means anything raised, and that we have to carry this around.

4-6. *Et ut ostendat sub priore debere nos esse, subsequitur dicens: Inposuisti homines super capita nostra.*

And to show that we ought to be under a Superior, it goes on to say, "You have set men over our heads."

*Ostendo* as to stretch or stretch before pertains to the verse at hand: “You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us forth to a spacious place” [Ps 65.12]. This verse intimating difficulties pertains to a superior or *prior*, one who is first, that having a person in charge of us is not easy since he calls all the shots. Such a *prior* is set over us, *inpono* (or *impono*), literally as to set in. The in-ness of this verb (*im-*) is directly over us, that is, super our heads as if he were standing upon them.

4-7. *Sed et praeceptum Domini in adversis et iniuriis per patientiam adimplentes, qui percussi in maxillam praebent et aliam, auferenti tunicam dimittunt et pallium, angarizati militario vadunt duo, cum Paulo apostolo falsos fratres sustinent et persecutionem sustinent, et maledicentes se benedicent.*

Moreover, by their patience those faithful ones fulfill the Lord's command in adversities and injuries: when struck on one cheek, they offer the other; when deprived of their tunic, they surrender also their cloak; when forced to go a mile, they go two; with the Apostle Paul they bear with false brethren and bless those who curse them.

The two scriptural verses run as follows: 1) “on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren” [2Cor 11.26]. 2) “and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure” [1Cor 4.12].

The preposition *ad-* prefaced to the verb *adimpleo* intimates a continuous filling. It pertains to the divine *praeceptum* or teaching as well as command and is situated in two places, as it were: *adversus* and *iniurius*, two adjective with the latter meaning that which is unlawful or harmful. *Patientia* or long suffering is prefaced with the preposition *per* or through, “faithful ones” lacking in the Latin, and this long suffering being what gets us through the two.

*Patientia* enables a person to withstand that which *adversus* and *iniurius* under the five circumstances: 1) struck on the cheek or *percussus* suggestive of a beating, 2) handing over their cloak or *tunica*, an under-garment which implies being deprived of an outer garment or *pallium*, 3) going two miles instead of one, *militaris* being a highway primarily for soldiers. The verb *angarizo* or to extract something forcefully being used here. 4) bearing or *sustineo* with the sense of holding up from below a *frater* or literally brother (plural) who is false and 5) bless instead of cursing, the verbal root *dico* (to say) prefaced with *malus* and *bonus*, bad and good.

### **Fifth Degree of Humility**

5-1. *Quintus humilitatis gradus est, si omnes cogitationes malas cordi suo advenientes vel mala a se absconse commissa per humilem confessionem abbatem non celaverit suum.*

The fifth degree of humility is that he hide from his Abbot none of the evil thoughts that enter his heart or the sins committed in secret, but that he humbly confess them.



At issue is the assault of evil thoughts and secret sins. While the second consists of plain *malus*, if you will, the first is more important. It consists of a *cogitatio* which is *malus* and hence suggestive of considerable deliberation. Other *mali* may not be so thought out. This is backed up by *cogitatio* entering one's heart, *advenio* connoting an arrival or reaching (*ad-*) and once there, tends to remain. Both are not the issue at hand, rather, problem is twofold: 1) hiding them causes trouble, *celo* also as to conceal which is more intentional and 2) *abscondo* also meaning to put away (from), *ab-*, this verb pertinent to sins which aren't mentioned but inferred by *committo* fundamentally meaning to join or connect together (*con-*).

Countering this is making both known by confession or a *confessio* which is an acknowledgment as *humilis*, humble. Such a *confessio* to one's abbot counters the natural tendency of *celo*, to conceal.

5-2. *Hortans nos de hac re Scriptura dicens: Revela ad Dominum viam tuam et spera in eum. Et item dicit: Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus, quoniam in æternum misericordia eius.*

The Scripture urges us to this when it says, "Reveal your way to the Lord and hope in Him" and again, "Confess to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever."

The two scriptural verses run in full as "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act" [Ps 37.5]. "Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever" [Ps 106.1]!

*Hortor* as to encourage also means to incite which is done by scripture, here with *res* or something like "thing"...the "scriptural thing." It acts in a capacity somewhat like the abbot in the last entry with regard to *confessio*, that is, *revelo* meaning to lay bear. What's to be made manifest implies work necessary to reach a state of readiness which isn't described but inferred. When a person reaches that point, his way becomes manifest, *via* intimating a path which he prefers to walk upon as opposed to other ones.

Concurrent with a *revelo* of this *via* is the second object of *hortor* or exhortation, namely, to hope in the Lord, *spero* connoting trust and expectation.

The third object of *hortor* is *confiteor* or to make known with regard to the Lord and has two qualities: 1) *bonus* or good and 2) *misericordia* which is comprised of *misereo* or to pity and *cor* or heart. Such a pitying heart, if you will, isn't temporary but lasts *in* eternity or *aeternus*, that is, without a beginning or end.

5-3. *Et item Propheta: Delictum meum cognitum tibi feci et iniustitias meas non operui. Dixi: pronuntiabo adversum me iniustitias meas Domino, et tu remisisti impietatem cordis mei.*

And the Prophet likewise says, "My offense I have made known to You, and my iniquities I have not covered up. I said: 'I will declare against myself my iniquities to the Lord;' and 'You forgave the wickedness of my heart.'"

The scriptural verse runs in full as "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord;' then you forgave the guilt of my sin" [Ps 32.5].

The prophet is King David, author of the Psalter, the "again" (*item*) referring to the Pss 37.5 & 106.1 cited above with regard to *revelo* and *confessio*. The *item* here, if you will, is in terms of *cognitus* or making known from experience or being recognized...not just that but with the "active" verb *facio*, to make, to make as recognized, this verb implying serious work to get it done.

*Cognitus* with *facio* has as its objects *delinquo* which means to fail or to be lacking. Similar to this is the verb *operio* or to cover over with regard to *iniustitia* or injustice. The former verb is more active whereas the latter is passive but both demand considerable work. As for *iniustitia*, the prophet says in a straightforward manner that he will engage in the act of declaring publically or *pronuntio* them to the Lord. He (King David) knows that as soon as this public acknowledgment is made, the Lord forgives his iniquities (*iniustitia*) or *impietas* which is the lack of *pietas* or devotion whether to God, family or nation. *Remitto* is the verb at hand, literally as to let go back or drive back.

### Sixth Degree of Humility

6-1. *Sextus humilitatis gradus est, si omni vilitate vel extremitate contentus sit monachus, et ad omnia quæ sibi iniunguntur velut operarium malum se iudicet et indignum, dicens sibi cum Propheta: Ad nihilum redactus sum et nescivi; ut iumentum factus sum apud te et ego semper tecum.*

The sixth degree of humility is that a monk be content with the poorest and worst of everything, and that in every occupation assigned him he consider himself a bad and worthless workman saying with the Prophet, "I am brought to nothing and I am without understanding; I have become as a beast of burden before You, and I am always with You."

The Psalm verses run in full as "I was stupid and ignorant, I was like a beast toward you. Nevertheless I am continually with you; you hold my right hand" [Ps 73.22-23].

This is the first time *monachus* or monk is found among the twelve steps of humility who is characterized here by the following two:

1) *Contentus* which derives from *contendo* or to strain eagerly. This word suggests application of one's energies which pertains not just to *vilitas* and *extremitas* but to every form of both, *omnis*. The first pertains literally to lowness of price and hence worthlessness whereas the second, the very end of something beyond which one cannot go further.

2) The monk passes judgment upon himself (*iudico*) as a workman or *operarius*, this noun applicable to a laborer. Thus he judges himself as a laborer who is both *malus* and *indignus*, bad and lacking (*in-*) *dignus* or worth.

A similar way of viewing oneself as being such an unreliable and common laborer is found in the prophet's words, that is King David. The preposition *ad* signifies direction towards-which with *nihilum* or nothing which also means that which is worthless. Note that the monk is brought to *nihilum*, *redigo* meaning to bring back as to an original condition. With this in mind, the monk has attempted to get out of this *nihilum* on his own power but is brought back to it, his native condition. One characteristic of this condition is not knowing or *nescio*, an ignorance that initially seems a defect but turns out to be a boon provided the monk remain in his *nihilum*.

*Iumentum* commonly refers to relatively large animals used for bearing or pulling. However, it is before the Lord, *apud* connoting nearness as well as being at home which is followed by the adverb *semper* or always with the Lord.

### Seventh Degree of Humility

7-1. *Septimus humilitatis gradus est: si omnibus se inferiorem et viliorem non solum sua lingua pronuntiet, sed etiam intimo cordis credat affectu, humilians se et dicens cum Propheta: Ego autem sum vermis et non homo, obprobrium hominum et abiectio plebis.*

The seventh degree of humility is that he consider himself lower and of less account than anyone else, and this not only in verbal protestation but also with the most heartfelt inner conviction, humbling himself and saying with the Prophet, "But I am a worm and no man, the scorn of men and the outcast of the people."

The two adjective *inferus* and *vilis* mean that which is below, lower parts and what is purchased at a low rate or cheap. Note that the the monk perceives this, the verb

*pronuntio* meaning to make public. That is to say, the monk makes it known to others or better, has it made known. *Sed item* or “that is to say” thus gives the proper expression of these two adjectives.

Instead of *pronuntio* in the public or opposite sense which isn't the case here or by *lingua* or by tongue, inner conviction is the source, namely, the heart described as *intimus*, that which is secret or innermost. Here is where the monk believes (*credo*) it as true and is convinced of it, this being rendered by the noun *affectus*. This is difficult to translate adequately, for it encompasses mood, affection, fondness as well as feeling.

Ps 22.6 is introduced, if you will, by the monk humiliating himself or *humilio* which connotes debasement. As the verse at hand, it runs in full as “But I am a worm and no man; scorned by men and despised by the people.” *Vermis* and *homo* or worm and man are contrasted, the former being equated with *obprobrium* (more commonly as *opprobrium*) and *abiectio*. The former means a reproach or scandal and the latter, a casting away from (*ab-*). As for *obprobrium*, it's with respect to men or *homo* and the latter, people or *plebs*, common folk or those of lesser discernment. If this second group perceives the monk as a worm, the situation is quite dire for him.

7-2. *Exaltatus sum et humiliatus et confusus.*

"After being exalted, I have been humbled and covered with confusion."

This Psalm quote runs in full as “Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless” [Ps 88.15]. All three are forms of verbs, the third being from *confundo*, to mix or mingle with the connotation of jumbling things together (*con-*). The passiveness suggests action coming chiefly from without, not from the monk himself.

7-3. *Et item: Bonum mihi quod humiliasti me, et discam mandata tua.*

And again, "It is good for me that You have humbled me that I may learn Your commandments."

The Psalm verse runs in full as “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes” [Ps 118.71]. The words *et item* represent the third and final sequence of Psalm verses at hand with *bonus* or good suggestive of hope despite the emphasis upon being humiliated. Even though this comes about both from within and from without, it's clear that the Lord is responsible for *humilio*. The *bonus* consists in learning divine commandments, *disco* suggesting becoming acquainted with, here the object being *mandatus* or that which has been committed to one's care.

## **Eighth Degree of Humility**

8-1. *Octavus humilitatis gradus est, si nihil agat monachus, nisi quod communis monasterii regula vel maiorum cohortatur exempla.*

The eighth degree of humility is that a monk do nothing except what is commended by the common Rule of the monastery and the example of the elders.

*Nihil-nisi* or nothing-but is a fairly absolute statement involving two elements: the common rule or *regula* which also is a pattern or model and those who actually follow it, the elders. *Cohortor* is the verb here meaning to animate or encourage. While the *regula* is objectively out there for everyone, examples of elders following it is what really counts.

## **Ninth Degree of Humility**

9.1: *Nonus humilitatis gradus est, si linguam ad loquendum prohibeat monachus et taciturnitatem habens, usque ad interrogationem non loquatur,*

The ninth degree of humility is that a monk restrain his tongue and keep silence, not speaking until he is questioned.

A contrast between *lingua* and *taciturnitas* or tongue (for speaking) and keeping quiet or silence. The first is prohibited or *prohibeo* (to hold back or to hold in check) and *habeo* (to have). The latter verb with regard to *taciturnitas* suggests having it as one's possession and not letting it go. Both *prohibeo* and *habeo* are to remain in effect until the monk is questioned, *interrogatio* also meaning examination. Although nothing about this examination is specified, it suggests something is at issue and needs resolution.

9-2. *monstrante Scriptura quia in multoloquio non effugitur peccatum, et quia vir linguosus non dirigitur super terram.*

For the Scripture shows that "in much speaking there is no escape from sin" and that "the talkative man is not stable on the earth."

*Monstro* as to point out or indicate is done by Scripture when serves to lead into two verses. The first runs in full as "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is prudent" [Prov 10.19]. *Multoloquium* consists of the adjective *multus* (many) prefaced to the noun *loquium* or that which is said or spoken, this contrasting with the (not) *lingua* and *taciturnitas* of the ninth step of humility. Basically *multoloquium* is a trap where the monk can't flee or *effugio*, to

flee from sin.

The second scriptural verse runs in full as “Let not the slanderer be established in the land; let evil hunt down the violent man speedily” [Ps 140.11]! *Linguosus* or talkative is pretty much equivalent to not restraining (*prohibeo*) one’s tongue as in the ninth degree. It produces instability, not being able to remain on the earth, *dirigo* meaning to give a particular direction which here is upon (*super*) the earth.

### **Tenth Degree of Humility**

10-1. *Decimus humilitatis gradus est, si non sit facilis ac promptus in risu, qui scriptum est: Stultus in risu exaltat vocem suam.*

The tenth degree of humility is that he be not ready and quick to laugh, for it is written, "The fool lifts up his voice in laughter."

Laughter or *risus* is the subject of this *gradus* and can apply to mockery. The monk is to avoid it, that is, being neither *facilis* nor *promptus*, easy to do or without difficulty and exposed to view or plain.

The scriptural verse runs as “A fool raises his voice when he laughs, but a clever man smiles quietly” [Ecc 21.23; vs. 20 in RSV]. Three words have a commonality here: *stultus*, *rusus* and *exalto*. The first also means simple or dull, the second is defined just above and the third means to raise up, as being out of place with regards to *vox* or voice.

### **Eleventh Degree of Humility**

11-1. *Undecimus humilitatis gradus est, si cum loquitur monachus, leniter et sine risu, humiliter cum gravitate vel pauca verba et rationabilia loquatur, et non sit clamosus in voce, sicut scriptum est: Sapiens verbis innotescit paucis.*

The eleventh degree of humility is that when a monk speaks he do so gently and without laughter, humbly and seriously, in few and sensible words, and that he be not noisy in his speech. It is written, "A wise man is known by the fewness of his words."

This degree contrasts sharply with *risus* or laughter in a boisterous manner described in the Tenth Degree. I.e., his speech is to have the following seven characteristics: 1) *leniter*: softly, mildly, 2) without *risus*, 3) *humiliter*: humbly, 4) *gravitas*: weight, slowness, seriousness, 5) words which are *paucus*: few, 6) *rationabilis*: rationally and 7) not *clamosus* in voice which connotes bawling.

Sextus Pomponius was a jurist who lived during the reigns of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. He wrote a book on the law up to the time of Hadrian, known as the **Enchiridion** of Sextus Pomponius. *Sapiens* or wise connotes tasting and thus flavor. Emphasis upon the sense of taste thus precludes speaking much by which a *sapiens* is known or *innotesco* which also means to become clear.

### Twelfth Degree of Humility

12-1. *Duodecimus humilitatis gradus est, si non solum corde monachus, sed etiam ipso corpore humilitatem videntibus se semper indicet,*

The twelfth degree of humility is that a monk not only have humility in his heart but also by his very appearance make it always manifest to those who see him.

*Non solum...sed etiam* or not only...but: humility in the heart as well as in the body, humility flowing from the inside to the out. While the monk may not be aware of both which function as one, others will see (*video*) this outflow. The verb *indico* as to point out differs from *video*, a mere seeing and is constant, *semper*.

12-2. *id est Opere Dei, in oratorio, in monasterio, in horto, in via, in agro vel ubicumque sedens, ambulans vel stans, inclinatio sit semper capite, defixis in terram aspectibus,*

That is to say that whether he is at the Work of God, in the oratory, in the monastery, in the garden, on the road, in the fields or anywhere else, and whether sitting, walking or standing, he should always have his head bowed and his eyes toward the ground.

Seven places and three actions are involved, all functioning as one. The second set takes place within the context of the first: *sedeo*, *ambulo* and *sto*. To all three belong a gesture downward, if you will: *inclino* and *defigo* or to incline and to fix with regard to a third verb pertaining to vision, *aspectus*, which is a seeing or looking directed downward.

12-3. *reum se omni hora de peccatis suis æstimans iam se tremendo iudicio repræsentari æstimet, dicens sibi in corde semper illud, quod publicanus ille evangelicus fixis in terram oculis dixit: Domine, non sum dignus, ego peccator, levare oculos meos ad cælos. Et item cum Propheta: Incurvatus sum et humiliatus sum usquequaque.*

Feeling the guilt of his sins at every moment, he should consider himself already present at the dread Judgment and constantly say in his heart what the publican in the Gospel said with his eyes fixed on the earth: "Lord, I am a sinner and not worthy to lift up my eyes to heaven;" and again with the Prophet: "I am bowed down and humbled everywhere."



The four scriptural verses in full run as: 1) “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but beat his breast saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner’” [Lk 18.13]! 2) “But the centurion answered him, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed’” [Mt 8.8]. 3) “For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh...Lord, all my longing is known to you, my sighing is not hidden from you” [Ps 38.7-9]. 4) “I am sorely afflicted; give me life, Lord, according to your word” [Ps 119.107].

*Hora* or hour is modified by *omnis* or every meaning day and night. The all inclusive nature time presented in this section is marked by a constancy of *aestimo*. This verb means to determine the extrinsic value of something and is directed to sins.

A second use of *aestimo* follows as directed to *repraesento*, to be present or to bring before or to show which here is *iudicium* or judgement which is dreadful, *tremo*, to shake or to tremble.

*Dico* or to say flows from this awareness of sin at every hour after the example of the publican whose eyes are fixed on the ground, *figo* also meaning to fasten not unlike *defigo* in 12.2. With eyes in that downward position the monk speaks twice: 1) that he isn't worthy (*dignus*) to raise his eyes in the opposite direction, upward to heaven or *levo* (to raise) in the direction of (*ad*) *caelum*. 2) that he is *incurvatus* and *humilatus* cured and humiliated. The former derives from *incurvo*, to bend or to bow. Both mirror that *omni hora* or every hour by the adverb *usquequaque*, a form of *usque* which means all the way to, everywhere.

12-4. *Ergo, his omnibus humilitatis gradibus ascensis, monachus mox ad caritatem Dei perveniet illam quæ perfecta foris mittit timorem,*

Having climbed all these steps of humility, therefore, the monk will presently come to that perfect love of God which casts out fear.

*Ascendo* or ascend is the opposite of *humilitas* or what pertains to the ground. *Mox* or soon modifies the coming-through...the *per-venio*...to or in the direction of (*ad*) *caritas* which also means dearness, that which is costly. And so the goal of the double action of *ascendo* and *pervenio* with regard to *caritas* is *perfectus* or literally made-through (*per-*). Once there, if you will, both cast out or *mitto* (to send) fear, *timor* connoting alarm or anxiety.

12-5. *per quam universa quæ prius non sine formidine observabat absque ullo labore velut naturaliter ex consuetudine incipiet custodire,*

And all those precepts which formerly he had not observed without fear, he will now begin to keep by reason of that love, without any effort, as though naturally and by habit.

*Universus* or all pertains to what is done as a whole compared with the more common *omnis*, “precepts” not being mentioned here. *Formido* connotes dread with regard to observing (*obseruo* or to notice, wait for) these precepts presented as *universus* or in their entirety. In place of *formido*, the monk will exchange the *obseruo* associated with it for *custodio* or guarding both naturally and by habit, *naturaliter* and *consuetudo*, also as custom. Note that *custodio* has the verb *incipio* or to begin to show a break with the previous *obseruo* which required effort, *naturaliter* and *conusetudo* not requiring such effort or *labor*.

12-6. *non iam timore gehennæ, sed amore Christi et consuetudine ipsa bona et dilectatione virtutum. Quæ Dominus iam in operarium suum mundum a vitiis et peccatis Spiritu Sancto dignabitur demonstrare.*

No longer will his motive be the fear of hell, but rather the love of Christ, good habit and delight in the virtues which the Lord will deign to show forth by the Holy Spirit in His servant now cleansed from vice and sin.

*Consuetudo* is used a second time along with *amor* of Christ and opposed to fear of hell or Gehenna and is mentioned in 1.2. This is a place just outside Jerusalem where some of Israel’s kings had sacrificed their children. Along with *consuetudo* and *amor* is *dilectio* or the taking of delight in *virtus* which also means strength.

The Lord condescends to show or *digno* with *demonstro* or deems worthy as well as to describe to the monk as servant (*operarius*, a laborer) which implies it is done in the context of work. Actually the Holy Spirit is the agent effecting this *demonstro*, a prerequisite being that the *operarius* is clean (*mundus* also means neat, elegant) from both vice and sin, the form being *vitium* or blemish as well as imperfection. Thus the naturalness implied by *consuetudo* is the fruit of having followed through with the twelve *gradus* or steps of humility.

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### Scriptural References

(numbers eight and eleven have no references)

P-1. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. [Lk 14.11]

P-1. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other (tax collector and Pharisee); for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted. [Ps 18.14]

P-4. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! [Gen 28.12]

1-5. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. [Ps 139.2]

1-7. Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. [Ps 18.24]

1-8. Do not follow your base desires but restrain your appetites. [Sir 18.30]

1-9. There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. [Prov 16.25]

1-9. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none that does good. [Ps 53.1]

1-10. Lord, all my longing is known to you, my sighing is not hidden from you. [Ps 38.9]

1-11. Do not follow your base desires but restrain your appetites. [Ecc 18.30]

1-12. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. [Prov 15.13]

1-12. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who act wisely, who seek after God. [Ps 14.2]

1-12. They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; there is none who does good, no not one. [Ps 14.3]

1-12. These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you. [Ps 51.21]

2-1. For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. [Jn 6.38]

3-1. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. [Phil 2.8]

4-2. and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. [Mt 10.22]

4-2. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord! [Ps 27.14]

4-3. Nay, for your sake we are slain all the day long and accounted as sheep for the slaughter. [Ps 44.22]

4-3. For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep for the slaughter. [Rom 8.36].

4-4. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

[Rom 8.37]

4-5. For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. You laid affliction on our loins. [Ps 66.10-11]

4-6. You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us forth to a spacious place. [Ps 65.12]

4-7. on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren. [2Cor 11.26]

4-7. and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure. [1Cor 4.12]

5-2. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. [Ps 37.5]

5.2. Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! [Ps 106.1]

5-3. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord;" then you forgave the guilt of my sin. [Ps 32.5]

6-1. I was stupid and ignorant, I was like a beast toward you. Nevertheless I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. [Ps 73.22-23]

7-1. But I am a worm and no man; scorned by men and despised by the people. [Ps 22.6]

7-2. Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless. [Ps 88.15]

7-3. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes. [Ps 118.71]

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