

## The Liturgical Context of Ælfric's Homilies for Rogation

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Time does not pass capriciously in the Church, but cyclically. Time to a Christian is pregnant with memory and celebration. The ecclesiastical structure of time determines in part the liturgical content of human devotion, and monastic time is therefore ordered accordingly.<sup>1</sup> Monks are strictly regulated in the times of their prayers, and in their oblations and obligations. The *Regularis concordia*, for example, requires that the seven penitential psalms be sung during the winter at Prime.<sup>2</sup> But why these psalms, and why at Prime? Why a particular verse and not another? The order of prayer in a monastic office or a liturgy is neither haphazard nor accidental. The pericope, lection, gospel, collects, tropes, psalms,

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<sup>1</sup> E. H. van Olst notes that the Christian liturgy is premised on the 'datum that prayer does not arise from human desire but from God's desire'; E. H. van Olst, *The Bible and Liturgy* (Grand Rapids, 1991). See also Stephan Borgehammar, 'A Monastic Conception of the Liturgical Year', in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. by Thomas Heffernan and E. Ann Mather (Kalamzoo, 2001), pp. 13–14 (p. 13): 'We learn to experience not a ceaseless progression of days and nights but a pattern of meanings'. I would like to thank Sarah Keefer for her guidance and encouragement, Drew Jones for his help and generosity, and Jen Adams and Joe Black for their many helpful suggestions. Any errors are my own.

<sup>2</sup> *Regularis Concordia*, ed. by Dom Thomas Symons (London, 1953), p. xliii. The first three penitential psalms (6, 31, and 37) are said during the *Trina oratio*, said out loud when a brother first reaches the oratory after waking. The order of prayer was taken very seriously, and it was an offense to ignore it. The Northumbrian Priests' Law fines a priest if he sings the hours at an inappropriate time (no. 36), or if he fetches the chrism at an improper time (no. 8); *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (London, 1955), vol 1, §53, pp. 434–39.

hymns, and homily of a mass all fit together to fulfill the symbolic mandate of a particular moment in time. Examining how a given homily relates to that symbolic mandate may allow us a fuller appreciation of Old English homilies. By reading homilies in their liturgical context, we can observe how homilists dealt with broader liturgical themes. First, we can determine, even if vaguely, how the prayers of a Christian feast are interconnected thematically or symbolically. Then, we can inquire into how the liturgy could have affected compositions prepared for that day's feast. Homilies for Rogationtide, the Christian feast of atonement, by Ælfric of Eynsham, Anglo-Saxon England's greatest prose stylist, provide a particularly interesting place to consider how liturgy affects homilies.<sup>3</sup> Liturgical texts do not appear to have influenced Ælfric's homilies for Rogationtide, yet his homilies contain elements for which no other sources are known. I will argue that the liturgy of Rogationtide provides some of the themes that guided Ælfric as he composed.

To search out Ælfric's sources is also to inquire into his method of composition, to guess at the principles that guided him to some sources and away from others. Malcolm Godden has provided a remarkably full list of Ælfric's sources, and suggests that Ælfric relied on relatively few volumes to compose his homilies.<sup>4</sup> Another source, one that Godden calls 'liturgical texts', may be more fertile than we currently suppose. 'Liturgical texts' is a category under which Godden lists the Psalms, a 'line from an Office for the Assumption

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<sup>3</sup> I do not distinguish between homilies and sermons here. Milton McCormick Gatch defines a sermon as 'a general address on a religious theme', and a homily as 'an exiletical address on a passage of Scripture'. Ælfric often does both in the same work. Gatch, 'The Achievement of Ælfric and his Colleagues in European Perspective', in *The Old English Homily and its Backgrounds*, ed. by Paul Szarmach and Bernard F. Huppé (Albany, 1978), pp. 43–73 (p. 45).

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, EETS: SS, 18 (Oxford, 2002), p. xlv.

[. . .] and some words from a hymn for the Annunciation'.<sup>5</sup> I would like to explore that category, and to propose a closer association of Ælfric's homilies to their liturgical context. A homily, as part of a liturgy, is bound by the peculiarities of ecclesiastical time. It arises out of a particular festival, out of a scriptural reading for the day, or sometimes out of liturgical texts such as antiphons.<sup>6</sup> In an annual cycle of liturgy, homilies will often reflect on readings and themes proper (that is, specific) to a day or a season.<sup>7</sup> A Christmas homily might reflect on the promise of salvation; a homily at Easter, on the fulfillment of that promise. Topics that are proper to a day or a season, themes that are relevant to a point in time, are expressed throughout a liturgy. It is not too much to expect that a homily designed for a feast like Rogationtide echo the liturgy of that feast. In fact, one of Ælfric's resources was a homiliary that was, as Father Cyril Smetana writes, 'designed specifically for the liturgy.'<sup>8</sup>

It was (and is) important that a liturgy for any given day be thematically consistent. One can imagine that consistency is difficult to achieve simply because there are so many parts to a liturgy. Notwithstanding some variation, Anglo-Saxon liturgy was largely the

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<sup>5</sup> Godden, *Commentary*, p. lxii. Defining a source is no easy thing, and I refer the reader to Allen Frantzen's discussion of sources as they pertain to Anglo-Saxon studies: *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, 1990), pp. 62–95; and to Donald G. Scragg, 'Source Study', in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 39–58. The liturgical texts that I discuss might better be described as influences, rather than sources.

<sup>6</sup> One thinks, for example, of certain sermons by the twelfth-century Cistercian monk Aelred of Rievaulx. See *Aelred of Rievaulx: The Liturgical Sermons*, trans. by Theodore Berkeley and M. Basil Pennington (Kalamazoo, 2001), p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, ed. and trans. by Christopher A. Jones (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 144–49, §§70–80. See Jones' notes on pp. 217–28.

<sup>8</sup> Paul the Deacon's homiliary is described by Cyril L. Smetana, 'Paul the Deacon's Patristic Anthology', in Szarmach and Huppé, *Old English Homily*, pp. 75–97. Ælfric's version was possibly 'a shortened form adapted for monastic use' (p. 86).

liturgy of Rome. Some parts of the liturgy were common to every mass, some parts were proper to a mass on a particular day. The former is known as the *Ordinary* of the mass. The latter is known as the *Proper* of the mass, and was understood after the fourth century to be consistent with the larger theme(s) of the day.<sup>9</sup> Augustine, bishop of Hippo and perhaps the most influential Christian thinker for the Middle Ages, offers an exposition of Psalm 56 during his sermon on the Gospel of John. (Augustine was also author of the Middle Ages' most influential commentary on the Psalms.) The psalm and the gospel were both proper to the mass during which Augustine read his sermon.<sup>10</sup> 'Most opportunely', he comments, 'and by the Lord's disposition, it happens that the gospel chimes in with the psalm'.<sup>11</sup> Augustine

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<sup>9</sup> Until the Council of Carthage in AD 397, liturgical prayers were the uncensored inventions of local prelates. After Carthage, 'liturgical prayers would require official approval of some sort, and in 407 another synod of Carthage insisted that a collection (*collectio*) of *preces, praefationes, commendationes, and impositiones manuum*, composed under the supervision of the hierarchy, should become obligatory'; Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, trans. by William Storey and Neils Rasmussen (Portland, 1981), pp. 34–35. One is reminded of Bede's story of Caedmon, who also required doctrinal supervision before composing his poetry. See *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969; repr. 1992), IV, 24, pp. 414–15. Current Catholic catechesis is described in Chapter Two of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ottawa, 1992); section 1206 warns against liturgical diversity that threatens to damage ecclesiastical unity.

<sup>10</sup> Psalm are numbered according to the Catholic distribution, which follows the Greek and Vulgate Bibles.

<sup>11</sup> The lection is John 15. 12. Augustine, St Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, ed. Dekkers and Fraipont (Brepols, 1956), CCSL 39, p. 694, lines 25–26: 'opportune namque accidit, et illo procurante, ut ei consonaret euangelium'; trans. by Maria Boulding, 'Exposition of Psalm 56', in *Expositions of the Psalms*, trans. by Maria Boulding, 6 vols. (Hyde Park, NY, 2001), 3:103–19 (p. 103). Augustine did not believe that liturgy was purely symbolic; see Pier Franco Beatrice, 'Christian Worship', in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, 1999), pp. 156–64 (p. 158). But see D. R. Letson's assessment that homiletic digressions cohere through a general thematic unity; 'The Poetic Content of the Revival Homily', in Szarmach and Huppé, *Old English Homily*, pp. 139–56 (p. 147).

suggests that both coincidence and the Lord's disposition are at work in the coherence of the liturgy. More explicit about the inherent consistency or coherence of the liturgy is Amalarius of Metz (*ca* AD 775 – *ca* 850) in his preface to his *Liber officialis*, a work consulted by Ælfric while he composed his Rogationtide homilies.<sup>12</sup> In an eleventh-century manuscript, Salisbury, Cathedral Library 154, one reads, 'Scimus enim nichil agere in aecclesia imitando patres nostros secundum constitutionem illorum nisi omnia ordinate et rationem habentia' ('For we know that no things are done in church by imitation of our fathers and by their ordinance save that they all have a reason and are done by design').<sup>13</sup> Amalarius calls the liturgy a 'manifestatio domini' ('manifestation of the Lord'). The order and reason of ritual are not capricious, in other words, but cohere by design.

A conviction in a rational and ordered liturgy is not peculiar to a few commentators, nor was it treated lightly. The Gregorian sacramentary commissioned by Charlemagne and known as the *Hadrianum* was an important witness to early medieval liturgical practice. Benedict of Aniane corrected and updated it in the early ninth century, and wrote in his preface that those who refuse to use a Gregorian sacramentary are 'endangering their souls'.<sup>14</sup> Such danger was possible only if the coherence of the liturgy were considered integral to redemption. Benedict's warning is dire enough to suggest that the thematic or symbolic coherence of the liturgy for any given day was a serious matter. One wonders whether a sermon writer ran the risk of compromising the coherence of the liturgy with a poor sermon awkwardly wedged into an otherwise coherent liturgical experience. A more secular analogy

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<sup>12</sup> For example, in his sermon for the Monday of Rogationtide in the first series, *CH* I.18. See Godden, *Commentary*, p. 145.

<sup>13</sup> *A Lost Work by Amalarius of Metz*, ed. and trans. by Christopher A. Jones (London, 2001), pp. 183 and 230, his trans. This is an abridgment of the *Liber officialis* with interpolations.

<sup>14</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 80–92 (p. 88).

is a jazz composition in, say, the key of b-flat. A trumpeter taking a solo runs the risk of compromising the coherence of the composition by improvising in an inharmonious key. The coherence of a jazz song depends upon soloists submitting their improvisational urges to a governing key. This secular analogy notwithstanding, it is likely that Ælfric, in composing or selecting elements for his sermons, paid attention to the governing liturgy, which set the tone for the mass in which his sermons partook.

There is evidence to suggest that a liturgy was thought to cohere not only symbolically or thematically, but also supernaturally. Benedict claimed that an improperly executed liturgy could imperil the soul. Furthermore, a properly executed liturgy could positively affect earthly and heavenly reality. Augustine held that the sacraments were a vehicle of grace: ‘The use of material things, elevated to the level of sacrament, has the ability to work spiritual realities’.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, sacramental words have a supernatural effect, like an intercession for the soul of a dead relative. The spiritual effect of sacraments and liturgies in the economy of salvation cannot be physically measured or sensed—they are literally operating beyond nature. Christian Anglo-Saxons endowed the liturgy with a supernatural effect, with a power to change terrestrial reality. Certainly Rogationtide liturgy, as described below, sought to assuage terrestrial suffering by removing the spiritual causes of that suffering. Such confidence in the affective power of liturgy is not inconsistent with more remarkable instances of affective prayer, for example. The affective power of liturgy is not categorically distinct from the affective power of prayer, since liturgies are comprised in part of prayers. An invocation of the cross, according to a prayer in London, British Library,

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<sup>15</sup> Emmanuel J. Cutrone, ‘Sacraments’, *Augustine through the Ages*, pp. 741–747 (p. 745). This view is longstanding: see J. Rivière, ‘Sacrement’, *Dictionnaire pratique des connaissances religieuses*, ed. by J. Bricout, 6 vols (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1926), VI, 114. On Ælfric’s view of grace with respect to the sacraments, see Lynne Grundy, *Books and Grace: Ælfric’s Theology* (London, 1991), chapter 3.

Cotton Tiberius A. iii, will protect from enemies. Saint Tibertius was considered so holy that when he incanted his prayers of invocation over a sick man, the man was healed. Psalm verses incanted over a mixture of herbs and butter made the salve holy.<sup>16</sup> Ælfric speaks to liturgy's affective ability during the Rogationtide festival. In his Rogationtide 'Hortatory Sermon on the Efficacy of the Holy Mass', a variant of the Tuesday sermon, he describes how the mass-prayers of the priest Tunna burst the fetters of his enslaved brother Ymma.<sup>17</sup> Again, in his second Monday sermon, Ælfric reminds his audience that Elijah brought on a drought by prayer, and ended it by prayer (*CH* II.21, pp. 330–31). The point to be taken is that more depended upon the coherence of a liturgy than symbolic or thematic consistency. One wonders whether the spiritual and sometimes terrestrial efficacy of a mass depended upon a degree of liturgical coherence.

To invoke again the example of music, one wonders how detrimental to the efficacy of a mass an inharmonious sermon would have been. In other words, was Ælfric obliged by the inherent coherence of the liturgy to compose a sermon in harmony with liturgical themes? One could argue that the mass was efficacious not because of its coherent liturgy, but because of the singular potency of its prayers. It is, after all, the effective *mass-prayers* of Tunna that Ælfric emphasizes. Psalms comprise a large part of the liturgy. And, along with the Pater Noster and the Creed, psalms were considered potent prayers, and integral to the ritual of monastic life. Each psalm and many psalm verses have particular associations by which they

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<sup>16</sup> Phillip Pulsiano, 'Prayers, Glosses and Glossaries', *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Oxford, 2001), pp. 209–30, (pp. 211–12).

<sup>17</sup> *CH* II.20, pp. 190–98. References to the first series are to *CH* I. See Paul Szarmach, 'The Vercelli Homilies: Style & Structure', in Szarmach and Huppé, *Old English Homily*, pp. 241–67 (p. 249), concerning the 'efficacy of Christian worship'. See also the especially clear explanation by Janet Nelson, 'Ritual and Reality in the Early Medieval *Ordines*', in *The Materials, Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History*, ed. by Derek Brewer (Oxford, 1975), pp. 41–51.

were classed. Some psalms prompted God's clemency—the Rogationtide liturgy was also thought to prompt God's clemency. Alcuin of York (*ca* AD 735 – 804) wrote in his *De laude psalmodum* that he who sings the five penitential psalms 'will find that God's immediate clemency will illuminate [his] entire mind with spiritual joy and gladness'.<sup>18</sup> These five psalms are employed, like tools, for a specific spiritual effect. One doesn't say them, so much as *use* them. In fact, Carolingian prayer books speak about the eight uses of the psalms.<sup>19</sup> The efficacy of psalms was sufficiently established as a Christian tenet that Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical councils feared that psalms could be abused. The Council of Clofeshoe in 747 dedicated its twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh canons to remedy the misuse of psalms—they

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<sup>18</sup> '[. . .] and promise you great hope of God's indulgence'. Jonathan Black, 'Psalm Uses in Carolingian Prayerbooks: Alcuin and the Preface to *De psalmodum usu*', *Medieval Studies*, 64 (2002), 1–60 (p. 15), his trans. This derives from an Augustinian idea that those who pray should come to understand what they say, and in this understanding achieve blessedness. See Augustine's second exposition of Psalm 18. 1, in Augustine, *Enarrationes*, CCL 38, pp. 105–113; trans. by Boulding, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 2:204–14 (p. 204). Alcuin makes this clear in his *Enchiridion sive Expositio in Psalmos poenitentiales*, PL 100:569–96, p. 574 (345B): monks sing psalms in order to learn diligently from the senses 'ut sciant et intelligant corde quid ore et lingua resonent' ('in order that they know and understand by means of the heart what resonates by means of the mouth and tongue'). The consequence is a contrite and humble heart prepared to beseech God. Alcuin says that the abluion of one's penitential tears as one reads is cleansing, and is God's medicine (346A).

<sup>19</sup> Black, 'Psalm Uses', p. 2: '(1) to do penance, (2) to pray, or (3) to praise God; in times of (4) temptation, (5) world-weariness, (6) tribulation, or (7) regained prosperity; and (8) when one wishes to contemplate divine laws'. The same is true of prayer. See John Cassian, 'Ninth Conference: On Prayer', in *The Conferences*, trans. by Boniface Ramsey (Mahwah, NJ, 1997), IX.viii.1–3, pp. 335–36.



were being used to secure divine forgiveness for wrongdoing in lieu of penance.<sup>20</sup> Some of these same psalms are found in the Rogationtide liturgy.

Medieval Christians needed guidance in the proper use of these potent prayers, and they were helped by writers like John Cassian, a fourth-century Gaulish monk, Amalarius, and Rabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mainz in the ninth century. The guidance these writers offered found its way into the liturgy. Psalms and other prayers were coming to be explicated during the tenth century in the liturgy itself in a practice known as *troping*. As Mary Berry explains,

[T]his is the art by which the traditional chants of the Proper and Ordinary of the Mass were introduced, followed by, or interlaced with newly-composed passages, expanding and interpreting the meaning of the texts.<sup>21</sup>

A trope *explains* what a prayer *does*. The offertory prayer for Ascension Day, for example, is taken from Psalm 46. 6, ‘Ascendit Deus in iubilatione, et Dominus in uoce tubae, alleluia’ (‘The Lord ascends amid shouting, and God amid the blast of a trumpet, alleluia’). The tenth- or eleventh-century Winchester Troper adds, ‘Eleuatus est rex fortis in nubibus’ (‘The mighty

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<sup>20</sup> Catherine Cubitt remarks that psalms were being used to buy ‘spiritual relief in order, not to atone for the burden of sin, but to obtain greater freedom in wrongdoing’; *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils, c. 650–850* (London, 1995), p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Berry, ‘What the Saxon Monks Sang: Music in Winchester in the Late Tenth Century’, in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. by Barbara Yorke (Woodbridge, 1988; repr. 1997), pp. 149–60 (p. 150). On tropers in Anglo-Saxon England, see E. C. Teviotdale, ‘Tropers’, in *The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Richard W. Pfaff (Kalamzoo, 1995), pp. 39–44. Three Anglo-Saxon tropers are extant. For hymns newly introduced from the second half of the tenth century through the later Anglo-Saxon period, see Helmut Gneuss, *Hymnar und Hymnen in Englischen Mittelalter* (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 55–74. The dramatic element of the liturgy is explored by M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2002); I am indebted to him for his intriguing chapter on Rogationtide, pp. 191–209.

king is elevated into the heavens’).<sup>22</sup> The Winchester trope keeps to the same theme, but complicates slightly the theological implications of the psalm. A careful reader might wonder whether the trope’s passive form, *eleuatus est*, implies Christ’s passivity, while the psalm’s active *ascendit* implies Christ’s active participation in the Ascension. If Christ were elevated (in the passive), one might be inclined to ask, ‘Elevated by Whom?’ Tropes, along with hymns and collects, appear in a liturgical context, and in that context threaten to have real-world effect, such as offering incorrect teaching. In explaining the psalm’s active verb with a passive form, is the Winchester trope deepening our understanding of the Ascension or is it teaching incorrect doctrine? Ælfric warns, ‘Over the teachers is God’s ire most excited’.<sup>23</sup> And so one might infer that homilies and tropes were composed with careful attention to the liturgical context in which they were slated to appear. Whether the liturgy was thought effective on account of its coherence, or on account of the potency of its component prayers, Anglo-Saxon clerics had a pedagogical obligation to guide the faithful through the liturgical experience. For that reason, the harmony of a sermon with its liturgical context is as much a matter of correct teaching as it is a matter of liturgical coherence.

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<sup>22</sup> Walter Howard Frere, *The Winchester Troper* (London, 1894), p. 149. Early dating is by Frere, p. xxvii, for Bodley 775, ‘The Bodleian Troper’ or ‘Æthelred Troper’. But see Teviotdale, ‘Tropers’, pp. 43–44.

<sup>23</sup> ‘On the Greater Litany: Tuesday’, *CH* II.20, lines 183–184 (Godden, *Second Series*, p. 195). Speaking of the Old Testament, Ælfric writes, ‘ða lareowas, þe nellað heora lare nyman of þisum halgum bocum, ne heora gebysnunga, þa beod swilce lareowas, swa swa crist sylf sæde: *Cecus si ceco ducatum prestat, ambo in foueam cadent*’ (‘Teachers who do not want to take their teachings [doctrine] or examples from these holy books are the same teachers of whom Christ said, *If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit*’); *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, ed. by S. J. Crawford, EETS: OS 160 (London, 1922), p. 69, lines 1164–1167. Ælfric’s emphasis on teaching is explored by Fred Biggs, ‘Ælfric’s Andrew and the Apocrypha’, *JEGP*, 104 (2005), 473–94.

So what attention did Ælfric give to the liturgical context of his Rogationtide sermons? We can begin to answer this question by establishing the liturgical distinctives for Rogation days, and then to evaluate the extent to which Ælfric picks up on them in his Rogationtide homilies. Ælfric wrote two homilies entitled *In Letania maiore* to be preached on the Monday of Rogationtide. Seven more Rogationtide homilies by Ælfric are extant, nine in total. The Monday is part of a three-day feast of Gallic origin celebrated on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension (which always falls on a Thursday). Its Roman counterpart, one day rather than three in length, falls on April 25.<sup>24</sup> Ælfric wrote two series of homilies, and he provides sermons for each of the three days in both series, along with variants. The feast, also called Rogationtide (after the Latin *rogatio*, a request or entreaty), has a penitential character—something it shares with the Ember Days, for example. During Ember Days, which are three days of prayer and fasting during each season of the year, the liturgy is modified to accommodate a penitential theme.<sup>25</sup> For example, the joyous *alleluia* is

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<sup>24</sup> Joyce Hill, 'The *Litania maiores* and *minores* in Rome, Francia, and Anglo-Saxon England: terminology, texts, and traditions', *Early Medieval Europe*, 9 (2000), 211–46. Amalarius points this out in his *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, PL 105:985, 1067C.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office* (Toronto, 1982), p. 85. On the coherence of the liturgy of Ember Days, see van Olst, *The Bible and Liturgy*, pp. 79–80. The Roman liturgy is given by M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge*, 5 vols (Louvain, 1931–61), III, 248; cited by Michael Lapidge, ed. *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints* (London, 1991), p. 40. It is taken from a ninth-century ordinal of St Amand, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 974. Another litany can be found in the Romano-German Pontifical, a tenth-century work from Mainz, edited by C. Vogel and R. Elze, *Le Pontificale romano-germanique*, 3 vols (Vatican City, 1963–72). Very helpful in sorting out Rogationtide traditions is Gordon B. Sellers, 'The Old English Rogationtide Corpus: A Literary History' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Loyola University Chicago, 1996). On the significance of parts of the mass, Ælfric seems to have relied on Amalarius of Metz, *Liber officialis*, ed. by J. Hanssens in *Amalarii Episcopi Opera Liturgica Omnia* (Vatican City, 1948);

omitted from the mass during Ember Days since it is unsuitable to a penitential theme. During Rogationtide, only one *alleluia* of two is omitted, perhaps to imply that Rogationtide is a time for penance but also a time for hope.<sup>26</sup> Rogationtide liturgy is celebrated in anticipation that it will act as a supplication to God, that it will appease him, and that so appeased, he will lessen the burdens of the prayerful community.<sup>27</sup> The prayers of the feast were carefully enumerated. In the Benedictine *regula* governing Ælfric's monastic life, Mondays have a specific order of prayers, although there are variants. Variation during Rogationtide Monday is introduced early in the day during the mass.<sup>28</sup> This mass, as best as I can reconstruct it, may have comprised the following prayers (the items in italics are the *Proper*, the others are the Ordinary): Prayer at Altar, *Introit*, Kyrie Eleison, Gloria (omitted), *Prayer*, *Commemoration* (if any), *Epistle*, *Gospel*, Creed (omitted), *Offertory*, Oblation prayers, Lavabo, *Secret*, Preface, Sanctus, Canon of the Mass, *Communion*, *Postcommunion*, and the last Gospel. The Proper in the current Roman use (as well as in the Leofric Missal)

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Haymo of Auxerre; and possibly an anonymous *expositio missae* described by David Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 116–17.

<sup>26</sup> Adrian Fortescue writes that during Rogation days, 'It is not allowed to sing joyful chants'. He adds, 'Since it is Eastertide, *Alleluia* is added to the antiphon, versicle and response'; *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* (London, 1934), p. 369.

<sup>27</sup> Ælfric makes the point again in his sermon for Lent, *De oratione Moysi*, 'ac we ne scelon swa ðeah geswican þære bene / oðþæt se mild-heorta god us mildelice ahredde' ('but nevertheless we should not desist from prayer / until the compassionate God mercifully saves us'); *LS* 1:286, lines 36–37.

<sup>28</sup> The Proper of *Letania maiore* on VII Kalends Mai. I have recreated ninth-century observance, with reservations, from *The Leofric Missal*, ed. by F. E. Warren (Oxford, 1883), p. 107 (fols 126<sup>a</sup>–27<sup>b</sup>); and *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, ed. by H. A. Wilson (London, 1896), pp. 111–13 (fols 79<sup>r</sup>–80<sup>v</sup>). I have underlined phrases from the Jumièges Missal that differ from Leofric.

declares the Introit to be Psalm 17. 7 (also verses 2 and 3)<sup>29</sup>; the Prayer (or Collect) is 'Praesta quaesumus'<sup>30</sup>; there is no Commemoration prayer; the Epistle is James 5. 16–20; prior to the Gospel, an Alleluia and Psalm 17. 1<sup>31</sup> are sung; the Gospel is Luke 11. 5–13; the Offertory is Psalm 108. 30–31<sup>32</sup>; the Secret, 'Haec munera'<sup>33</sup>; the Communion prayer is Luke 11. 9–10<sup>34</sup>; and the Postcommunion prayer, 'Uota nostra'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> 'Exaudiuit de templo sancto suo uocem meam et clamor meus in conspectu eius introibit in aures eius' ('He heard my voice from his holy temple, and my shout went before his sight, even into his ears'). The verb *introire* of this verse echoes against the first utterances of a priest during the Ordinary: 'Introibo ad altare Dei' ('I will go in to the altar of God'). Verse 2, 'Diligam te Domine fortitudo mea' ('I will love thee, O Lord, my strength'); and verse 3: 'Dominus firmamentum meum et refugium meum et liberator meus Deus meus adiutor meus et sperabo in eum protector meus et cornu salutis meae et susceptor meus' ('The Lord is my foundation and my refuge and my deliverer, my God, my support, in whom I will trust, my guardian, and the horn of my salvation and my harbor').

<sup>30</sup> Amalarius, *De officiis*, PL 1067C, notes the prayers proper to the day. This prayer he calls the 'Prima oratio ad missam' ('the first prayer of the mass') and quotes, 'Praesta, quaesumus, omnipotens Dues, ut qui in afflictione nostra de tua pietate confidemus, contra aduersa omnia, tua semper protectione muniamur' ('Grant, we beseech thee, omnipotent God, that we who in our affliction trust in thy mercy, may always be sheltered by your protection from all adversaries.')

<sup>31</sup> 'Diligam te Domine fortitudo mea' ('I will love thee, O Lord, my strength').

<sup>32</sup> 'Confitebor Domino nimis in ore meo: et in medio multorum laudabo eum, quia astitit a dextris pauperis: ut saluam faceret a persequentibus animam meam, alleluia' ('I will confess beyond measure to God with my mouth, and in the midst of multitudes I will praise him, who shall stand at the right hand of the poor: he will save me from those who persecute my soul, alleluia').

<sup>33</sup> 'Haec munera, *quaesumus, domine* [*domine quaesumus*] et uincula nostrae prauitatis absoluant, et tuae nobis misericordiae dona concilient. Per dominum nostrum' ('May these offerings, we beseech thee, O Lord, loose our chains of depravity, and win for us the gifts of your mercy. Through our Lord').

<sup>34</sup> 'Petite et accipietis: quaerite, et inueietis: pulsate, et aperietur uobis: omnis enim qui petit, accipit: et qui quaerit, inuenit: et pulsanti aperietur, alleluia' ('Ask, and you shall be given: seek, and you shall find: knock,

The prayers of the Proper may have influenced portions of Ælfric's sermons for the Monday of Rogationtide. Ælfric adopted some of the images and phrases in his sermons from homiletic sources that addressed penitential themes. These sources can be found listed and cited in Godden's commentary, and include Augustine, Caesarius of Arles, Gregory the Great, Amalarius, and Paul the Deacon.<sup>36</sup> Other portions of Ælfric's sermons appear to come out of the Proper of Rogationtide Monday. The most obvious example of Ælfric's attention to the Proper is his extended discussion of the day's gospel in both of his sermons for the Monday. Other examples are not so obvious, and include the theme of poverty, a need for prayer, fundamentals of the Christian faith, and an emphasis on good works. These are topics common to Christian sermons and homilies, but their coincidence in Ælfric's Rogationtide sermons suggests that he may have been taking direction from the liturgy. Joyce Bazire and James Cross suggest a number of themes for Rogationtide: penance, care of the soul, catechism, learning, and right behavior.<sup>37</sup> Importantly, they do not include prayer, poverty, or good works.

Prayer is exceptionally important to Ælfric in these sermons. He begins his Monday sermon in the first series (*CH* I.18) by explaining that the feast requires Christians to pray, and that they should pray for wealth, health, peace, and forgiveness of sins. The fact is that

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and it shall be opened to you: indeed, everyone who asks, receives: and who seeks, finds: and to whomever knocks, it is opened, alleluia').

<sup>35</sup> 'Uota nostra, quesumus, domine, pio fauore prosequere, ut dum *tua dona* [dona tua] in tribulatione perce[i]pimus, de consolatione nostra in tuo amore crescamus. Per' ('May thy kind favor, we beseech thee, O Lord, follow our prayers, that when we receive thy gifts in [our] tribulation, we may increase through our consolation in thy love'). Compare *The New Roman Missal* (Chicago, 1937), pp. 578–81.

<sup>36</sup>Godden, *Commentary*, pp. 145–53, and pp. 519–29.

<sup>37</sup> Joyce Bazire and James E. Cross, eds., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies* (Toronto, 1982), p. xxiv; and Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, p. 191.

all feasts require Christians to pray. That Ælfric places special emphasis on prayer during Rogationtide must be accounted a likely effect of the thematic mandates of this particular feast. Following Amalarius, Ælfric relates the origin of the feast in Vienna where Bishop Mamertus commanded his people to fast, and thus stopped an earthquake, fire, and attacks by wolves and bears. This fast, Ælfric explains, was suggested to Mamertus by the story of Jonah.<sup>38</sup> Jonah saved Nineveh from destruction by exhorting the Ninevites to fast and pray, Ælfric says, unlike Sodom and Gomorrah, which God destroyed 'for heora leahtrum' ('on account of their crimes').<sup>39</sup> Like Jonah, Ælfric exhorts his audience to pray that they might be saved from God's anger. By enacting Jonah's exhortation during his own sermon, Ælfric implicitly asks the congregants to consider their association to Ninevites. Ælfric thus restages the historical moment of Nineveh's salvation, and implies the recurrence of that moment first in Vienna, and then potentially, if the congregants fulfill their role as penitent Ninevites, in Anglo-Saxon England. In words and by implication, Ælfric assures his listeners that their prayers will be answered. Perhaps to allay doubt about God the Father's forgiveness, he explains Luke 11, asking what father would give his son a stone if asked for bread?<sup>40</sup>

Poverty is another important theme in these sermons. From prayer, Ælfric shifts suddenly to poverty. A sudden shift in theme is startling, and seems inconsonant with his discussion of the economy of prayer and suffering so far. Ælfric asks the rich to share with

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<sup>38</sup> Paul Szarmach discusses Ælfric's modifications to the Jonah story in his 'Three versions of the Jonah story: an investigation of narrative technique in Old English homilies', *ASE*, 1 (1972), 183–92. Chief among these modifications is Ælfric's omission of the three days and nights that Jonah spent in the belly of the fish.

<sup>39</sup> *CHI*.18, l. 39 (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 318).

<sup>40</sup> The significance of each object in this passage is explained. Godden attributes these explanations to Augustine, Bede, and Haymo of Auxerre, although Amalarius makes the same points. Godden, *Commentary*, p. 150; Amalarius, *De Officiis*, 1068A.

the poor since ‘ealle we sind godes þearfan’ (‘We are all God’s poor’).<sup>41</sup> If the rich act well towards the poor, he explains, then God will act well towards the rich. Then, Ælfric argues that there is an existential need for both rich and poor, concluding that each is made for the other. The rich man offers sustenance to the poor, the poor man offers prayers for the rich. Even in his discussion of poverty, Ælfric is emphasizing prayer, but surely he is not suggesting that only the poor need pray. Instead, Ælfric is describing how prayer can act on behalf of others. In the analogy that informs this shift in theme, as the rich sustain the prayerful poor, so will God sustain the prayerful Anglo-Saxons. Ælfric takes much of this sermon from other sources, especially Amalarius. But unlike Amalarius, Ælfric equates the Vienna story with Nineveh, as does an anonymous Rogationtide homily found in the Vercelli Book (Homily 40), and as does Maximus of Turin in his Sermon 80, ‘De ieiuniis Niniuitarum’.<sup>42</sup> Like Ælfric, Maximus writes that the Ninevites fasted ‘ut iram diuinitatis, quam luxuriando prouocauerant, abstinendo lenirent’ (‘so that the anger of God which they had provoked through extravagance, they would soften through abstinence’). Ælfric is not following Maximus too closely here, since Maximus’s *luxuria* is not Ælfric’s wealth, but lasciviousness and excess. Ælfric’s discussion of wealth and poverty in this sermon is unlikely to have arisen out of the fallacious implication that wealth brings on the ire of God. Nor is Ælfric’s declared interest here in *luxuria*.

Two other seemingly anomalous themes are an emphasis on works and defining who is and is not a Christian. The latter theme is to be distinguished from catechizing those who are already considered Christians. In his second series, Ælfric begins his Monday sermon (*CH* II.19) by explaining that Christians need to be taught, especially to love God. One is

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<sup>41</sup> *CH* I.18, l. 179 (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 323).

<sup>42</sup> Bazire and Cross, *Rogationtide*, p. 10. The sermon of Maximus is edited by Almut Mutzenbecher (Turnhout, 1962) in *CCSL* 23: 332–34.



commanded to love thy neighbor. Ælfric limits neighbors to ‘þa ðe þurh geleafan us gelenge beoð, and ðurh cristendom us cyððe to habbað’ (‘those who through belief are related to us, and through [Christendom] are allied to us’).<sup>43</sup> The definition of who is and who is not a Christian is therefore very important to the salvation of the community. Ælfric is emphasizing the need for Christians to understand the fundamentals of their faith, for it is faith and often faith alone that distinguishes them from their neighbors.<sup>44</sup> Yet any liturgical catechesis presupposes that those gathered before Ælfric are Christians who nevertheless fail to understand, or barely understand the fundamentals of their own faith. Perhaps this tension between understanding and faith compels Ælfric to emphasize a need for good works, to say that the love of God manifests itself in good works. Few sources have been proposed for this sermon, and Ælfric’s emphasis on defining the Christian and on his good works seems, like Ælfric’s emphasis on poverty, somewhat capricious. If we look away from the liturgy to Ælfric’s bookshelves, one possible source for Ælfric’s emphasis on the importance of works is Jerome. Jerome’s commentary on Jonah is significant to Ælfric’s understanding of Rogationtide. In his commentary, Jerome remarks on 4. 10, ‘Et uidet Deus opera eorum’ (‘and God looked on their works’). God, says Jerome, looked on their works, but did not hear their words.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps accordingly, Ælfric lays a similar stress on works, although he is much more hopeful than Jerome about the efficacy of prayer. Jerome, too, makes a connection

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<sup>43</sup> CH II.19, lines 11–12 (Clemoes, *Second Series*, p. 180).

<sup>44</sup> One thinks here of the anonymous second-century letter to Diognetus, long thought to be by Justin Martyr. The author writes, ‘The difference between Christians and the rest of mankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. Christians do not live apart in separate cities of their own, speak any special dialect, nor practice any eccentric way of life [ . . . ]. [They] conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet, and other habits’. *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. by Maxwell Staniforth and Andrew Louth (London, 1987), pp. 139–51 (p. 144).

<sup>45</sup> Jerome, *Commentaria in Ionam*, PL 25:1117B–1152B, at 1144C.

between the pleading of Nineveh and that of Sodom and Gomorrah, a connection Ælfric also makes in his first sermon.<sup>46</sup> Incidentally, in the midst of Ælfric's second Monday sermon, he uses the figure of a bird with wings of love to describe the soul; Jerome says that Jonah is a *columba*, dove.<sup>47</sup>

But we need not look exclusively to Jerome, since Ælfric's emphasis on prayer, poverty, good works, and Christian doctrine might also be explained by looking to the liturgy. For example, Ælfric speaks of a need for prayer; the pericope of the mass, Luke 11. 5–13, also deals with prayer. Perhaps the most productive influence on Ælfric's Rogationtide sermons is the procession of Rogationtide, during which penitents march with holy relics between the hours of Terce and None, from one station to another.<sup>48</sup> The Leofric Missal and the Missal of Robert of Jumièges direct that the Roman stations be followed. These stations would likely have been built for the feast in Anglo-Saxon England. Beginning at a station for St Laurence, penitents would have moved to stations portraying St Valentine, the Milvian Bridge, and the Holy Cross, then finally to the atrium of a church before entering and celebrating Mass.<sup>49</sup> This procession takes its liturgical order from the physical geography of Rome. The Roman procession of 25 April begins at the church of St Laurence in Lucina, and moves along the Flaminian Way past the celebrated fourth-century church of St Valentine's,

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<sup>46</sup> CH II.19 (Godden, *Second Series*, pp. 182–83); and Jerome, *In Ionam*, 1120D.

<sup>47</sup> Jerome, *In Ionam*, 1120D. This connection between a bird and the soul is not noted in Robert DiNapoli's useful *An Index of Theme and Image to the Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: Comprising the Homilies of Ælfric, Wulfstan, and the Blickling and Vercelli Codices* (Frithgarth, 1995), s.v. 'Birds' and 'Dove'.

<sup>48</sup> Each station in the procession houses a relic, making it a spiritual place, a 'gastlice gemotstowe'. Bazire and Cross, Homily 5: 'our ghostly meeting place is in the area around our relics, as much in the church as outside as in any place in which they are set'. See also Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, p. 201.

<sup>49</sup> Another word commonly used for the atrium of a church is *Paradisum*, Paradise, used in Latin in Ælfric's translation of *Genesis*. Intriguingly, Ælfric describes a vision of paradise in one of his Rogationtide sermons.

the first stop for pilgrims on that road. Then, over the Milvian Bridge and along the Claudian Way, the pilgrims walk alongside the Tiber to the *Campus Neronis*, and raise a cross—this is where pagans once processed to sacrifice to the god Robigus, preserver of grain.<sup>50</sup> The processing pilgrims end up in the church of St Peter, to whom special prayers are offered.<sup>51</sup> In Rome, the focus of the festival is on the power of prayer, not on works or fasting. After Pope Leo III (AD 795–816) adopted the Gallic three-day feast, he abolished the fasting which forms so central a part of the Anglo-Saxon rite.<sup>52</sup>

The theme of poverty is raised early on during the procession. In the Sarum Processional, which is convenient (if late) for reconstructing the Anglo-Saxon procession, congregants are directed to begin at None with the antiphon ‘Exurge, Domine’.<sup>53</sup> The psalm is 43 in the Vulgate numbering, ‘We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us’. In keeping with the theme of the day, this psalm asks God to awake, and to stop the

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<sup>50</sup> *Dictionnaire Pratique*, s.v. ‘Litanie majeure’. Lat. *robigo* means ‘blight’. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, calls these ‘stational churches’, p. 84.

<sup>51</sup> In the prayer preceding Mass in the Leofric Missal, Mary is substituted for Peter, who appears in the Missal of Robert of Jumièges. This may be because, as in the Sarum missal, a high mass for Mary is said on Rogationtide Tuesday. *The Sarum Missal in English*, trans. by Frederick E. Warren (London, 1911), s.v. There was a belief that Christ, during the forthcoming Ascension, exalts Mary in heaven above the angels. See *CH* I.30, p. 431; and Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, CSASE, 2 (Cambridge, 1990), p. 237. Assumption seems to be an important theme: Elias (whom Ælfric equates with Elijah) also figures in Rogationtide sermons, and he, too, was assumed. See Bazire and Cross, Homily 2.

<sup>52</sup> *New Roman Missal*, pp. 1668–69.

<sup>53</sup> *Processionale ad usum insignis praeclarae ecclesiae Sarum* (Leeds, 1882), pp. 103–21. Also, the *Liber usualis*, p. 835.

suffering he brings on his people.<sup>54</sup> (The psalm also speaks of the importance of fathers, a topic Ælfric also addresses at length.) Augustine remarks that this psalm reminds us that God ‘chose to turn away from his people, or so it seemed, with the result that his holy ones were mowed down in widespread slaughter’.<sup>55</sup> After an invocation of the suffering of the people, a prayer for St Laurence follows:

*Ad sanctam laurentium.* Mentem familiae tuae, quaesumus, domine, intercedente beato laurentio martyre tuo, et munere conpunctionis aperi, et largitate tuae pietatis exaudi. Per dominum nostrum.

(*To Saint Laurence.* ‘We beseech you Lord, with blessed Laurence, your martyr, interceding, reveal your mind to your servants, and through the offering of remorse, and through the gift of your mercy, hear us. Through Christ our Lord’.)<sup>56</sup>

St Laurence (*Laurentius*) suffered martyrdom for presenting the poor and the sick to the Prefect of Rome as the treasures of the church. This was commemorated in a famous hymn by the poet Prudentius, and in *De officiis* by Ambrose of Milan, who reports the saint’s words: ‘Hi [pauperes] sunt thesauri ecclesiae’ (‘These are the treasures of the church’).<sup>57</sup> The prayer to Saint Laurence reminds us that those who pray on Rogationtide also suffer impoverishment and affliction. With this prayer, they become the gifts of the church offered by the intercessing spirit of St Laurence. Ælfric makes reference to the poor and the sick in

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<sup>54</sup> Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, 2003), p. 362. See King Alfred’s *tituli* to the relevant Old English psalms; Patrick O’Neill, *King Alfred’s Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

<sup>55</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes*, CCSL 38, p. 482, lines 10–12: “quasi auerterit faciem suam a gemitibus eorum, quasi oblitus sit eos, quasi ipse non sit Deus.” Trans. by Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 2:265. .

<sup>56</sup> Culled from the *Leofric Missal* and the *Missal of Robert of Jumièges*; see above, note 28.

<sup>57</sup> H. Leclercq, ‘Saint Laurent’, *DACL*, ed. by F. Labrod and H. Leclercq, 15 vols (Paris, 1929), VIII, 2. See also Ambrose, *De Officiis* II, xxviii; *PL* 16, p. 148.

both his Monday sermons. In one he writes, ‘Gif hwa ðearfan forsihð. he tælð his scyppend; Be untrumum mannum. se ælmihtiga cwæð. Ic ðreage and swinge. Þa ðe ic lufige’ (‘If any one despises the poor, he calumniates his creator. Of sick men the Almighty said, “I chastise and scourge those whom I love”’).<sup>58</sup> And, in another Rogationtide sermon, ‘ealle we sind godes þearfan’ (‘We are all God’s poor’).<sup>59</sup> By invoking poverty in liturgical proximity to this prayer to St Laurence, Ælfric is able to imply a connection between the suffering of his people, the place of the poor in Anglo-Saxon society, and the intercessory role of St Laurence.

Ælfric speaks about poverty in the context of the Rogationtide liturgy, and of Laurence’s donation of the poor in his sermon on Laurence (*CH* I.29, p. 422). Ælfric apparently takes that sermon on Laurence largely from the Cotton-Corpus legendary, which in turn is based on an anonymous passion.<sup>60</sup> There, Ælfric reports that Laurence gave the treasures of the church to the poor, and said of the poor, ‘hi sind þa ecan maðmas’ (‘they are the eternal treasures’)<sup>61</sup>. In Bede’s *De temporum ratione liber*, which relates a history of the world, under the entry for the year 4472 *anno mundi*, Bede writes that Pope Symmachus built a house dedicated to saints Peter, Paul, and Laurence, a house for the poor.<sup>62</sup> Ælfric likely knew this text, as well as Prudentius’ poem celebrating Laurence, which discusses Laurence’s relation to the poor of Rome (it is the second song of the *Peristephanon*). Eight manuscripts

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<sup>58</sup> *CH* II.19, lines 245–47 (Godden, *Second Series*, pp. 187–88).

<sup>59</sup> See n. 40 above.

<sup>60</sup> See Godden, *Commentary*, pp. 238–47. The Cotton-Corpus legendary may not have been Ælfric’s chief source for such *vitae*. See Biggs, ‘Ælfric’s Andrew’, pp. 477–78.

<sup>61</sup> *CH* I.29, lines 113–114 (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 422).

<sup>62</sup> *De temporum ratione liber*, ed. by C. W. Jones, *CCSL* 123B, cap. 66, line 1686.

that contained all or part of the poem are extant from Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>63</sup> Whether Ælfric took a connection between Laurence and the poor directly or indirectly, or whether he or a source is responsible for that connection, his mention of poverty in the midst of a liturgy that includes a prayer to Laurence is more than coincidental. More importantly, whether his discourse on poverty is Ælfric's invention or not, his sermon is tied thematically through Laurence to prayers of the Rogationtide liturgy.

After Psalm 43 and a prayer to Laurence, the liturgy continues to evoke its penitential theme. In the modern liturgy, the antiphon is followed by a *Kyrie eleison* and a litany of saints. The litany itself evokes penance. As Michael Lapidge comments, 'From its very beginning, litanic prayer was used for penitential purposes'.<sup>64</sup> Early medieval liturgical practice is illustrated by two continental exemplars. They are the primary witnesses to the

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<sup>63</sup> Godden does not include Prudentius in his 'Summary List of Sources', *Commentary*, pp. xlvi–lxii. The extant manuscripts are Cambridge Corpus Christi College 23.1 (Gneuss 38, s. x<sup>ex</sup>, prov. southern England), 223 (Gneuss 70, s. ix<sup>3/4</sup>, prov. Arras, Saint-Vaast) and 448 (prologue only, Gneuss 114, s. xi/xii, prov. southern England); Durham Cathedral Library B. IV. 9 (Gneuss 246, s. x<sup>med</sup>, prov. Durham); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auctarium F.3.6 (Gneuss 537, s. xi<sup>1</sup>, prov. Exeter); Oxford, Oriel College 3 (Gneuss 680, s. x<sup>ex</sup>, prov. Christ Church, Canterbury); Boulogne-sur-Mer Bibliothèque, Municipale 189 (Gneuss 805, s. x/xi, prov. Christ Church Canterbury, and its Old English gloss: s. xi<sup>in</sup>, prov. Saint-Bertin); and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 8085 (Gneuss 889.5, s. ix<sup>med</sup>, prov. France). Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001). The fifth item is also found on the donation list of Bishop Leofric of Exeter. At his death in 1072, Leofric donated his personal library to Exeter Cathedral. One of those books was listed as 'liber Prudentii de martyribus', identified by Michael Lapidge as the *Peristephanon*. Michael Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists From Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. by Mary P. Richards (New York, 1994), pp. 87–167, item X.37, p. 135. (Another item on this list is Amalarius' *Liber officialis*, now Cambridge University, Trinity College MS B.2.2 of the second half of the tenth century.)

<sup>64</sup> Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 46.

Roman liturgy of Rogationtide. A ninth-century ordinal of St Amand (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 974), directs the poor to leave the almshouse, process with a cross, sing the *Kyrie eleison*, and then ask for the prayers of Christ and Mary. A litany follows. In order, the celestial powers invoked are Christ, Mary, St Peter, St Paul, St Andrew, St John, St Stephen, St Laurence, the saint who is patron to the church in which the mass is celebrated, and all the saints.<sup>65</sup> A second continental example, the eleventh-century Romano-German pontifical, contains this same litany. Unfortunately, we do not know at what point during the Anglo-Saxon procession a litany was recited. The Sarum use puts the litany after the seven penitential psalms, and before a series of prayers uttered prior to entering the church.

The procession that follows these prayers has symbolic relevance to Ælfric's sermons, especially as concerns his catechetical theme. The procession is meant to demonstrate the coordinated and directed advance of the church (that is, of believers). In part, the procession is also a means of demonstrating the limits of the church—who is, and who is not a member. According to the Sarum use, an antiphon begins the procession: 'Surgite sancti de mansionibus uestris; loca sanctificate, plebum benedicite, et nos humiles peccatores in pace custodite, alleluia' ('Rise, Holy One, from your dwellings; sanctify these places, bless the people, and watch over us humble sinners in peace. Alleluia'). The procession then moves out singing Psalm 66: 'May God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us'.<sup>66</sup> Patristic commentators say that the psalm's 'us' indicates that this psalm is a

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<sup>65</sup> Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 40.

<sup>66</sup> Alternative antiphons include Psalm 131, 'Lord, remember for David all his affliction'; Psalm 121, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord'; Psalms 67, 'Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him'; and Psalm 68, 'Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul'.

benediction called for by the whole people, rather than one given by a priest.<sup>67</sup> Augustine concludes of this psalm that what gives us joy is ‘the devotion of those who confess and the deeds of those whose lives are upright’.<sup>68</sup> Like the procession itself, the psalm is thought to emphasize the body of believers, those who confess Christianity. As we have seen, Ælfric spends a good deal of time in his Rogationtide sermons discussing who is and who is not a Christian. Moreover, the activity of the procession—its movement—is significant of a need for an active life in faith. Similarly, Ælfric writes that Christians earn the consolation of heaven by doing good: ‘we geearnian þæt ece lif mid gode’ (‘we earn eternal life with good deeds’).<sup>69</sup> Cassiodorus comments on this psalm that a Christian cannot earn God’s blessing by merit alone, but needs prayer and confession.<sup>70</sup> Again, Ælfric says of God, ‘He commanded us also to be watchful in prayers, repeatedly praying with bold faith, that we may escape from future harm.’<sup>71</sup> Ælfric emphasizes, like this liturgy’s Psalm 66, the blessings possible through prayer. After Psalm 66, two psalm antiphons follow: 131. 1, ‘memento

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<sup>67</sup> A benediction given by a priest is illustrated in Numbers 6. 24–27, a blessing by Aaron; Terrien, *Psalms*, p. 483. Augustine likens God in this blessing of 66. 2 to a farmer ‘compluenti nos et colenti’ (‘who sends rain on us and cultivates us’). Augustine, *Enarrationes*, CCSL 39, p. 856, lines 14–15; trans. by Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 3:307. Perhaps coincidentally, Rogation processions includes the blessing of fields and cattle.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Et quam non delectemur nisi profectibus uestris, in istis autem laudibus quam periclitemur, ille nouerit [...]’ (‘God knows that it is your progress, and nothing else, that delights us’); Augustine, *Enarrationes*, CCSL 39, p. 868, lines 53–55; trans. by Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 3:323.

<sup>69</sup> CH II.19, line 298 (Godden, *Second Series*, p. 189). See also CH I.19, lines 174–175: ‘geearnian þæt ece rice and þa ecan blisse mid gode’ (Clemons, *First Series*, p. 331).

<sup>70</sup> Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, trans. by P. G. Walsh, 3 vols (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), II, 117.

<sup>71</sup> CH II.19, lines (Godden, *Second Series*, p. 188): ‘He het us eac beon on gebedum wacole gelomlice us biddende mid bealdum geleafan þæt we moton forfleon ða towardan frecednysse’.



Domine David et omnis mansuetudinis eius' ('O Lord, remember David, and all his meekness'), and 121. 1, 'laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi in domum Domini ibimus' ('I rejoiced in the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord'). These antiphons are also steeped in Patristic commentary. Cassiodorus notes that 131. 1 implies God's patience, and Augustine remarks that the psalm calls for our humility and, furthermore, is not the voice of one man singing, but of all who are in the body of Christ.<sup>72</sup> Like Psalm 66, this last antiphon stresses the body of the church, and perhaps makes necessary Ælfric's explicit delineation in his sermons on Rogationtide of who precisely belongs to Christ's Body.

The role of prayer in securing peace is now stressed once more. The processing church comes to its next station, which requires a prayer to St Valentine and a request for grace in return for penance:

*Ad s. ualentinum.* Deus, qui culpas delinquentium districte, feriendo percutis, fletus quoque lugentium non recuses, ut qui pondus tuae animaduersione[-is] cognouimus, etiam pietatis gratiam sentiamus.

(*To St Valentine.* 'God, you who firmly strike down the sins of offenders, do not refuse the tears of the mourners, as we who recognize the weight of your reproach, let us also know the grace of your mercy'.)<sup>73</sup>

The reference to tears and to the reciprocity implicit in their offering recalls Psalm 6. 9–10, 'exaudiuit Dominus uocem fletus mei / exaudiuit Dominus deprecationem meam / Dominus orationem meam suscepit' ('The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath

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<sup>72</sup> Cassiodorus, *Psalms*, 3:322; Augustine, *Enarrationes*, CCSL 40, p. 1898, lines 1–3: 'In isto psalmo commendatur nobis humilitas servi Dei et fidelis, cuius uoce cantatur, quod est uniuersum corpus Christi.' Verse four, which refers to tribes, speaks to the delineation of the faithful, as Ælfric has done.

<sup>73</sup> See note 28 above.

heard my supplication: the Lord hath received my prayer'). This psalm is the first of the Penitential Psalms mentioned above. Cassiodorus comments in respect of these verses that persistent prayer 'appeases [God] by its insistence'.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, in his first Monday sermon, Ælfric writes that even though there might be some delay in God's response, 'ne sceole we for ði þære bene geswican' ('we should not on that account desist from prayer').<sup>75</sup> And further, 'Ælc þæra þe geornlice bitt, and þære bene ne geswicð, þam getiðað god þæs ecan lifes' ('To everyone who eagerly asks, and does not cease from prayer, God will grant everlasting life').<sup>76</sup> The tradition of Patristic commentary on Psalm 6, represented by Cassiodorus, seems to inform Ælfric's understanding of insistent prayer found in his sermons.

At this point in the procession, participants have considered several themes: an amelioration of suffering, the body of the church, and a need for prayer. These themes are reiterated in the next antiphon, which sets the faithful if suffering church against the enemies of God. The Sarum use directs that an antiphon from Psalm 67. 2 be sung: 'Exsurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici eius et fugiant qui oderunt eum a facie eius' ('Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Him flee before His face'). This antiphon recalls *surgite* from the opening prayer of the procession, and thereby compels the prayerful to compare them. The first prayer calls directly on God to rise, this antiphon asks indirectly that God arise. The difference in mood may point to another difference: the first is a call by all the people, the second is a benediction by a priest. Symbolically, and as a recollection of the appointment of Aaron as high priest in the desert, this benediction suggests that the body of faithful now speaks through one sanctified voice. As to the second phrase in this antiphon,

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<sup>74</sup> Cassiodorus, *Psalms*, 1:97.

<sup>75</sup> Ælfric, *Sermones catholici*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols (Hildesheim, 1983), I, 248. This phrase does not seem to be in Clemoes, *CH I.18*, pp. 319–20, where Thorpe's page 248 is presumably collated. I cannot explain Clemoes' apparent omission.

<sup>76</sup> *CH I.18*, lines 94–96 (Clemones, First Series, p. 320).

Cassiodorus comments that the psalmist ‘appropriately proclaims what is to befall the Lord’s enemies, and what is to happen to the faithful at the judgment to come’.<sup>77</sup> In one Monday sermon, Ælfric says that Christians will not rise from ignorance or darkness to eternal life if they do not believe in the Trinity.<sup>78</sup> We see here a rationale for Ælfric’s emphasis on fundamental Christian doctrine—by their faith will Christians be identified at the judgment to come. As to the third phrase in this antiphon, to remind the faithful of the enemies of God, Ælfric describes in his Tuesday sermon the demons that appear to Fursa; and, to reinforce the reality of the heavenly realm, Ælfric describes paradise as seen by men who are ‘of þissum life gelædde’ (‘led out of this [earthly] life’).<sup>79</sup> In a physical analogy, the processors will be heading back to their church, whose entrance is called the *Paradisum*, and which will soon house the repentant body of processing Christians. The antiphon thus reminds Christian participants literally and figuratively that their suffering has a larger purpose and a distant goal.

Speaking to the theme of suffering’s larger purpose, Psalm 68. 1 and 68. 17 follow. This psalm is traditionally seen as prophetic of Christ’s suffering and passion. Cassiodorus remarks that the first portion of the psalm is spoken in the voice of Christ who ‘begs the Father to grant Him safety, since He has suffered many hardships and attacks undeservedly[. . .]’.<sup>80</sup> The verses read, ‘Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul’, and ‘Answer me, O Lord; for thy mecy is good: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies turn thou unto me’. Ælfric consoles his audience in his second Monday

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<sup>77</sup> Cassiodorus, *Psalms*, 2:121.

<sup>78</sup> *CH* I.18, lines 63–65 (Clemons, *First Series*, p. 319).

<sup>79</sup> *CH* II.21, line 113 (Godden, *Second Series*, p. 203). The dream of Fursa is described in *CH* II.20 (Godden, *Second Series*, pp. 190–198).

<sup>80</sup> Cassiodorus, *Psalms*, 2:141.

sermon with the story of Job, whom God forgave (*CH* II.19, p. 188). He tells them to forbear, as Job did, through many harms that come to middle earth over the children of men. In another Rogationtide sermon, Ælfric describes how Christ prayed to his father and asked for forgiveness (*CH* II.22, p. 206). The waters of Psalm 68 are reflected in the next prayer over the Milvian Bridge, which echoes Joel's call to repentance (2. 17, *parce populus tuo*, 'spare your people'). It asks for the redemption offered by God, specifically in the form of Christ: 'Parce, domine, quaesumus, parce populo tuo, et nullis iam patiaris aduersitatibus fatigari, quos precioso filii tui sanguine redemisti' ('Spare, O Lord, we beseech thee, spare your people, and now permit them to be worn down by no adversity, whom you have redeemed by the precious blood of your son'). Ælfric, too, reminds his audience that it is through Christ alone that redemption comes (*CH* II.22, p. 207 and p. 209). The next station, the cross, requires a prayer that speaks to themes already familiar to participants in the procession: redemption had through suffering and a need for mercy and consolation: 'Deus, qui culpas nostras piis uerberibus percutis, ut a nostris iniquitatibus emundes, da nobis et de uerbere tuo proficere, et de tua citius consolatione gaudere' ('O God, you who strike down our sins with righteous blows in order to cleanse us of our iniquities, grant to us that we benefit on account of your blows, and rejoice swiftly in your consolation'). Although this prayer echoes the themes surrounding the liturgical psalms, punishment was a pedagogic technique, as illustrated at the beginning of Ælfric's *Colloquy*. Punishment can be retributive, but it can also indicate that the recipient has done wrong. To punish a man is also to demand that he admit his wrongdoing. Augustine comments that Psalm 68 (which is sung near the end of the Rogationtide procession) calls for penance since 'the sinner who has lost the ability to confess is truly dead'.<sup>81</sup> Ælfric emphasizes the importance of confession and prayer in the

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<sup>81</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes*, *CCSL* 39, p. 916, lines 22–23: 'Perditit enim confessionem; uere mortuus est'; trans. by Boulding, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 3:382. To Augustine, the waters represent the crowds who

process of redemption, apparently even in the life of Christ. He writes, 'Nu forgeaf se almihtiga fæder his ancennedan suna' ('Now the almighty Father forgave his only-begotten son').<sup>82</sup>

God's mercy is a topic stressed in both the procession and in Ælfric's sermons. At the next station, the processors have approached their church. The prayer *In atrio* reads, 'Adesto, domine, supplicationibus nostris, et sperantes in tua misericordia, intercedente beato petro apostolo tuo, caelesti protege benignus auxilio' ('Be at hand, gracious Lord, for our supplications, protect us who are hopeful on account of your mercy and through the intercession of the blessed apostle Peter with heavenly aid'). *Adesto* recalls Psalm 144. 18, 'Prope est Dominus omnibus inuocantibus eum' ('The Lord is near to all who call upon him'), something Ælfric will also claim in his sermons for the day. Psalm 68 closes with a promise to sing a song to the Lord, and an expectation that all of creation will sing praise as well. Then, as a ward against mortality in time of war, an antiphon follows: 'Free, O Lord, your people from the hand of death, and defend this people by your right hand, that living we may bless thee, Lord, our God', followed by Psalm 8, 'O Lord, our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth'. This beseeching antiphon, followed by the psalmic praise of God is reminiscent of the movement of the previous psalm, as well as of Psalms 55 and 56, both of which are Proper to this procession. Both ask God to pity men in return for their praise. Ælfric in his sermons for these days will continually stress God's mercy as well as a need to pray. Psalm 8 picks up on the last strophe of Psalm 68, witnessing the marvel of creation as itself praise of the Lord. At the same time, Psalm 8 illustrates the relative smallness of man, echoing the answer God gives Job after intense suffering, alluded to in Ælfric's second

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persecute Christ.

<sup>82</sup> CH II.22, lines 44–45 (Godden, *Second Series*, p. 207).

Monday sermon.<sup>83</sup> The psalm also speaks about the glory of the Lord's ascension above the heavens, also appropriate for a feast that ends at Ascension.

The themes of the procession are now gathered together during the mass, when they will be reiterated in part by the Proper and in part by Ælfric. Once the processors have passed through the *Paradisum* and back into the church, mass begins. As described above, the prayer following the introit beseeches God for his protection, and trusts that his mercy will follow upon the congregants' affliction. Following the gospel and Offertory, the prayer known as the Secret asks again for God's mercy. The Prefatory prayer speaks about the logic of this service: 'Aeterne deus. Et te auctorem et sanctificatorem ieiunii conlaudare, per quod nos liberas a nostrorum *debitis* peccatorum. Ergo suscipe ieiunantium pr[a]eces, atque ut nos a malis omnibus propitiatus eripias, iniquitates nostras, quibus merito affligimur, placatus absolue' ('Eternal God, both Father and sanctifier of fasting, we praise you on account of which you free us from the debts of our sins. Therefore receive the prayers of those fasting, so that you, having been placated, take us away from all our sins, absolve us of our iniquities, by which we are deservedly afflicted'). At this point, the various themes of the procession and its prayers have been comprehended in the Prefatory prayer.

The exchange of prayerful fasting for release from suffering is central to the Rogationtide liturgy. Since God will undoubtedly fulfill His portion of the bargain, a successful exchange depends upon the promises of men, on the vows made in their prayers.

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<sup>83</sup> The psalm's title speaks of winepresses, which Augustine says indicate churches: 'Torcularia ergo possemus accipere ecclesias'. Churches separate the good from the evil according to the intentions of one's heart. Augustine, *Enarratione*, CCSL 38, p. 49, lines 5–19; trans. by Boulding, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 3:129.

Cassian calls prayer a kind of oath or vow.<sup>84</sup> In this vein, we might consider the benediction of the mass:

Omnipotens deus deuotionem uestram dignanter intendat, et suae uobis benedictionis dona concedat. Amen. Indulgeat uobis mala omnia, quae gessistis, et tribuat ueniam quam ab eo deposcitis. Amen. Sicque ieiunii uestri, et precum uota suscipiat, ut a uobis aduersa omnia, quae peccatorum retributione meremini, auertat, et donum in uobis spiritus paraclyti infundat. Amen.

(May the Omnipotent God kindly hear your devotions, may He grant you the gifts of his blessings. Amen. May He pardon all your evils, which you have borne, and may He grant forgiveness which you ask of Him. Amen. And then may He receive the vows [or petitions or oaths] of your fasting and prayers, so that he may turn away all adversities from you, which you earn as retribution for your sins, and may He pour forth upon you the gifts of the consoling Spirit. Amen.)<sup>85</sup>

Here we see some of the implicit assumptions that govern parts of this liturgy made more explicit. Fasting and repentance please the Lord, and He in return (but not solely on that account) offers grace and consolation. In that consolation, each person may grow in the love of God towards eternal salvation. As we have seen, Ælfric stresses the need for love above and beyond good works. These themes are also the substance of the postcommunion prayer, as described above. Even clearer is the prayer over the people, ‘Pretende nobis, domine,

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<sup>84</sup> Cassian, *Conferences*, IX.xii.1, ‘Prayers are those act by which we offer or vow something to God, which is called [*euxi*] in Greek—that is, a vow’. And Isidore, *Etymologiae*, PL 82:0257B, ‘orare est petare’ (‘to pray is to entreat’). And Tertullian, *De ieiunio aduersus psychicos*, ed. by Reifferscheid and Wissowa, *CCSL* 29, p. 289, line 11: ‘Tamen et uotum, cum a deo acceptatum est, legem in posterum facit per auctoritatem acceptatoris’ (‘Even a vow, when it has been accepted by God, constitutes a law for posterity, on account of the authority of the acceptor’).

<sup>85</sup> See note 28 above.

misericordiam tuam, ut quae uotis expetimus, conuersatione tibi placita consequamur' ('Extend to us, Lord, your mercy, so that through our repentance [*conuersatione*], which is pleasing to you, we may attain what we seek through our petitions [or vows or oaths]'). Much the same sentiment is found in the gospel for the day, at Luke 11. 10, Ask, and you will receive.<sup>86</sup> The point that Bede and Ælfric both make in their homilies on Rogationtide, and one implicit in the procession itself, is that one must actively seek, one must ask.

Ælfric emphasizes in his sermons that Rogationtide's exchange of prayer for relief from suffering depends not only upon vows, but also upon the unity of the Christian community. Ælfric calls *Litaniae* 'gebeddagas', or prayer days, as the Roman feast emphasizes. Other homilies, Vercelli among them, also call these *gangdaegas*, or procession days.<sup>87</sup> This going out of the church, turning, and coming back to the church is central to the messages of the feast. The faithful call out to the Lord from the church at the outset of the feast. Thus, the introit from Psalm 17. 7, reads, 'Exaudiuit de templo sancto suo uocem meam' ('He heard from afar my voice from your holy temple'). Voices in prayer call out to the Lord from a temple. The *temple*—the Latin word is also used in vernacular texts (as in Vercelli XX)—is not equivalent to the Old English term *cirice*, which usually glosses *ecclesia*.<sup>88</sup> The temple is the sacred altar of the Lord, and its ministers are priests and monks. But, in his first sermon for Rogation Tuesday, Ælfric says that 'the good man is a temple

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<sup>86</sup> Bede points this out in his own homilies on Rogationtide: the promise is made by God in Matthew 7. 21; Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. by Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst, 2 vols (Kalamazoo, 1991), II, 124. The pericope for Bede is Luke 11. 9–13.

<sup>87</sup> Vercelli XI, XII, and XIII; see Bazire and Cross, *Rogationtide Homilies*, p. xviii.

<sup>88</sup> Bazire and Cross, Homily 2, p. 31, line 11. For glosses, see Mattie Harris, *A Glossary of the West Saxon Gospels in Word-Indices to Old English Non-Poetic Texts* (Hamden, 1974), pp. 1–115, s.v.



[*templ*] of the Holy Ghost'.<sup>89</sup> So, when Ælfric says in his first Monday sermon that we 'offer up *our* prayers, and follow *our* relics out and in', he presumably means the prayers of both clerics and Christian laymen.<sup>90</sup> This invocation of a Christian community accords with the benediction of the procession from Psalm 66, described above, in which the whole people calls for God's mercy. The unity of the people in Christian fellowship accords with and explains Ælfric's discussion of who is and who is not one's neighbor. That the introit and processional benediction are spoken by a priest suggests that the progress of the people, as in a procession, depends upon the proper direction of clergy and teachers. Again, the liturgy evokes themes found in Ælfric's Rogationtide sermons.

Ælfric echoes the liturgy most significantly in his emphasis on *conversatio*. In the prayer over the people *conuersatio*, literally 'a turning', also means conduct or behavior. Turning to God, as enacted at the cross during the procession, pleases him. The processors come to the cross, pray, and then convert to the church, through which they will find salvation. In his first sermon for Monday, Ælfric relates that Bishop Mamertus of Vienna instituted a fast in order to stop God's scourging the city. The king's palace, says Ælfric, 'was burnt with heavenly fire [*heofonlicum fyre*]'. So, king, people, children, and animals all fasted for three days, and 'through that conversion [*gecyrrrednysse*] [. . .] God had mercy on them'.<sup>91</sup> This same fire had earlier burnt Sodom and Gomorrah. It is God's righteous anger.<sup>92</sup> It is the

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<sup>89</sup> CH I.19, l. 67: 'se goda man bið þæs halgan gastes templ' (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 327).

<sup>90</sup> CH I.18, lines 40–41: 'began ure gebedu ond fylían urum haligdomum ut ond in' (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 318).

<sup>91</sup> CH I.18, l. 39: 'mid heofenlicum fyre forbærnde' (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 318).

<sup>92</sup> Thus, in the 'Second Commentary on the Gospels' of the Canterbury biblical commentaries, we find that someone who *saepe cadit in ignem* ('falleth often into the fire') is 'someone whom anger overcomes'. See Matthew 17. 4. In Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian*, CSASE, 10, (Cambridge, 1994) pp. 404–05. See also Vercelli XIX, and Alcuin,

purging fire of the apocalyptic visions of Fursa and Drihthelm that fill Ælfric's sermons for the second Tuesday of Rogationtide. The *conuersatio* is pivotal to the exchange that is made during this feast, as Paul Szarmach has pointed out in his study of the Jonah story, and is equally essential to Ælfric's Monday homilies.<sup>93</sup> God exchanges his mercy for penitence, and for prayers withdraws his anger.<sup>94</sup> This exchange of prayer for terrestrial bounty is also found in social relations. As described above, Ælfric speaks in his first Monday sermon about the relation of poor to rich: 'The rich man is made for the poor man, and the poor man for the rich one. It is incumbent on the affluent, that he scatter and distribute; on the indigent it is incumbent that he pray for the distributor'.<sup>95</sup> As the rich man gives sustenance to the poor man, so does the poor man 'give to the rich everlasting life'.<sup>96</sup> Prayers are part and parcel of the world's exchanges. One commentator has perhaps misproposed this exchange as the 'prayers of the poor *to* the rich'.<sup>97</sup>

When we ask why Ælfric's Rogationtide homilies discuss the poor, explain the Apostle's Creed, stress prayer and grace, relate dream visions of heaven, and stress good works, we ask why Ælfric chose to emphasize these particular themes and not others. Of all

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*Enchiridon*, who comments on Psalm 6. 2 that *furor* (anger) signifies 'ignem purgatorium' ('a purgative fire'); *PL* 100:346A.

<sup>93</sup> Szarmach, 'Three versions of the Jonah story', p. 185: 'a change of heart during Rogationtide will result in divine forgiveness'.

<sup>94</sup> See more explicitly, Maximus of Turin, *Sermo LXXXI: De Ieiuniis Niniuitarum*, CCSL 23: 332–34, especially p. 334.

<sup>95</sup> *CH* I.18, lines 205–07: 'Se welega is geworht for ðan þearfan. ond se þearfa for ðam welegan. Ðam spedigum gedafenaþ þæt he spende ond dæle. ðam wædlan gedafenað þæt he gebidde for ðam dælere' (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 324).

<sup>96</sup> *CH* I.18, l. 210: 'sylð þam rican þæt ece lif' (Clemoes, *First Series*, p. 324).

<sup>97</sup> Malcolm Godden, *Commentary*, p. 145.

the topics and themes Ælfric might have addressed, he chose to compose or to select passages which fulfilled the mandate of the Rogationtide liturgy. This mandate is to encourage blessings and bounty, to stop war, to heal the sick, and to abate the fiery anger of God.<sup>98</sup> Rogationtide coheres in its progression and reiteration of themes, themes distinct from those of, for example, the Easter liturgy. During the Rogationtide mass, the Christian seeks blessedness through progressive and varied striving. This striving (for penance, forgiveness, understanding, and mercy) is reenacted physically during the Rogationtide services. Rogationtide liturgy serially invokes suffering, resignation, wisdom, and joy. A celebrant moves from place to place, moment to moment, prayer to prayer, in a constant ritual peregrination. The themes of Rogationtide are manifested in the liturgy, specifically in those elements proper to the feast. Ælfric's sermons, *qua* sermons, contribute generally to the efficacy of the Rogationtide mass, and therefore find their principle of coherence within a liturgical ordo. But Ælfric's method of composition, his principles of selection and invention, required him to look beyond his library to the symbolism and thematic coherence of the Rogationtide liturgy.

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<sup>98</sup> Thus, Cassian, 'Ninth Conference: On Prayer', IX.iii.3, pp. 330–31.

