Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

34 Congregation (*Congregacio*)

The congregation is triple: the lowest, the middle, and the highest. The lowest is hell where the evil are gathered with the evil, just as straw and wood for burning, Ezech. 22[:21]: “I will gather you together and will burn you in the fire of my wrath.” The middle is in this world where evil are gathered with the good, just as the straw with the grain, the cockles with the wheat before the winnowing of the air, Psal. [61:9]: “Trust in him, all you congregation of people.” The highest is in paradise where the good are gathered with the good, just as friends at a feast, Matt. 24[:31]: “They shall gather together his elect from the four winds.” Matt. 13[:20]: “But the wheat gather into my barn.” In this way “the princes of the people are gathered together, with the God of Abraham,” Psal. [46:10].

¶ Again note that where many are gathered, they advance more securely, resist more forcefully, they banquet with others more joyfully, Eccle. 4[:9]: “It is better that two should be together, than one.” We may also see on the other hand that a solitary bird is either rapacious as a bird of prey, or it has lost its spouse or

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companion as the turtle dove. Thus, often a single religious person is either rapacious for taking away his superior or brother or he has lost his spouse, that is Christ, because it is said in Eccle. 4[:10]: “Woe to him that is alone.” Therefore, in the forgetfulness “of the Lord,” there was “a pair of turtledoves,” not a single turtledove, Luke 2[:24].

Again, a single candle is easily extinguished by the wind, but not so if it is united with others. Thus, many are conquered by the chain of charity, they shine better by example, they burn more ardently by desire, Psal. [49:5]: “Gather together his saints to him.” We also see that not one scholar, but many make a school, not one ox but several draw a great thing, not one member but several makeup a body, not one bee but many make a honeycomb. Thus, in many religious communities unity is greater than abundance of merits.

¶ In the figure of this matter not one alone but many disciples received the Holy Spirit, Act. 1[:8].