

“The Spiritual House of the Soul”

excerpt from a homily by St. Bernard of Clairvaux

The spiritual house of the soul is the gaining and living of virtue: for as a material house is built with much hard labor and rises little by little, by various stones and beams, so is the spiritual house built by various virtues, and by long labor and slow improvements.

The length of the house is long suffering, its width is love, its height is hope.

The four walls are the four cardinal virtues, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

The foundation is humility.

The roof is patience.

The windows are the desire for holiness through which the light of the Gospel finds entrance.

The door is obedience to the commandments.

The door keeper is holy fear.

The watchman are the angels.

The husband is the will.

The children are the good works.

The servants are our senses obedient to our intellect, found in truth.

The table is sacred scripture.

The bread is the Eucharist.

The wine is the blood of Christ.

The living water and well spring is the Holy Spirit.

The oil is mercy.

The bed is a quiet and peaceful mind.

The sacraments are the medicine.

The Priests are the doctors.

The guests, our Father, Son and Holy Spirit.