When I was quietly residing in my church and had made it my happy custom to speak to the people on Sundays and feast days, some of our colleagues entreated our smallness to commit to memory in some sort of written work what I used to preach to the people in sermons. As I silently deliberated with myself about whether I should satisfy their wish, I came upon a fourfold rationale, each part of which seemed to plead their case. First, there is brotherly love; second, the honorableness of the occupation [of preaching]; third, the common good; and fourth, the convenience of it.

It is, of course, the mark of brotherly love to apply one’s ears to brothers’ just requests. It is the mark of an honorable occupation to devote the brevity of our life not to idle and vain things but to healthy ones. It pertains to the common good to provide for the shared goodwill of all, not only one’s own, which is modeled on our Savior. And it is certainly to our own benefit to prepare while we are alive the merits that shall be ours after death. For because it is particularly meritorious to instruct the unlearned, those who transmit to posterity the erudite teaching in written form, seem to deserve even more because they continue teaching after they die.

And so, compelled by these reasons, I agreed to our brothers’ request. Since I composed these brief homilies for the benefit of simple folk, I was careful to avoid the obscurity of allegories, the profundity of scriptural [references] and weightly vocabulary as much as I could and instead sought a moral lesson in all things, since it is more necessary for a person’s life.

Finally, if someone finds in this work authorities at half-strength and paraphrased, he should know that this has occurred because, when I was snatched away to the court of the prince [Richard I], I sometimes wrote on the road, sometimes even amidst armed action, and I did not have a copy of the original works. I therefore pray those who may examine this work of my devotion: remember not to judge harshly but rather intercede mercifully for Raoul the sinner.