

Mental Prayer According to the
Principles of Saint Thomas Aquinas

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Loreto's Introduction to Father Denis Fahey

When Jesus Christ, our King and Master, taught us how to pray to His Father and Our Father, he used the phrase “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” In heaven God’s will is perfectly accomplished, but here on earth, fallen mankind cannot fulfill God’s will without the constant assistance of sanctifying grace communicated to the world through the sacraments of His church.

After the fall of Adam, a world perfectly ordered to God’s divine will was corrupted and **dis**-order became the ‘natural’ state of mankind and the created universe. It was the role of the Messiah to **re**-order this fallen world—to bring a new state of order to the world His Father had created. The means for establishing that order by which a fallen world may return to God is the Catholic church and the life of sanctifying grace. As Christians newly born into the life of grace—a ‘supernatural’ state of being—we are all called to bring as much order to this world as is possible, all the while never forgetting that this world is in a fallen and corrupted state and that a ‘utopia’ is not possible here on earth. The Church of Christ is constantly opposed in this mission by all of the forces of ‘naturalism’ or dis-order, that is those forces opposed to the supernatural life of divine grace. It is the duty of all Christians of the Church Militant to battle against these forces.

This calling of Christians to the battle for order was the motto of the pontificate of Pope Saint Pius X. That motto was *Instaurare Omnia in Christo*, “to restore all things in Christ”, taken from Saint Paul’s letter to the Ephesians 1:10. The modern popes have frequently warned us of the dangers of ‘naturalism’, which denies the supernatural life of grace and militates against it, and they have

called us to fight in our private and public lives against this pernicious error. No priest has heeded that call and risen to defend the supernatural life of grace as clearly and as vigorously as Father Denis Fahey. He truly understood, and explained why, there is no salvation outside the Catholic church, either for individual persons or for the life of *society* and of *nations*.

A clear image of just what the life of a Christian in a society imbued from top to bottom with the social principles of Christ the King would be like, is not a widely shared understanding in much of the Christian world today, especially in America. We must remember that Christianity is a religion of world conquest! We are called to conquer the world for Christ and to do all that we can to subdue persons and nations to His will. A Catholic undertakes this battle first within himself and then within his family. Soon the influence of many families begins to pervade the community and then the nation or state. If Christian people do not have the full picture in their mind of exactly what God's Plan for Order in this world would look like in its accomplishment, then they can have no long-term strategy for victory and little hope of achieving it. We have all of the tools required and all of the powers of heaven backing us. Let us take into our hearts and our minds the full plan and its potential for the realization of peace in the world and Christ the King of heaven and earth will bless our efforts. This was the permanent admonition of Fr. Fahey.

Father Fahey was a seminarian and was ordained in Rome during the pontificate of Pius X. The young priest was deeply influenced and inspired by that pope. When he penned a short *Apologia* for his work, Father Fahey expressed his vocation in this fashion:

“When in Rome I began to realize more fully the real significance of the history of the world, as the account of the acceptance and rejection of Our Lord's Program for Order. I used to ask permission to remain at the Confession of St. Peter, while the other scholastics went round the basilica.

“I spent the time there going over the history of the world, and I repeatedly promised Saint Peter

that if I ever got the chance, I would teach the truth about his Master in the way he and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, wanted it done.

That is what I have striven to do and am doing.”

Father Fahey not only clarified, explained, taught, and defended ‘Our Lord’s Program for Order’ in the world, he also actively fought and exposed the persons who were the enemies of that order. Because he did so, he has often been called ‘negative’ or ‘anti-Semitic’, or ‘much too concerned with Masonic conspiracies’. These are the pathetic terms of opprobrium hurled with such energy by those enemies of Christ whose plans he has effectively opposed. But in this he was in good company with St. Louis Marie de Montfort and Our Lady, who appears ‘terrible as an army set in battle array’ to the enemies of her divine son.

Listen to the words of St. Louis Marie as he stresses the two functions of our Blessed Mother, the *positive* one of making Our Lord known, and the *negative* one of making war upon His enemies.

Mary must be manifested more than ever by her mercy, her power and her grace in these latter times; by her mercy, bringing back and lovingly welcoming the poor strayed sinners who will be converted and will return to the Catholic Church; by her power, against the enemies of God, idolaters, schismatics, Mohammedans, Jews, and men hardened in impiety, who will rise in terrible revolt to seduce all those who oppose them and to make them fall by promises and threats; she must also be made manifest by her grace animating and sustaining the valiant soldiers and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, who shall battle for His interests.

And lastly, Mary must be terrible to the devil and his ministers, as an army in battle array, principally in these latter times, because the devil knowing that he has but little time, and now less than ever, to damn souls, will every day redouble

his efforts and his combats. He will before long raise up cruel persecutions and will lay terrible snares for the faithful servants and true children of Mary whom he finds more difficult to conquer than the others.

Loreto Publications is committed to re-issuing all of the previously published works of Fr. Fahey and making them available to a much wider audience. The works of Fr. Fahey are critically important for Catholics to read, understand, and disseminate in our day when the forces of 'organized naturalism' or 'anti-supernaturalism' seem to be rampaging triumphantly through the Church and the world today. Arm yourselves for the battle!

The following works of Fr. Denis Fahey
are available from Loreto Publications:

Mental Prayer According to the Teaching of Saint

Thomas Aquinas (1927)

The Kingship of Christ According to the Principles of Saint

Thomas Aquinas (1931)

The Social Rights of Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ the King

Adapted from the French of Rev. A. Phillippe C.S.S.R. by Fr. Denis

Fahey C.S.Sr. (1932)

The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World (1935)

The Rulers of Russia (1938)

The Workingmen's Guilds of the Middle Ages (1943)

(A translation of the work by Dr. Godefroid Kurth C.S.G.)

The Kingship of Christ and Organized Naturalism (1943)

Money Manipulation and the Social Order (1944)

The Mystical Body of Christ and the Reorganization of Society (1945)

The Tragedy of James Connolly (1947)

The Rulers of Russia and the Russian Farmers (1948)

The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the

Jewish Nation (1953)

The Church and Farming (1953)

Editor's notes:

Loreto's editions of the works of Father Fahey have been newly typeset and updated with some changes to the original text. The alterations are as follows:

1. We have changed the spelling of many words to match modern American spelling rules. Some examples are: neighbor for neighbour, show for shew, labor for labour, realize for realise, mold for mould, program for programme, etc.

2. We have made use of current punctuation and capitalization rubrics.

3. We have made a few minor corrections of typographical errors in the original texts but have NOT altered the words of Fr. Fahey nor made any deletions.

4. We have made uniform the notations of scripture references in the currently accepted fashion. For example, we use Mt. 24: 6–9 instead of Matt. xxiv 6, 7, 8, 9.

Foreword

Mental prayer is, in a certain sense, the most important exercise of the spiritual life. Fidelity to it (saints tell us) will ensure salvation; its complete abandonment may lead to perdition; progress therein means a corresponding progress in the interior life of union with God.

Hence, the special value of books which treat of mental prayer. The excellence of the present work lies in the source from which it is drawn. St. Thomas Aquinas holds a unique place among the Doctors of the Church. He has become the official theologian of Christ's Mystical Spouse, her Universal Doctor. She has canonized his teaching, making it her own in all its essential elements.

Singularly enamored of Truth, the Angelic Doctor sought and found wisdom in all its fullness—human wisdom (metaphysics)—wisdom at once human and divine (theology)—wisdom wholly divine (gift of the Holy Ghost). In him we find a wonderful synthesis of the threefold wisdom, each supreme in its own domain. Yet the first humbly ministers to the second, and both first and second lead on to the third. This sublime harmony constitutes the eminent sanctity of the Angel of the Schools. “In him was singularly pre-eminent a marvelous fellowship of doctrine with piety, of learning with virtue, of truth with charity.” (Pius XI, *Studiorum Duce[m].*)

One of the chief characteristics of Thomistic doctrine is its marvelous unity. Part fits into part, and each part is aptly adjusted to the whole. To appreciate the teaching of St. Thomas on mental prayer, we must first consider the fundamental principles which govern the supernatural life of sanctifying grace. A very accurate and striking parallelism between the natural life of the soul with its various faculties and the supernatural life of grace with its accompanying virtues and gifts forms the foundation, as it were, of his

doctrine on the spiritual life. Then comes a luminous distinction between the infused moral virtues, the three theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This distinction forms the basis of a corresponding division in mental prayer. In its lowest form this prayer proceeds from the infused moral virtues, especially prudence. A yet higher form is that in which faith, hope, and especially charity, constitute the main element. Lastly succeeds mystical prayer, or prayer of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in which the soul "is taught not by mere learning, but by experience of divine things." (I Q. 1, A. 6, ad 3^m.)

This division throws much light on the whole subject of mental prayer. Through lack of knowledge and guidance, many earnest souls make little or no progress in the way of prayer; much less do they aspire to the state of mystical prayer, supposed to be unattainable except by the privileged few. To such souls this book will be a real boon.

In dealing with the main object of mental prayer, the author has touched incidentally on many points of spirituality which St. Thomas has beautifully developed, such as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just, charity as a friendship with God, the constant action of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, etc. It is our earnest hope and prayer that the diffusion of such high teaching may grow apace. It will help to lift us all above that mediocrity in which we are too often content to live out our Catholic lives. A wave of immorality and naturalism is passing over the world. One of the great means of preserving our faithful people from its pernicious influence will be the careful explanation of the dogmatic truths, which deal with the supernatural life. The present book is a notable effort in this direction. May it soon be followed by many others!

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Dedication

To the Holy Family of Nazareth, the Cell divinely preordained for the restoration of the Supernatural Life and Order, through membership of Christ's Mystical Body, to the fallen children of the First Tiller of the soil, and to those ardent lovers of the Irish countryside, Saints Patrick, Brigid, and Columcille, this little work is humbly and lovingly dedicated by the author.

“We must recognize that one of the causes of the disequilibrium and confusion of world economy, affecting civilization and culture, is undoubtedly the distaste and even contempt shown for rural life with its numerous and essential activities. But does not history, especially in the case of the fall of the Roman Empire, teach us to see in this a warning symptom of the decline of civilization? ...It cannot be too often repeated how much the work of the land generates physical and moral health, for nothing does more to brace the system than this beneficent contact with nature which proceeds directly from the hand of the creator. The land is not a betrayer; it is not subject to the fickleness, the false appearances, the artificial and unhealthy attractions of the grasping city. Its stability, its wise and regular course, the enduring majesty of the rhythm of the seasons are so many reflections of the divine attributes....

“Your consideration will not be limited to the economic and technical sides of the agricultural problem, for you must be also interested in social justice and the Common Good. ...It is necessary to set up social organizations which will take care of the legitimate interests, the material and moral progress of the agricultural population. This will tend not only to check the evil of rural depopulation. This will tend not only to check the more conscious of their social function, more proud of the dignity of their life and vocation, of the greatness and sacredness of their task” (Pope Pius XII: Letter to Rev. J. P. Archambault, S.J., President of the Social Week, Rimouski, Canada, August 31, 1947

Part I

Union of Sanctity and Science in St. Thomas

The Sovereign Pontiffs measure their words and, when these words are addressed to the whole Church, they must be listened to with a respect and reverence to which the pronouncements of no other are entitled.¹ In this age, when the minds of men are being systematically led astray by a press that does not scruple to give contradictory directions in successive issues, we often need to remind ourselves that, in the case of the Encyclical Letters of the Supreme Pontiffs, we may not, after a glance at the headings, settle down with an easy conscience to wait for the contradiction.²

1. In this section free use has been made of an excellent commentary on the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI: *Studiorum Ducem* (29th June, 1923), by Monsieur l'Abbe L. Lavaud. The commentary is entitled: *Saint Thomas, Guide of Studies* (Paris: Têqui). His excellent articles on ecclesiastical studies in *La Vie Spirituelle*, Vol. X., have also been utilized.

2. As the press of the world is in great part in the power of the descendants of those who passed Mount Calvary blaspheming Him, "wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again: save thyself, coming down from the Cross" (Mk. 15:29), we may expect to find in it an educational program in complete opposition to that of the vicars of Him who died on Calvary. In our day, diplomas and certificates are required on the part of those who have the ambition to teach youth to read and write, while nothing except money is required on the part of a man, or group of men, in order to start a paper and educate and mold the generations trained to read by the certificated teachers. The moneyed influences behind a paper direct all those who write for it and control its policy, or set of ideas (the *forma accidentalis*, to use the scholastic phrase) which they wish to impress upon their readers. Why should not papers be obliged by law to publish the names not only of those who write, but of those who control and direct them, together with the names of the various societies, Masonic and other, to which they belong? Thus all may know the mental and moral value of the real educators of the people. For the opinion of the Sovereign

Now, Pope John XXII, at Avignon, in the year 1318, addressing the Cardinals in Consistory, uttered these memorable words: “St. Thomas Aquinas has illumined the Church more than all the other Doctors. A man will make more progress during one year in his books than in a whole lifetime spent in the writings of others.” Those words were quoted by Pope Pius X in the Letter *Doctoris Angelici*, and the holy Pontiff added: “The experience of centuries proves the truth of this statement of our Predecessor John XXII, and, indeed, it is becoming more evident from day to day.” In that wonderful tribute of praise to St. Thomas, the Encyclical Letter *Studiorum Ducem*, Pope Pius XI again makes these words his own. Indeed, it may be said that the entire document is devoted to bringing home to us the ultimate reason of this encomium of the Angelic Doctor’s works—the union, altogether unique, of science and sanctity, in his life and writings. “For true science and genuine piety,” writes the present Sovereign Pontiff, “are linked together in a wondrous kinship. God is very Truth and supreme Goodness: therefore, when God’s glory is sought in the salvation of souls—and that is the chief and essential function of the Church—it is not enough that the ministers of holy things should be well instructed in necessary knowledge, but that they should also abound in becoming virtues. This marvelous fellowship of doctrine with piety, of learning with virtue, of truth with charity, was singularly pre-eminent in the Angelic Doctor. He is likened to the sun, because he sheds both light and warmth: he pours illumination into the mind and enkindles the flame of virtue in the will. God, the Fount of Wisdom and Holiness, seems to have wished to show forth in Thomas how intimately linked are the practice of virtue and the

Pontiffs with regard to the unbridled liberty of the press, cf. Brief of Pius VII, *Post tam diuturnas*, to the Bishop of Troyes, in which the Pope said: “The liberty of the press has been the chief instrument for first lowering the standard of public morality and then corrupting and overthrowing the people’s faith.” Cf. also Prop. 79 of the *Syllabus* of Pius IX. Concerning Jewish control of the press, read in Vol. I of Henry Ford’s illuminating work, *The International Jew*, the section entitled: “Does Jewish Power Control the Press?” Cf. also, in German, Dr. Joseph Eberle’s *Grossmacht Presse*, pp. 201–302.

contemplation of truth, and how a deeper pondering of truth produces more perfect and embellished virtues. ...He who lives purely and spotlessly and has curbed all unruly desires is set free from a great hindrance: unshackled and disembarassed, he can lift his soul to heaven and look into the hidden things of God. As Thomas himself said: "First life, then teaching; for the life leads to the knowledge of the truth' (comment, in Matt. v.). Similarly, the sustained effort to understand supernatural things excites man to live more perfectly. ...These are the things, venerable Brethren, we should learn from this Commemoration: but in order that they may appear more clearly, We have deemed it fitting to speak briefly in this Letter of the holiness and teachings of Thomas Aquinas and to show the effects that flow therefrom for the priesthood, and especially for those who are preparing for Orders. Moreover, We have wished to give a suitable teaching to all Christendom."³

It is, unfortunately, possible to have a profound knowledge of theology without sanctity, for knowledge does not necessarily and infallibly produce a degree of love corresponding to it. A keen mind can argue during a whole life-time on behalf of Catholic truth and write learned works without advancing to any great degree in charity.⁴ Faith is indispensable, because without the virtue of faith, one does not possess the principles of theological science. For, "although theology is an intellectual virtue formally

3. Encyclical Letter: *Studiorum Duce*m. Translation: Blackfriars.

4. The reason of this is excellently given in an article by l'Abbé L. Lavaud in *La Vie Spirituelle*, Vol. X, pp. 299, 300, from Cajetan's commentary on Ia, IIae, Q. 27, A. 2: "The progress of love depends upon two factors that may not act together: the object loved, which acts upon the will of the person loving it through the knowledge the person has of it, and the will of the person which abandons itself to the action of the object loved. As the will is free, it can yield more readily to the action of a pressure objectively less strong and abandon itself to it more and more completely without any increase in the knowledge it has of the object. On the other hand, the will can strengthen its resistance to a pressure objectively stronger, and even remain unmoved in presence of new sources of attraction which the intelligence discovers in the object, and which solicit an increase of love. Thus, instead of increasing together, knowledge and love, even of God, may not be present together or follow one another."

and intrinsically natural, yet it is supernatural in its root, namely, faith, which it necessarily pre-supposes, and without which it is absolutely impossible.”⁵ Charity, however, in its lowest degree, is not indispensable.⁶

On the other hand, it would be wrong to think that sanctity suffices to confer science. The moral virtues, especially the virtue of chastity, are, it is true, of immense help in the acquisition of knowledge.⁷ They dispose for perfect intellectual operations. But it is beyond and above all, charity which gives penetration to the intelligence, because charity is the root of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.⁸ Accordingly, we may say that if we suppose equal intellectual ability and application to work on the part of two students, he who loves God better will enjoy a profounder knowledge of Him. The greatest theologians were nearly all distinguished for eminent holiness, and the Church has so lofty an idea of the intimate relation between science and holiness that she gives the title of Doctor of the Church only to canonized saints.

We have said that, speaking generally, an increase of knowledge does not necessarily cause an increase of love, and that greater love does not necessarily suppose more perfect knowledge, but it cannot be denied that deeper knowledge tends of itself to produce an increase of love.⁹ Pope Pius XI points this out in the phrase quoted above: “Similarly the sustained effort to understand

5. L. Lavaud *Comment. in Studiorum Duce*m, p. 136.

6. “*Ad habendam multam scientiae et certitudinis paraturam sine charitate Dei, sed ex propria industria, lectio sufficit et studium ac humanus labor.*” (John of St. Thomas. *Cursus Theol. Edit. Vives* t. vi, p. 626.)

7. “The virtue of chastity especially disposes a man for contemplation, while carnal pleasures bring the mind down to the level of the things of sense.” (IIa, IIae, Q. 180, A. 2 ad 3.)

8. “*Ceteris paribus doctior erit in Theologia qui caritatem habuerit quam qui non habuerit. Quia sine caritate non sunt conjuncta... dona Spiritus Sancti cum fide quae illuminat mentem et intellectum dat parvulis.*” (Bannez in IIam, IIae, Q. 1, A. 4 ad 2.)

9. L. Lavaud, *La Vie Spirituelle*, Vol. X, p. 302, where the following text of Cajetan is quoted: “*Non negatur quod maior cognitio causat maiorem amorem: sed quod maior amor necessario exigat maiorem cognitionem.*” (In loc. cit.)

supernatural things excites men to live more perfectly.” It is here a question of theological science and supernatural love of charity. If a theologian humbly wishes to get better acquainted with the dogmas of our holy religion, by the effort of reason illumined by faith, not out of self-love nor because of the fame he may obtain through his knowledge, but because he loves God and His truth and is not satisfied to have a merely superficial knowledge of Him,¹⁰ if he studies, not merely for the pleasure of knowing, but with a view to directing all his knowledge to God in love, he will not be deceived in his hopes. Every new ray of light will increase the ardor of his charity.

Now, it is in the power of every student and of every theologian especially, to study in this wise. It is in the power of every theologian especially, for, by its very nature, theology demands to be studied for love of its divine object and with a view to increasing that love. God is supreme goodness and subsistent love. All goodness in created things comes from Him, and all His works are works of love, especially the mysteries of our salvation, the incarnation, the redemption and, above all, the Blessed Eucharist. Theological science is, therefore, the science of subsistent love and of the works of subsistent love. St. Thomas, the theologian *par excellence*, is thus necessarily a quickener of divine love in souls. He is ever inculcating the lesson of the phrase sung by the Church: “*Sic nos amantem quis non redamaret!*”¹¹ We may apply to theology, thus studied according to the Thomistic ideal, what St. Thomas says of contemplation: “It is an act of the intelligence, but love is its source and its term.” It is thus no longer a merely intellectual occupation which those who are not engaged in the hurry and bustle of the ministry may take on to keep their minds from getting fallow, but becomes a noble

10. Cf. IIam, IIae, Q. 28, A. 2: “*Amans non est contentua superficiali apprehensione amati sed nititur singula quae ad amatum pertinent intrinsecus disquirere, et sic ad interiora eius ingreditur.*”

11. Cf. L. Lavaud: Commentary on *Studiorum Duce*m, p. 97. Here below, knowledge of and about God is inferior to love of God. Perfection of life lies in love of God and love of everyone and everything, even theological science, for God. (Cf. *Catholic Bulletin*, June, 1925, p. 607, where the Thomistic idea of life is outlined.)

act of contemplation, nourishing and strengthening the real life of the soul, the divine life of grace, participation in the divine life of God, knowing and loving Himself in three divine persons.¹²

12. “If study does sometimes become an act of supernatural contemplation, it is inasmuch as by study we are led on to the love of God. Accordingly, if a person studies for the sake of acquiring knowledge, and not for the sake of edifying others and advancing in the love of God, it is well that he should realize that such study belongs to the natural contemplation (of philosophers), not to the supernatural contemplation (of theologians).” (St. Thomas, *In Canticum*. Cap. I.) In the Letter to Superiors of Religious Orders (*Acta Ap. Sedis*, 1st April, 1924, pp. 136–137, 145–146), Pope Pius XI insists again on the necessity for priests of linking together, in their lives, science and the love of God. His Holiness again refers to the mutual aid which acquired wisdom and the wisdom that is the fruit of charity render each other. In the same letter he quotes the beautiful words of St. Bernard (*In Canticum*, *Sermo XXXVI*): “Some there are who desire knowledge merely for the sake of knowing, and this is shameful curiosity...and some there are who desire knowledge that they may put their knowledge up for sale for gain or for honors, and this is disgraceful trafficking; but some there are who desire knowledge that they may edify others, and this is charity: and finally, there are some who desire knowledge that they may thereby be edified themselves, and this is prudence.”

And Pius X, in his Exhortation on the occasion of his Sacerdotal Jubilee, 1908, adds a striking and beautiful confirmation. “Since men are merely the instruments, which God uses for the salvation of souls, it is necessary that they be suitable instruments for God to handle. And why is this? Do we think that God is moved by any excellence, whether inborn or begotten, of our endeavors, to employ our help for the spread of His glory? By no means, for it is written: “The foolish things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the strong: and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are.” (1Cor. 1:27–28.) There is one thing, however, that unites man with God, one thing that makes man an acceptable and not unworthy assistant to His mercy, sanctity of life and morals. If this, which is, in fine, the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, be wanting in the priest, he is lacking in everything. For wealth of refined learning, which We Ourselves endeavor to promote among the clergy, even skill and adroitness in their work, if separated from this, although they may bring some benefit to the Church or to the individual, are most frequently the lamentable cause of loss to both. But abundant testimonials from every age

If we accept by faith that God speaks to the world by the mouth of Peter and set ourselves with docility, making use of the means St. Thomas employed, to study St. Thomas in order to learn to think and see and love as members of our divine Lord's Mystical Body, we can hope to share in the wonderful union of love and study, which was the "form" of the life of St. Thomas.

declare that he who is graced and enriched with holiness, though he be the lowliest, can attempt and accomplish many wonderful and salutary things for the people of God: a renowned example of no distant memory is John Baptist Vianney. ...Sanctity alone makes us what the divine vocation demands: men crucified to the world, and to whom the world itself is crucified."

Part II

The Sources of the Union of Sanctity and Science in St. Thomas

When we turn to the Encyclical Letter, *Studiorum Ducem*, to discover the sources of the marvelous union of love of God and Study in St. Thomas we find that the Holy Father insists especially upon two:

“But the chief distinctive characteristic of Thomas’s sanctity is what St. Paul calls ‘the word of wisdom’ (1Cor. 12:8), and that combination of acquired and infused wisdom with which humility, zeal for prayer, and the love of God harmonize so perfectly.” Again: “(But) his humility is supremely evidenced by the fact that he used his God-given genius not for his personal glory, but solely in the cause of truth. While other philosophers spend themselves in spreading abroad their own brilliance, he strives to hide himself behind his teaching, and thereby the heavenly light of truth alone gleams forth from him in unalloyed radiance—Humility, then, and cleanness of heart, together with unflagging zeal for prayer, made the soul of Thomas docile and ready to the promptings and illuminations of the Holy Ghost. The very principles and essence of contemplation consist in the acceptance and following out of these inspirations. In order the more readily to obtain these illuminations from above, he would often abstain from food, spend whole nights in prayerful vigil and surrendering to a holy impulse, he would repeatedly lean his head against the tabernacle and he would constantly turn his eyes with sorrow and love towards the image of Jesus crucified: and he confided to his friend St. Bonaventure that, whatever, he knew, he had for the most part learned from the book of the crucifix. Truly it could be said of Thomas, as it was said of

Dominic, his Father, that he never spoke except of God or to God.” Finally: “St. Thomas, who wonderfully combined within himself wisdom, infused and acquired, who had recourse to prayer and fasting to help in the solution of his difficulties, who regarded the crucifix as the source of all his learning and his most precious Book, has been fittingly chosen as the patron of all Catholic schools. But he should be recommended especially to young men preparing for Orders, so that they may derive the greatest fruit from the highest of all possible studies.”

In the Collect for the Feast of St. Thomas we ask that “we may understand what St. Thomas taught and imitate him in our lives.”¹³ As it was by prayer that he scaled the heights of holiness and penetrated into the secrets of the God of love, so it is of great importance for us to get a good grasp of St. Thomas’s teaching on mental prayer in order that, praying as he did we may learn to live on our lowly level that admirable synthesis of study and prayer which we see so perfectly realized in him.

13. *Oremus, Deus qui Ecclesiam tuam beati Thomae Confessoris tui mira eruditione clarificas et sancta operatione fecundas: da nobis quaesumus: et quae docuit intellectu conspicerere, et quae egit imitatione complere.*

Part III

Teaching of Saint Thomas on Mental Prayer

Parallelism Between Our Natural and Supernatural Organisms¹⁴

The doctrine of St. Thomas on grace, the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is dominated by the idea, which has escaped the attention of some, of the parallelism between the structure of our natural and supernatural organisms.

Our natural organism comprises, first of all, a nature “in the Aristotelian sense of the word—principle or fount of operations—of which the distinguishing characteristic is rationality. It is in virtue of this rational nature that we are men, and it is in us the first foundation and remote principle of that human life, the obligation of which it imposes on us, and the essential lines of action of which it traces out for us.

From this rational nature proceed, in the first place, the rational faculties or principles of operation which are special to it. These faculties, while being distinct from the rational nature but of the same spiritual quality, are only two in number: intelligence and will, for the reason that the activity of rational natures consists in knowing the true and loving the good.

Our nature is, as has been said, rational, not purely intellectual, for it is composed of an intellectual soul united to a body forming with it a new being, of an order different

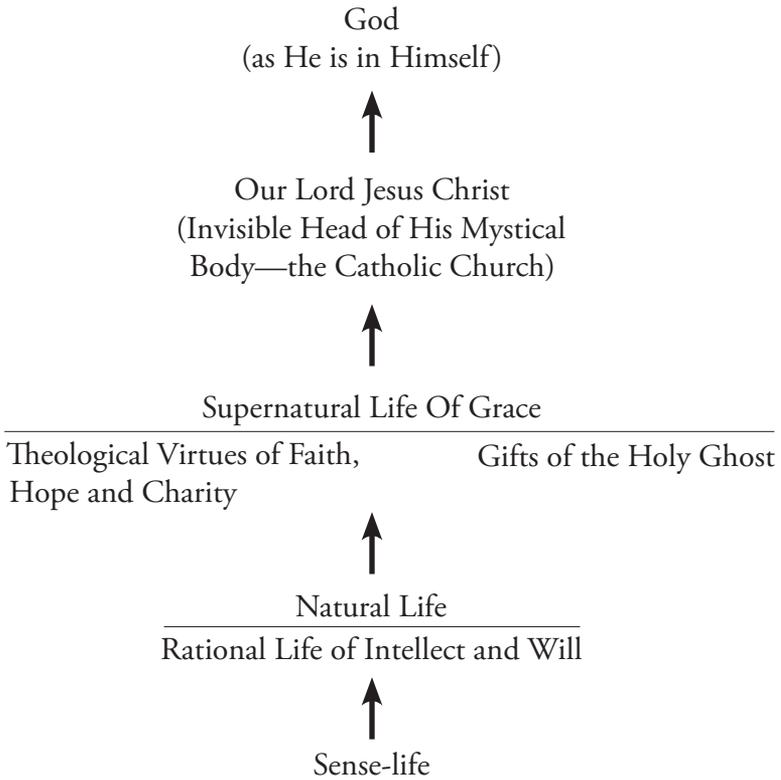
14. The framework and most of the material of this section are inspired by a striking article by Father Lemonnier, O.P. I have tried to summarize in some places and in others illustrate and amplify his teaching. Where other writers have been consulted the references are given. The article by Father Lemonnier appeared in the *Revue Apologétique*, 1st May, 1924.

from and inferior to that of the angels. From this soul, besides the purely intellectual faculties of intelligence and will, proceed also faculties or powers by which it exercises that portion of its activity in which it depends intrinsically and in varying degrees on the body. Foremost amongst these faculties are the sense-faculties, with which alone we are concerned from the point of view of this article. In this group there are faculties both of knowledge and of appetition. The faculties of knowledge are the external and internal senses, and the faculties of appetition are the sense-appetites. What we must remark with particular care is that these sense-faculties, inferior as they are to the intellectual faculties, are rational and human, not intrinsically in themselves, but only by reason of participation in the rational nature which they subserve, and hence are only improperly or imperfectly rational and human.¹⁵

The human value which they can and ought to assume springs from their functioning in subordination to the higher faculties, the activity of which they favor and influence from below and the control of which is exercised on them from above. A rational nature, endowed with several groups of faculties, mutually influencing one another, and linked together in hierarchical order,—such is man for St. Thomas. And we shall find that our supernatural life reveals the same characteristics analogously.

Before examining the details of our supernatural organism, it may be well to represent by a diagram the Thomistic ideal of life. This will help towards clearness.

15. The passions are not the seat of human acts “by their nature and as parts of the sense appetite” (Ia, IIae, Q. 56, A. 4), but, “in this sense that, made to obey the reason, they share in its light” (Ia, IIae, Q. 56, A. 4).



St. Thomas repeats ever so often that there are two kinds of life in us: one natural, of which the principle is the soul; the other supernatural, of which the principle is, indeed, the soul, but the soul “informed “by a divine form which, though a created quality, makes us sharers in the divine life of God as He is in Himself in three divine persons.¹⁶ Our natural life, as we have already seen, and as it is represented in the diagram, comprises life on the level of sense and life on the higher level of intelligence. Sanctifying grace deifies us, raising our life to the plane of God’s own inner life; it is thus the foundation of the structure of our supernatural life. It makes us sons of God and brothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ, “who

16. Cf. *Divus Thomas*, May, 1924, article by Father Hugon, O.P. “*Necessesse est quod solus Deus deificet, communicando consortium divinae naturae per quamdam similitudinis participationem.*” (Ia, IIae, Q. 112, A. 1).

are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”—we read in the Gospel of St. John at the end of Mass. “Because this birth is of God, it makes us sons of God,” writes St. Thomas in a commentary on this portion of St. John. Sanctifying grace is not, of course, nor can it be, a substance; that is, a being destined to exist by itself. It is an accident of the category of quality. But in the economy of our supernatural being and relatively to our divine life, it plays in a certain fashion the role of “nature.” On the one hand, then, our human nature, fount of our natural life, is a substance: on the other hand, sanctifying grace is a quality by which we share in the divine nature. This is the first stage in the parallelism between our natural life and our supernatural life.

The similarity between the two kinds of life, natural and supernatural, becomes more striking as we pursue the comparison. From our human nature proceed, as we have shown, first of all, the intellectual faculties of intelligence and will. From sanctifying grace are derived, in the first place, the theological virtues. Now, these theological virtues of faith, hope and charity in the order of our divine life correspond to the intellectual faculties of intellect and will in our natural life. Our specifically human life, the life which belongs to us as men, the life in us which is superior to the life of the animals, is displayed by the activity of the intelligence and the will, which faculties alone are of themselves rational. So our divine life, strictly so-called, is to be found in the functioning of the theological virtues (the gifts are left out of consideration for the moment), for only these virtues are divine of themselves, inasmuch as they get us into touch directly with God as He is in Himself; by them alone do we share in the acts of the divine life which we imitate on our level.

The differences between the role of the theological virtues, faculties of our supernatural life, and the intellectual faculties of intelligence and will, belonging to our natural rational life, are secondary. There are only two intellectual faculties, while there are three theological virtues. The divine life, like the natural rational life, has only two forms of activity— knowledge and love. But while we have faith, as principle of divine knowledge, and charity,

as principle of divine love, there is also required, provisionally, the virtue of hope, on account of the imperfection of our actual principle of divine knowledge, which is faith. Faith does not enable us to see God, does not put us in possession of the object of our love, for that can be done only by direct vision, face to face. There remains, then, to us the desire of definitive possession, and the virtue of hope, strengthening that desire for its arduous task, establishes it in assured confidence of reaching the vision of God with the aid of His all-powerful grace. But in spite of this difference, the theological virtues enable us really to participate in the very life of God. By faith we exercise that first divine activity which consists in knowing God Himself, in Himself, and in the same way as He knows Himself. By charity we exercise the second divine activity, which consists in loving God Himself, in Himself, and in the same manner as He loves Himself. The knowledge of faith makes us sharers in God's very thoughts: the love of charity makes us participators in the very love of God. By hope we lay hold directly of the omnipotence of God, and we thus become capable of acting divinely in the order of the conquest of the vision of God. If the divine life thus becomes our life, thanks to the exercise of those principles of action, the theological virtues, we must always remember that it is because sanctifying grace has communicated to us, beforehand, a share in the divine nature, has made us radically capable of supernatural activity. The well-known maxim holds here, as it does everywhere,—the mode of action follows the mode of being (*operatio sequitur esse*).

Another difference can be discovered between the theological virtues and the intellectual faculties. Proceeding from a true "nature" in the order of being, for it belongs to the category of substance, the intellectual faculties are strictly faculties or powers. Derived from grace, which is itself only a quality, the theological virtues are properly habits (*habitus*), yet they function as faculties or powers of the second and supernatural nature, grace. And this remark is important, if we wish to grasp how completely the theological virtues belong to the supernatural order. The function of ordinary habits (*habitus*) is limited to determining in a certain direction the activity of the faculties of intelligence and will. The theological

virtues elevate the activity of the intellect and the will so as to raise it up to a level with an object situated outside its natural scope—God Himself, as He is in Himself.

But there is also in us an extension, as it were, of the divine life, analogous to that activity of the rational soul, which we call sense life. It is a continuation of the parallelism. In the one case, we see an intelligence in a body: in the other, sanctifying grace in human nature. And this human nature has the form of activity which belongs to it as such, that is to say, its relations with the world and its passions. Now, just as the sense life of man must be regulated by reason to become truly human, and the functioning of rational life be made possible, so this human life of relations and passions must be brought into harmony with the ends of charity in order to fit into the sphere of our divine life and to ensure that the exercise of the divine life and even its very existence, be not jeopardized. In order that this agreement and this harmony may be effected perfectly and from within the being himself, sanctifying grace emits a new set of virtues analogous to the sense-faculties, the infused moral virtues. Thus in the practical reason we find prudence and its attendant virtues: their function is to govern our whole moral conduct in relation to our supernatural destiny in accordance with the exigencies of divine charity. In the will are seated justice and its associated virtues: to them belongs the task of introducing into all the manifold relations of our life that perfect rectitude in regard of others, demanded of a child of God. Fortitude, with its company of virtues, rules the sense appetites of the irascible order; temperance and its allied group, those of the concupiscible order. These two great virtues have for purpose the subjection of all the passions, not merely to the rule of human reason, but to the rule of the divine life in which we participate. Nevertheless, since the infused moral virtues bring us into touch with God as He is in His inner life only by their functional connection with the theological virtues, they are not on the same level as the latter. As rationalized sense-life is rational only by participation, so divinized moral-life is divine only by participation, and, as it were, in the second degree.

Thus far, we have mentioned the gifts of the Holy Ghost only in passing. Like the virtues, they spring from sanctifying grace, but they are not primarily active principles. As habits (*habitus*), they are primarily receptive or passive, being qualities by which the soul is attuned for the active intervention of God the Holy Ghost. They must be carefully distinguished from the infused virtues. Every act of an infused virtue proceeds from a twofold principle of operation: a deliberation of reason and a supernatural virtue. Hence, St. Thomas says of the supernatural virtues, “that they perfect the faculties of the soul inasmuch as these are directed by reason.”¹⁷ The mode of action of the virtue conforms itself to our rational nature, though the habit is substantially infused into us by God. “The gifts, however, are distinguished from the virtues inasmuch as the virtues move us humanly; the gifts, divinely.”¹⁸ We need the infused virtues to act perfectly according to the rule and measure of our reason, illumined by grace.¹⁹ Much more necessary to us are the gifts, by which we are moved to action, in accordance not with our reason, the mere participated norm of divine wisdom, but with the sovereign, uncreated norm, God the Holy Ghost.

“As regards our final end, seeing that we are but imperfectly ‘informed’ by the theological (and infused moral) virtues, the guidance of our reason suffices only in the measure in which the higher ‘touch’ and direction of the Holy Ghost supply for its deficiency, as St. Paul says: ‘For whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God’ (Rom. 8:14); ...for to the heritage of the realm of the blessed nobody can attain unless moved and conducted thither by the Holy Ghost. So to reach that end the gifts of the Holy Ghost are necessary.”²⁰ The gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which our faculties are made pliable for supernatural action under the

17. IIIa, Pars. Q. 7, Art. 5 ad 1.

18. III D. 34, Q. 1, A. 1. The gifts are supernatural *quoad substantiam et quoad modum*. Concerning this division, see Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P., *De Revelatione*, Vol. 1 pp. 202–217, especially p. 21, where the text of St. Thomas, IIa, Q. 171, A. 2 ad 3, is explained.

19. Cf. Ia, IIae, Q. 63, A. 4.

20. Ia, IIae, Q. 68, A. 2, in corp.

influence of the supreme mover, are, of course, to be found only in the faculties capable of these acts.²¹ Consequently, only the faculties capable of supernatural acts are perfected by the gifts. But inasmuch as they participate in rational life, the acts of the concupiscible and irascible faculties can become human acts and as such capable of being elevated to the supernatural order. The passions of the irascible and concupiscible order are not the subjects of human acts “by their nature and as parts of sense-life,” as we have seen, but “in this sense that, made to obey reason, they share in its light.” Accordingly, the intellect, will, irascible and concupiscible appetites, are the seats of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. “Just as all our appetitive faculties are created to be governed by the orders of the reason, so all our faculties are created to be directed by the divine touch, as by a superior power. Hence, as in all our faculties capable of human acts, infused virtues are present, so gifts are to be found there also, that is to say, in the reason and the appetitive faculty.”²² “And then the Angelic Doctor goes on to enumerate the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and to place in the reason, wisdom and intelligence, counsel and science; in the will, piety; in the irascible appetite, fortitude; and, finally, in the concupiscible appetite, fear of the Lord.

It is to the gifts of the Holy Ghost that St. Thomas attributes heroic or divine virtue.²³ We must never forget this consoling doctrine, for it is encouraging to be assured that in spite of all our misery we all have in us, when we are in the state of grace, the germs of heroism. We are thus enabled to complete the parallelism between the natural and supernatural orders in us, though not quite perfectly.²⁴ Though we all know that many men give proof of

21. Cf. S. Kolipinski, C.S.Sp. *Le Don de l'Esprit Saint*, p. 114, *Studia Friburgensia*, published under the direction of the Dominican Professors of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

22. Ia, IIae, Q. 68, Art. 4.

23. “*Superexcellentiore virtuti quam Philosophus vocat heroicam vel divinam, quae secundum nos videtur pertinere ad dona Spiritus Sancti*” (IIa, IIae, Q. 159, A. 2 ad 1).

24. Father Lemonnyer’s development of the parallelism has been to a certain extent departed from here.

unsuspected qualities when unexpectedly called upon, and though we all have heard the saying that every soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack, yet we cannot say of each and everyone in the natural order, at least with the same assurance, what we can affirm of every soul in which supernatural life is to be found, that it has in it the plant of which heroism is the flower.

Before passing on, care must be taken to add that St. Thomas does not restrict the action of the gifts of the Holy Ghost to extraordinary feats. For the Angelic Doctor the gifts are called heroic virtues, because they move us to act by special divine inspirations, after the fashion in which we see heroes act. If our virtuous acts are performed humanly, the virtue must be called human. While, if we perform our human acts in a superhuman and divine way, our works (and consequently the virtues which are the principles of our works) will be no longer merely human, but will be, in a certain way, divine. Hence, the Philosopher, in the *Seventh Book of the Ethics*, Chap. I, distinguishes ordinary virtue from heroic virtue, which he calls divine, because its excellence makes of us gods, as it were. I assert that the gifts are distinguished from the virtues in this sense that the virtues perfect us humanly and the gifts divinely.”²⁵

One remark alone remains to be made. The theological virtues, especially charity (for in the perfection of charity lies the perfection of our real life), are preferable to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, absolutely considered (*simpliciter*). In addition, the theological virtues map out the field of activity of the gifts and form their remote rule, but, looked at from a certain point of view (*secundum quid*) the gifts are preferable even to the theological virtues, for the gifts have as their proximate rule the divine reason, and are thus not only divine in substance, but in their mode of action; in this wise they add an additional perfection to the theological virtues. The gifts are, of course, preferable to the intellectual and moral virtues.²⁶

25. III D. 34, Q. 1, A. 1. Cf. S. Kolipinski, C.S.Sp., op. cit., pp. 130, 131. Cf. Ia, IIae, Q. 69, A. 3—*donum autem excellentiori modo*.

26. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *La Perfection Chrétienne*, p. 169.
 “*Virtutes theologicae praeferuntur donis Spiritus Sancti et regulant ea; unde neque ad perfectionem septem dona perveniunt, nisi in fide, spe et charitate*

We have thus terminated the outline of the forces at the disposal of our supernatural life and attempted to bring home their significance in our real life by a comparison with the principles of activity of our natural life. This long and dry preliminary work was necessary in order to prepare the way for what is to be said of the three fundamental forms which the prayer of human beings takes.

Kinds of Prayer

Too great stress cannot be laid on the fact that our supernatural life, whether of prayer or action, is not and cannot be anything else than the bringing into play of these principles of divine life in us of which we have spoken, namely, the supernatural virtues, theological and moral, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. High above all methods and particular doctrines relating to the spiritual life, we must raise this principle as a guiding light. The essential program of our supernatural life and, if we may be permitted the expression, its natural law, may be found engraved on this very organism of our divine life, in the respective nature of each portion of it and in the hierarchical order which exists between the different parts. They are there just precisely as the essential program of our human life and its natural law are to be found traced out for us in our rational nature, substantial expression of the eternal law. It is to this law of our supernatural life that positive laws refer: it is this law which sheds light on them while at the same time showing their foundation. The same must be said of the doctrines and special methods of the supernatural life. They are of value in proportion to their agreement with this fundamental doctrine of theology, which alone makes them intelligible and profitable.

Sanctifying grace, participation in God's own nature, appears to us, then, enriched with three groups of principles of action. At the summit of the structure are to be found the gifts of the Holy Ghost: at its center, the theological virtues; at its base, in close contact with our rational human life, the infused moral virtues. Of course, this must be understood in accordance with the

fiat omne quod agunt" (Ia, IIae, Q. 68, A. 8). Cf. *Etiam* Ia, IIae, Q. 68, 1.

explanations given in the preceding sub-section. The theological virtues are, absolutely considered, at the summit of the structure, for, besides, other reasons, perfection of life lies in charity, and the action of the gifts is ever directed towards the perfecting of charity. Looked at, however, from the point of view of their proximate rule of action, which is the divine reason, for by them the Holy Ghost acts directly in the guidance of our souls, the gifts are superior to the theological virtues. This is the point of view at which we place ourselves here. To this hierarchy of organs of grace in us correspond three zones, as it were, of supernatural life, each with its own form of mental prayer. There are thus the mystical prayer of the gifts, the prayer of the theological virtues, and the prayer of the infused moral virtues. Each of these prayers, like our supernatural life itself, is composed of supernatural acts of intelligence and of supernatural acts of affection or love, combined in varying proportions. These acts proceed, in the mystical life, from the gifts; in the life of the theological virtues, from the theological virtues, and in the life of the infused moral virtues, from the infused moral virtues. Reserving mystical prayer for a special section, an attempt will be made here to describe the two other kinds of mental prayer, with particular reference to the principles—the theological and moral virtues—which are brought into play in them.²⁷

27. Private prayer only is the subject of this article, and in private prayer, only mental prayer is spoken of. Public prayer is the prayer offered to God “in the person of the whole Church” (St. Thomas: Comment, in *I. Ep. ad Corinthios*, Cap. xi., Lect. ii.), for example, the prayers said by priests in Church. We must never forget that the Catholic Church is not a mere spiritual administration (the purposeful use of the term “Vatican” in the press is meant to inculcate this idea, and even to debase this already inadequate notion by the insinuation of intrigue). The Catholic Church is the first great contemplative, the Mystical Body of Christ, of which Our Lord Jesus Christ is the head, and Whose members are linked together by the action of the Holy Ghost. The movements and actions of this great contemplative are carried into execution by human, very human, instruments, but they proceed from divine wisdom and from grace, participation in God’s life. (Cf. article in *Revue des Jeunes*, by M. J. Maritain, on “The Church and the Philosophy of St. Thomas.”)

In *Ila*, *Ilae*, Q. 83, on Prayer, St. Thomas points out, in Art. 1, that prayer is an act of the practical reason, because it belongs to the reason to set in order.

“Prayer is spoken reason.” In the Reply to the Second Objection in the same article, St. Thomas says: “The will moves the reason to its end: wherefore, nothing hinders the act of reason, under the motion of the will, from tending to an end such as charity, which is union with God. Now, prayer tends to God through being moved by the will of charity, as it were, and this in two ways. First, on the part of the object...to be united to God. ...Secondly, on the part of the petitioner, who ought to approach the person whom he petitions...or mentally. Hence, Damascene says that ‘prayer is the raising up of the mind to God.’ Then, in Art. 12, he speaks as follows: “I answer that prayer is twofold, common and individual. Common prayer is that which is offered to God by the ministers of the Church, representing the body of the faithful: wherefore, suchlike prayer should come to the knowledge of the whole people for whom it is offered: and this would not be possible unless it were vocal prayer. Therefore, it is reasonably interior acts of the infused moral virtues. These latter, if we suppose the acts of intention, are chiefly acts of choice (*electiones*) which must lead on, since we are in the moral and practical order, to that final act of the ordained that the ministers of the Church should say these prayers even in a loud voice, so that they may come to the knowledge of all.

“On the other hand, individual prayer is that which is offered by any single person, whether he pray for himself or for others; and it is not essential to such a prayer as this that it be vocal. And yet, the voice is employed in suchlike prayers for three reasons. First, in order to excite interior devotion, whereby the mind of the person praying is raised to God, because by means of external signs, whether of words or of deeds, the human mind is moved in regard of apprehension, and consequently also in regard of the affections. Hence, Augustine says to Proba (Ep. cxxx.) that “by means of words and other signs we arouse ourselves more sharply to an increase of holy desires.” Hence, then alone should we use words and suchlike signs when they help to excite the mind internally. But if they distract or in any way impede the mind we should abstain from them; and this happens chiefly to those whose mind is sufficiently prepared for devotion without having recourse to those signs....

Secondly, the voice is used in praying as though to pay a debt, so that man may serve God with all that he has from God, that is to say, not only with his mind, but also with his body: and this applies to prayer considered especially as satisfactory. ... Thirdly, we have recourse to vocal prayer through a certain overflow from the soul into the body, through excess of feeling; according to Ps. 15:9, ‘My heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced.’” (English Translation of the Summa. Italics mine.) Cf. *Catechismus Romanus (De Oratione)*.

Thus prayer is essentially an act of our poor fallible reason, putting itself in touch with the divine infallible reason. It is essentially the linking up of that

In the lowest form of mental prayer, that of the infused moral virtues, the intellectual element is contributed, principally, by the infused virtue of prudence, which lights up our whole supernatural moral life. The acts of affection and love are represented by the virtue of prudence which is called in theological language, the *praeceptum* and which is called in the language of spiritual writers the “resolution.”²⁸ Thus we have the essential elements of the prayer of the infused moral virtues, in the terminology of Thomistic theology. A few additional remarks will suffice to define it in its concrete reality and make clear its value. The virtue of prudence, which has its seat in the practical reason, and is charged with the direction of the individual moral life, is by its very nature discursive and deliberative. So, in the prayer of the infused moral virtues, the intellectual element, or to be more exact, that element which in philosophical language is called “reasoning” (*discursus*), and which has for object practical affairs, is legitimately predominant. To this form of prayer belongs the name of meditation, and it is the form of prayer properly designated by this term. It is really prayer, though of a restricted and imperfect kind, thanks to the intervention of the moral virtue of religion. The interior acts of the latter virtue are appropriately linked up with the deliberations of the virtue of prudence, the acts of choice of the moral virtues and

by which we are, by which we have being, with the source of being. The role of the body, which is by the soul, is secondary.

28. In the whole process of a deliberate act of the will, there are twelve acts, six of which belong to the intelligence and six to the will. To the intelligence belong: (a) in relation to the end—apprehension of the end to be attained or judgment of suitability of end, judgment as to its attainment; (b) in relation to means—counsel, discretionary judgment, command, passive application of the faculties (*usus passivus*).

To the will belong:

(a) in relation to the end—mere complacency, efficacious intention, fruition; (b) in relation to the means—approving consent, choice, execution. A splendid outline of the interplay of these acts of intellect and will is given in Gredt: *Elementa Philosophiae*, Vol. I, p. 431. *Editio Tertia*. Cf. Hugon, O.P.: *Metaphysica Psychologica*, Tract II, Quaest II, Art. III. Cf. also Prummer: *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, tom i., p. 29; and Ia, IIae, Q. 8–17, and *Revue Thomiste* (1926), pp. 414–415.

the categorical command by which prudence, which presides over the whole reasoning-process, finally consummates meditation. Of course, the interior acts of the virtue of religion, in the prayer of demand, are stirred up and invigorated by the theological virtue of hope. Besides, the theological virtues of faith and charity, the former as beacon-light of supernatural prudence, the latter as the vivifying force of the infused moral virtues, are not certainly without influence on the mental prayer of these virtues, but their influence makes itself felt from above and by the intermediary of the inferior group of virtues. Directed in its entirety to practical resolutions, to prudential precepts, meditation is an exercise of practical reason and is of the active life. It does not belong, properly speaking, to the contemplative life.

It is now time to pass from the mental prayer of the moral virtues to theological prayer, or the prayer of the theological virtues. The analysis of this prayer is, at least in its broad outlines, easy. To the virtue of faith belongs the privilege of giving light therein. This is a point of enormous importance, and which imprints on this prayer, characteristics quite different from those of meditation or the mental prayer of the infused moral virtues. Far nobler than the virtue of prudence, which perfects the practical reason, the theological virtue of faith, perfection of the intelligence, is, like the intelligence, primarily speculative or contemplative. Although it is not freed from the law of the human mind, which obliges it to pursue truth by “composition and division” (by the union and separation of thought-objects), it is much less discursive than prudence. It aspires to intuition and strives to reach it.²⁹

29. “Let us not forget that the human intelligence is intuitive by nature and predisposition. Owing to its substantial union with matter, it can only acquire knowledge by starting from sense-perceptible realities and by the help of phantasms. But apart from this necessity, our intelligence is intuitive. Its first act is an intuition, the intuition of ‘Being,’ or more concretely, ‘of a thing that is,’ and at the same time there appear to it suddenly with irrefragable (indisputable) evidence, the first principles, for example: ‘The same being cannot be, at the same time and under the same aspect, what it is and not be (it).’ ‘The special characteristic of these principles,’ says St. Thomas, ‘is that not only is their truth necessary, but that one sees necessarily that this truth holds of itself.’ (I Post Analy. I. 19.) Again: *Intellectus naturaliter cognoscit ens*

The prayer of the theological virtues will resemble it, and will tend to intellectual simplification. If faith has taken the desirable precaution of urging the intelligence to accumulate, by spiritual reading and theological study, a reserve of real light, it will see itself able to enrich theological prayer with thoughts at once accurate and simple. And these thoughts, instead of causing the prayer to become sluggish and checking its progress, will, on the contrary, stir up and strengthen the acts of love to the production of which this prayer tends as to its real end.

Another difference between the prayer of the theological virtues and that of the infused moral virtues is deserving of mention. As a theological virtue, faith has for proper object God Himself, either directly in Himself or in Jesus Christ, by Whom He revealed

et ea quae per se sunt entis in quantum huiusmodi, in qua cognitione fundatur primorum principiorum notitia.' (II *Contra Gentes*, C. 83.) ... We are obliged to have recourse to reasoning. But it is only a means, a transition-stage. And it must wind up by an intuition, as it began. Only on this condition, does one know a thing. 'The research of reason which starts from a simple intuition of the intelligence, for it is from the principles of which the intelligence is in possession that research proceeds, reaches its term also in the certitude of the intelligence, when the conclusions attained are resolved into the principles from which they draw their certitude.' (III *Sent.*, D. 35, Q. 1, A. 2, Q. 2.) And St. Thomas adds that by these intuitions, the human intelligence reaches out to the angelic intelligence, just as the animals, by their faculty of appreciation (*vis aestimativa*), by their instinct, reach out to the human intelligence inasmuch as it reasons. '*Ratio comparatur ad intellectual ut ad principium et ut ad terminum.* ... *Unde quamvis cognitio animae humanae propria sit per viam rationis, est tamen in ea aliqua participatio illius simplicis cognitionis quae in substantiis superioribus invenitur, ex quo vim intellectivam habere dicuntur.*' (St. Thom., *De Veritate* Q. 15, Art. 1.)

"Thus, then, every man is intuitive, and nobody, except abnormal individuals, is deprived of the rudimentary intuitions of 'Being' and of the first principles. ... It is owing to this faculty that man is capable of being raised to mystical contemplation. It is to this intuitive function of the human intelligence that the gifts of intelligence, knowledge and wisdom link themselves to strengthen it. (Cf. IIa, IIae, Q. 8, A. 1, corp.)" Joret, O.P.: *La Contemplation Mystique*, pp. 83, etc.

Faith has for object what God Himself sees, but He keeps the eyes of faith veiled, so that by it, the divine essence is attained without being seen. Cf. article by J. Maritain in *Revue de Philosophie* (1926), pp. 576, 577.

Himself and drew near to us. Consequently, theological prayer, leaving in the background the direct consideration of the virtuous government of our acts and our passions, about which meditation is continually occupied, is chiefly concerned with God, His perfections, His inner life, His supernatural government, general and particular, His gifts of grace; then with Our Lord Jesus Christ, His life, death and permanent role as head of the Church.

A third point of difference between these two forms of prayer must also be indicated. Meditation is an exercise of the active life, as prudence is a practical virtue, whereas, the prayer of the theological virtues, taking its intellectual origin in the virtue of faith, which is primarily speculative, belongs to the contemplative life. Accordingly, meditation has for end to lead us to practical resolutions, and in this exclusively is to be found the value of meditation, if we leave out of account the acts of the virtue of religion which are mingled therewith. A meditation which does not bear fruit in resolutions is a failure. This is not true of the prayer of the theological virtues, which is contemplative. Its direct object is not the right ordering of our practical life. It arrives at this result more efficaciously, it is true, than meditation, but by way of overflow and of natural consequence, and not as the end aimed at directly. It has its end in itself; it is of value by itself, that is to say, by the affective movements of charity, to which it is destined to give rise, and in which it takes delight. Of these acts of love, the value and merit are supreme.

Thus we come to the effective elements in theological prayer. The prayer of the infused moral virtues deliberates, in presence of God, on the right ordering of our moral life and of our external activity. As theological prayer is completely occupied with God Himself and aims at taking the form of a direct conversation with Him, it demands the presence of God with still greater force. And He is there as the guest of every soul in the state of grace.³⁰ Even where grace and charity are not, God must be present in order to preserve the creature in being, but when He has communicated to us by sanctifying grace a participation in His own nature, by

30. *Dulcis hospes animae*, as we recite with Holy Church in the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*.

means of the virtue of charity, which springs from grace, we obtain a living, vital, affective grasp of God as He is in His inner life. “God is thus present as known, loved, possessed. Henceforward, He is our guest. It is a new mode of presence.”³¹ And He dwells in us even outside of these passing moments in which we recollect ourselves and consciously seek to live with Him.

Theological prayer, then, opens by an act of faith by which we bring home to ourselves that through divine grace we have God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost present in us. This act of faith is at the same time the bringing of our whole being into touch with God and thus bringing it under the influence of its cause.³² Now, God is the efficient cause of the life of our souls, natural and supernatural,³³ so we bring ourselves by prayer under His action that we may really live. “Prayer,” St. Thomas says (IIa, IIae, Q. 83, Art. 15), “proceeds from charity through the medium of religion, of which prayer is an act as stated above (Art. 3), and with the concurrence of other virtues requisite for the goodness of prayer, viz., humility and faith. For the offering of prayer itself to God belongs to religion, while the desire for the thing that we pray to be accomplished belongs to charity. Faith is necessary in reference to God, to Whom we pray; that is, we need to believe that we can obtain from Him what we seek. Humility is necessary on the part of the person praying, because he recognizes his neediness.” By faith, then, we realize that we have God present in us, and by charity we are put into loving communication with God from the very beginning of the prayer of the theological virtues. Accordingly, acts of love speedily become mingled with the introductory acts of humility and of the other virtues by which we begin, and here we behold the supreme

31. Joret: *La Contemplation Mystique*, pg. 16. Cf. 20, 21.

32. Speaking of Society, Pope Leo XIII says: “When an organism perishes and corrupts, it is because it had ceased to be under the action of the causes which had given it its form and constitution. To make it healthy and flourishing again, it is necessary to restore it to the vivifying action of those same causes.” (Apostolical Letter, March 19, 1902.)

33. “*Deus est vita effective et animae per charitatem et corporis per animam: sed formatter charitas est vita animae, sicut et anima vita corporis*” (IIa, IIae, Q. 23, Art. 2 ad 2).

dignity and greatness of theological prayer. We lower it, in fact, when we see in it only an instrument of moral progress and when we want to hurry on to practical resolutions, as if they were the only thing that mattered. The world and all that is in it, practical resolutions and everything else, are of value in proportion as they are animated by the love of God. The whole visible world remains without its crowning beauty if love, supernatural love, spring not from human hearts. It is to that end that everything is directed by God, namely, that acts of pure supernatural love of Himself should be elicited. We really live in proportion as we are, to use the scholastic expression, “in act of love,” and it was on this that the Little Flower concentrated the whole effort of her life. We even lower the dignity of this prayer, if we consider it as a means of progressing in charity. It does develop charity or love in us, but this is because, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, it is the highest act of our supernatural life, the perfection of charity, and in the perfection of charity lies the perfection of life.

Charity, St. Thomas teaches, will be perfect only in heaven, when the soul shall be immutably fixed in the act of love. The act of love will there be one and eternal. Pilgrims on the earth cannot attain to that fullness of perfection, and yet, because the perfection of this world is only a beginning of celestial perfection, we ought to try to live by love as actually as possible in order to arrive at perfection. Now, there are necessarily two parts in our spiritual life: on the one hand, all the activities of the active life, and, on the other, those of the contemplative life. To live, then, by love the soul must do everything by love and, for that purpose, set the act of charity in the heart of all other operations. Thus, the whole active life, which is concerned especially with our neighbor, becomes a continual exercise of fraternal charity; and the whole of contemplative life, which is concerned principally with God, becomes a constant exercise of the love of God. The Little Flower understood this law admirably. She has done more. She has preferred love to everything else, and in love that which is most perfect, its act.³⁴ By charity we love God

34. Cf. *La Bienheureuse Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, (extrait de La Vie Spirituelle, Mai, 1924)*, p. 114. Cf. English Translation of this work: *Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus; Four Studies*, p. 124.

with a love of friendship. Friendship, however, means reciprocal benevolence. We wish well to God as our friend, and He returns our wish and our benevolence. We wish Him all good. His own goodness and all the good that He possesses or that it belongs by right to Him to possess. Now, the good that belongs to God is twofold, what we call His extrinsic glory, and that essential good which we call His intrinsic glory. Our love takes a different form according as it regards either glory of God. Our affection, doubtless, has reason to rejoice concerning that extrinsic glory of God, outlined in the opening section, of the "Our Father"; it has, above all, to desire and long for it, because this extrinsic glory is incomplete, and is being fiercely combated. We must long to see all human wills tending in unison straight to God. If opposition and conflict must be, we should pray that it be merely divergence in the choice of means whereby to glorify God, and not hatred of God and His Church, the Mystical Body of His Son. We must desire with all our hearts that, even if limited human intelligences take different views of things, they may keep their wills perfectly detached from self and self's short-sighted interests and remain undividedly attached to God. This would mean in all of us complete subjection of the natural life of reason and sense to the supernatural life. But, however beautiful this vehement desire to see the consummation of the extrinsic glory of God may be, there is a still lovelier act of charity, the object of which is the intrinsic glory of God. This glory of God is His own being, His perfections, His happiness, His divine prerogatives, all that of which the eternal possession constitutes the Godhead, our God. With regard to this His intrinsic glory, our love of benevolence has nothing to desire, but has only to acquiesce, approve and rejoice. This loving joy in the eternal being and subsistent goodness of God, is the highest act of love in which divine charity finds expression; it is the supreme act of our supernatural life, the end to which all the other acts of the moral virtues, and even the theological virtues, are meant to lead us.

Let us develop a little the friendly character of this joy and this loving desire. We rejoice in the well-being of God as we rejoice in the well-being of a friend. God's happiness in Himself appeals to us as does the happiness of a friend. Now, a friend is one looked on as another self. We consider his happiness as our own. We long for

it and rejoice at it, as if we ourselves and our own well-being were in question. This is the extraordinary privilege of charity, that by it we can look upon God and ourselves as one and His interests as our own.

Another important remark remains to be made. Between friends there is identity of love and hatred.³⁵ Accordingly, as charity is friendship between God and us, it demands the complete agreement of our wills with His adorable will. But charity does more than demand this agreement, for it disposes us thereunto and aims with all its force at bringing it about. Remark that there is not yet question of doing the will of God, but of willing to do it. The agreement of which we are speaking belongs to the order of intention, like the interior act of charity of which it is a property. In this order, however, it must be complete, without reservation or contradiction. If our friendship with God is perfect, it will make us accept as our own to the fullest extent His will, the will of our friend. And thus we come to a point in the prayer of the theological virtues where, as a natural infallible result of the charity which urges us on, the question will present itself of our practical fidelity to God's will, as manifested by the objective order of life, and of our progress in the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. Loving God and all that He loves, we shall be led on to elicit interior acts of attachment and of ardent desire concerning those immense spheres of moral goodness which it is the function of the infused moral virtues perfectly to subject to our real life. Thus, we long to handle with prudence all the interests committed to our care, so that the real life of the world may be furthered in the best manner possible: we desire to practice justice towards all, so that the cause of the real life may flourish, and so on. Divine charity is efficacious to persuade us to enter into God's views and thus prove ourselves true friends: it is a quality which by its sanctifying force lifts the prayer of the theological virtues high above meditation. Charity fortifies those intentions which are the life and soul of the moral virtues. Thus the love of God flows over into the active life, and when one passes from the contemplative

35. The formula, *idem velle, idem nolle*, expresses this identity.

life to the active life, it is “not by subtraction, but by addition,” to use St. Thomas’s phrase IIa, IIae, Q. 182, A. 1 ad 2).

The point of view at which we must put ourselves to govern ourselves supernaturally is exclusively the point of view of charity, of God loved above all. It is the point of view of God Himself, the point of view at which, if the expression may be permitted, God places Himself to regulate His own life. Supernatural love of God is both the universal motive-power of all our activity as well as the supreme principle of unification for the direction of that activity. It is the task of the infused virtue of prudence to guide that activity in conformity with the ends of charity. The really prudent man welcomes the teachings of faith; he takes as point of departure of his work of self-guidance the intentions of supernatural love vibrating in his heart; he strives to assure their reign in all the details of his life. For what is meant by being supernaturally just, if not the being just for the love of God? And the same is true of temperance and fortitude. It is by this continual dependence on our divine life that the prudence of the children of God diverges at the very outset from the prudence of the flesh, which places the end of life in mere sense-pleasure. It is this which makes it reject any compromise with the prudence of the world which fixes the end of life in the good things of the earth. Finally, it is this which raises it above mere natural prudence, which aims at the good of man in accordance with the exigencies of reason. Supernatural prudence lifts up to the height of the aims of faith, hope and charity, the just mean which is the rule of its guidance, thus producing in the whole conduct of life a more complete purification as well as a more exacting unification. Of course, it must never be forgotten that our supernatural life comes to us, not directly from God, but through the sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the aim of the infused virtue of prudence is the conformity of our activity with that of our divine Lord.

Meanwhile, in the bosom of charity, another love has been awakened, distinct from the love of benevolence. It is the love of God as our supreme good, the possession of which can alone render us perfectly happy. The good which we now consider in Him is no longer His, but ours. It is for ourselves that we love Him, not

for Himself. The love of friendship can lay hold of this love, raise it to its own level, but not change its nature. Why, indeed, should charity absorb the love of hope to the point of doing away with it? Is not that love natural and legitimate, by which we express our dependence on God, as not only creating, but also perfecting our being? It is glorious for God both that we should love Him under the aspect of our unique supreme good and that we cannot in a certain manner act otherwise.

Then again this vehement desire to possess God as our good, strengthened and purified by the love of friendship, and ever propelled upwards by the virtue of hope, becomes in turn in the prayer of the theological virtues marvelously efficacious: we are inspired to embrace firmly the means of supernatural progress by which we carve out our path to God. Here again, for the second time, the prayer of the theological virtues shows its practical fecundity, while from the simple glances of faith to the protestations of charity, it goes on developing, renewing and increasing its fervor.

Method of Theological Prayer

Mental prayer is sometimes made too complicated by methods that may be useful for beginners, but which provoke a reaction in a good many souls after a while. The following of the method becomes a mere mechanical movement in time, and there is no real entering into action of the forces of the divine life in us. The end—loving God in act so that, one with Him in mind and heart, the divine life may communicate itself freely to us and through us to the world—must never be forgotten in learning and utilizing the means. As prayer is a movement of elevation of the soul to God, a method of prayer must be simple, so as not to interfere in any way with the spontaneity of our relations with God in us, while it must at the same time give scope for and expression to the essential acts of the movement of the soul.³⁶

36. Cf. *La Perfection Chrétienne*, by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrangé, O.P., pp. 255–270, for a fuller treatment of what is touched on in this sub-section.

It is clear that mental prayer is not merely an act of the intelligence, like study. There are speculative minds and zealous students, even of theology, who are not, for all that, contemplative souls or prayerful minds. If their studies bring them more pleasure than sense-amusements, this pleasure comes from knowledge alone and not from charity; they are moved far more by love of knowledge than by love of God, and this pleasure often increases their pride and love of themselves. Study, especially of theology, as we have seen, can be made an act of the contemplative life through having as its motive force the love of God and by tending towards union with Him in love as its end. Mental prayer must always proceed thus; the soul must mount upwards to God on the two wings of the intellect and the will, aided by grace. Prayer is, accordingly, a movement of supernatural knowledge and love.

Now, what are the essential acts of theological prayer? We have seen in the preceding sub-section, following St. Thomas (IIa, IIae, Q. 83, Art. 15) that “Prayer proceeds from charity through the medium of religion, of which prayer is an act as stated above (Art. 3),³⁷ and with the concurrence of other virtues requisite for the goodness of prayer, viz., humility and faith. For the offering of prayer itself to God belongs to religion.” Charity opens the

37. “I answer that, as stated above (Q. 81, A. 2–4), it belongs properly to religion to show honor to God; wherefore all those things through which reverence is shown to God belong to religion. Now, man shows reverence to God by means of prayer, in so far as he subjects himself to Him, and by praying confesses that he needs Him as the author of his goods. Hence it is evident that prayer is properly an act of religion.” (IIa, IIae, Q. 83, A. 3.) The acts of religion are directed to God as to their sole and unique end, and thus the virtue of religion, in the order of dignity of ends, comes closest to the theological virtues. It is the highest of the moral virtues, account being always taken, of course, of the fact that the first place is reserved to the virtue of prudence in the order of the direction of moral activity. Religion directs to God the acts of worship, prayer, adoration, vows, sacrifice, as well as the acts of the other moral virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. Cf. articles by Father Gardeil, O.P., in *Revue Thomiste*, 1919. How the liturgy, fruit of the virtue of religion, disposes for the prayer of the theological virtues is admirably explained in an article by Father Lemonnyer, O.P., in *La Vie Spirituelle*, Oct., 1924.

eyes of faith on God indwelling in us in the state of grace and then animates the virtue of religion to subject our being to God living in us. Coming into God's presence by religion, recognizing Him as the supreme source of all being, supernatural and natural, and of our being, in particular, we bow down before Him in all humility. Every prayer must be humble, for we who come into God's presence to converse with Him must remember what we are. Of ourselves, we are nothing, and even less than nothing, for our sins are a disorder inferior to nothingness itself.³⁸

Humility gets rid of the chief obstacle to grace, which is pride. Far from crushing us down, it reminds us, for it is linked with the virtue of magnanimity, that with God in us we have the omnipotent source of sanctity ever seeking to pour His divine life more fully into us, and through us into the world, if only we give Him a free hand.³⁹ This thought should be strongly before our minds at the beginning of our prayer, so that it may proceed from grace and not from an empty sentimentality, infinitely inferior to grace. The sight of our sins and the vivid conviction, in presence of the God of purity, that our contribution to the world is only imperfection and disorder will stir up the virtue of penance, by which we express regret to God for all the obstacles to His mastery over our souls that we have placed therein.

After the acts of humility and penance, comes a simple act of faith, without set form of words on some fundamental truth: God, the source of the divine life, which is in us, His perfections, His goodness, or our Lord, the mysteries of His life, of His passion, of His glory, or the duty of avoiding sin, of tending to the end of our Order or Congregation, if we happen to be in religion, or of accomplishing our little daily task as members of our divine Lord's

38. We may express the contrast, scholastically, as follows: *Non-ens est non-ens simpliciter, est extra ordinem entis. Peccatum est non-ens in ente, est contra ordinem (debitum) entis.* "For every action, in so far as it has 'being,' is good; but, on the contrary, in so far as it lacks any of the fullness of 'being' due to a human action, to that extent does it fall short of goodness and is evil." (Ia, IIae, Q. 18, A. 1 in corp.)

39. On the union of humility and magnanimity, see St. Thomas (IIa, IIae, Q. 129, A. 3 ad 4).

Mystical Body and thus furthering the diffusion of the divine life in the world. On feast-days, the sacred liturgy will supply the subject matter of the act of faith which may be found in a few words of the Gospel or of the Divine Office. St. John of the Cross taught his disciples to give only a very short time to the construction of representations of scenes of the Gospel and to lift up their minds straightway to the mystery, and bow down in faith and love before Our Lord's sufferings and the infinite value of His redeeming love. This act of faith, superior to all reasoning, ought to be always accompanied by love and thus tend to become more and more a look of loving faith.

This look of (loving) faith at some divine truth gives birth to an act of hope. We desire the happiness, the peace, promised by God to those who follow the Lord Jesus. But, as we know that we cannot reach that peace and that happiness except by the aid of divine grace, we implore that grace, relying on God's help (hope thus leads to the prayer of demand, which is an act of the virtue of religion). Thus, from "I believe," the soul passes on spontaneously to: "I desire, I thirst, I hope "for the union of all men and all nations in the Mystical Body of Christ: "Thy kingdom come."

Confidence in the help of God reminds us of the fact that He is good in Himself and not merely on account of His kindness to us. (Cf. Ia, IIae, Q. 62, A. 4.) So, an act of charity spontaneously arises from our hearts, under the form of an act of love of Him Who is love. "God is love" (1Jn. 4:8). If our sense-life comes to our aid in these acts; that is, if we feel that we love God above all things, we ought to accept the help of our lower life with pleasure, but it is not necessary that we should thus feel. This feeling disappears in periods of aridity and dryness. Our act of love must aim at depth and calm, directing by an act of the rational will our whole being to God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We may express it thus: "My God, I do not want to lie when I tell You that I love You. Grant me the favor of loving You and pleasing You in everything. I really want to do so: I want to mean it fully without reserve."

This affective charity must become effective charity: "I want to conform my will to that of God. I want my will and every human will to tend upwards to Him through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to break with everything that makes me the slave of sin, pride, selfishness, sensuality. I want, Lord, to share more fully in this divine life which You are offering me. It is for this You came, 'that I might have life and might have it more abundantly.' (Jn. 10:10.) Increase my love for You. You want only to give. I want to receive as You would wish me to receive, in suffering and in trial as in joy and consolation, whether You come to make me an associate in Your joyful mysteries or in Your sorrowful mysteries, for all lead to that eternal life which will unite us forever. Make me faithful to You today in that point which I have so often neglected."

At this culminating point of our prayer, the knowledge of faith and the love of hope and of charity tend, under the divine influence, to coalesce into a look of supernatural love. This look is the summit of what we can attain by our efforts aided by God's grace. If we refer back to the diagram (Section III, Sub-section A) and leave out of consideration for the moment the action of the gifts we, in this act of love, direct our whole being back to God under the virtue of charity.

With our natural being in order, thanks to the infused and acquired virtues, we tend back to God under the theological virtues linked together by charity. Of course, without the action of the gifts, there will not be complete harmony in our being, but what is here aimed at is to represent what we must try to reach in order to prepare for the action of the gifts, so far as in us lies.⁴⁰

Theological prayer, thus tending to a simple look of ardent love, is a preparation of the soul for infused contemplation which in the giving depends on God alone, and in which we are passive under the action of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. "There is a kind of contemplation which is, with the help of grace, the fruit of our human activity, of our reflection or meditation upon the author we are reading, or upon the words of the preacher to whom we are listening. Grace and the theological virtues certainly act therein; there is even a latent influence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; but without ordered human activity, the soul would not succeed in reaching this kind of contemplation, which for this reason is

40. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.: *La Perfection Chrétienne*, pp. 273, 274.

called acquired. ...But if the loving contemplation of God is not the fruit of human activity aided by grace, we must call it infused, not acquired. ...Why? It is not merely because it comes from the infused virtues, for so does the contemplation that is called acquired. Neither is it called infused, as if this term meant that the act itself of contemplation were infused or produced immediately by God alone acting in us, for thus it would not be a vital, free, meritorious act. It is called infused or passive in this sense, that it is not in our power to elicit this act at will, as we do an ordinary act of faith. All that is in our power is to receive it with docility and prepare ourselves for it by recollection. ...This infused contemplation is also called supernatural, because it is doubly (reduplicative) so: not only as regards the substance of the act, like the act of infused faith, but also as regards the mode or manner of the act which is here the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, a mode no longer latent and passing, but manifest and frequent.”⁴¹ We have seen what theological prayer is, so we may now ask ourselves the question how we are to arrive at it and persevere in it. Prayer is a matter mainly of God’s grace. It is, then, to be expected that preparation for prayer consists rather in humility and mortification than in merely mechanical methods: “Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3.) God deigns to enlighten interiorly the humble ones of this earth, such as the Cure of Ars. And to converse freely with God, our souls must be detached from all disordered self-interests of daily life, such as natural affections, jealous movements, rash judgments, and mental repetitions of the slights we have endured from our neighbor.⁴² We must deepen in ourselves, then, the conviction that of ourselves we have nothing except sin and imperfection, and thus remove pride, which God hates, while seeking to grasp that the divine life which is in us through Our Lord is a form of love, ever aiming at exteriorizing itself in love. To enable divine love so to manifest itself in our life and actions, we must practice the subjection of everything natural in us to the divine life; hence

41. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. *Ibid.*

42. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.: *La Perfection Chrétienne*, p. 267.

the necessity of mortification. We must endeavor not to have the tendency of our actions stop short at self, but to have them proceed onwards to God, animated by supernatural love. This purification of daily life is rightly called the remote preparation for prayer. Evidently it must precede the choice of a subject of prayer (or the proximate preparation), which is less important, being but the fanning of a fire of love which has never been permitted to die down, but has been fed by frequent acts of complete generosity. “Thus, fervent, humble souls have no trouble with the immediate preparation of mental prayer. Such souls will often make mental prayer while engaged in manual work,⁴³ by loving the beauty of life in order, that is, in conformity with the will of God.

We must persevere in this prayer when once attained; it is a hard struggle against self and the demon, in which many, even very advanced, souls have faltered. “Souls who have striven for a long time get discouraged, as Saint Teresa says, when they are only a few paces from the source of living water. They fall back. Without mental prayer, they no longer have the strength to carry the cross, and they yield to the attractions of a superficial life, in which others might be saved, perhaps, but in which they run the risk of being lost, because their powers lead them to overstep the mark. This tendency on the part of their faculties to go to excess was permitted them, and even demanded of them, if we may so speak, on the side of the love of God, of which the measure is to be measureless, but, everywhere else, excess leads them to ruin. For certain souls, naturally cast in noble mold, there can be no question of mediocrity. If they do not belong completely to God, they will belong completely to themselves against God. They will seek to enjoy their own individuality and their own powers, and thus they run the risk of making of themselves their own absolute end, in God’s place. The angels must choose between burning love and irremediable mortal sin, for venial sin, St. Thomas says, was impossible for them. The angelic intelligence sees too far and embraces all the consequences. Angels or devils, very holy or very wicked, such were the alternatives. Now, there are souls that have

43. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.: *op. cit.* p. 268.

something of the angelic nature in them, and, for them, it is very dangerous not to persevere in prayer, contenting themselves with being present thereat in the body only, without any act of real love. This means the giving up of the interior life and perhaps ruin.”⁴⁴

To keep us humble and spur us on to detachment from the things of sense and self and to attachment to God alone, the study of the *Summa* of St. Thomas is of inestimable help. When one has grasped the sublime exposition of the objective order of being, natural and supernatural, given by St. Thomas, one has acquired a powerful help in tending upwards to God in supernatural love through Our Lord Jesus Christ, our mystical head. “Thomas has told us that the chief fruits of sacred study are a great love of God and a great desire for eternal things.”⁴⁵

44. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., op. cit., p. 269.

45. Encyclical Letter: *Studiorum Ducem*.

Part IV

Mystical Prayer, or Prayer of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost

Progress in Charity

Writing to the director of the esteemed Dominican review, *La Vie Spirituelle*, on the 21st September, 1921, Pope Benedict XV said: “In our day, many neglect the supernatural life and cultivate in its place a vague and inconsistent sentimentalism. It is absolutely necessary, then, to repeat oftener what Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church have taught us on this subject, taking as our guide St. Thomas Aquinas, who has so clearly exposed their doctrine on the elevation of the supernatural life. The attention of souls must be drawn to the conditions required for the progress of the grace of the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which the full development is found in the mystical life.”

First, we shall see that, as the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are infused into our souls along with divine grace, develop along with it, the infused contemplation of the gifts is in the normal line of development of the supernatural life. Later, we shall treat briefly of the nature of this prayer of the gifts and of the dispositions preparatory thereto.

Christian perfection consists essentially in charity (*Summa Theol.*, IIa, IIae, Q. 184, Art. 3). “A being is perfect inasmuch as it reaches its end which is its final perfection. Now, the final end of human life is God, and charity it is which unites us to Him according to the text of St. John: ‘He that abideth in charity abideth in God and God in Him.’ Accordingly, the perfection of Christian life consists especially in charity.⁴⁶ “The Angelic Doctor

46. IIa, IIae, Q. 184, Art. I.

adds farther on: "Perfection is found principally in the love of God and secondarily in the love of our neighbor, which form the object of the chief commandments of the divine law. It is only accidentally in the means or instruments of perfection which are indicated to us by the evangelical counsels."⁴⁷

Hence, perfection of life comes under the divine command, for the two precepts of the divine law enjoin charity, the twofold love of God and of one's neighbor. "But it would be a mistake to suppose that the love of God and of one's neighbor comes under the law to a certain degree only, and that whatever exceeds that measure is merely matter of counsel. That such is not the case is evident from the very form of the precept which indicates perfection: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. For the two expressions 'whole' and 'perfect' are synonymous. ...Hence the Apostle says (1Tim. 1:5): 'Now, the end of the commandment is charity.' But the end does not admit of any measure or limit, in which it differs from the means. A doctor does not limit the degree to which he intends to restore health, but he does regulate the amount of the remedies to be taken and determines the course of treatment to be followed to restore health."⁴⁸ "Hence we must

47. IIa, IIae, Q. 184, A. 3. The following summary of the Thomistic doctrine on perfection may be found useful. It is taken from L. Lavaud's excellent commentary on the Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*, p. 77:—"Perfection consists essentially in the total accomplishment of the precepts, that is to say, in the practice of all the virtues. But because charity is the form of the virtues and because all the precepts have for end, love. Perfection consists in a special way and formally in charity, principally in the love of God and, secondarily, in the love of our neighbor. The other virtues being, as it were, the matter which charity informs, to continue the scholastic comparison, it may be said that perfection consists materially in the accomplishment of the other precepts or the practice of the theological virtues (faith and hope) and the moral virtues. All these virtues belong to the essence of perfection and are necessary elements of it, just as the body which is informed by the soul enters into the essence of man. The evangelical counsels are an excellent, but not indispensable, means to reach the perfection of charity and of the other virtues. We may say, then, that perfection consists instrumentally in the practice of the evangelical counsels."

48. IIa, IIae, Q. 184, A. 3.

continually repeat to ourselves: “I have not yet carried out my duty to the full: I have not yet got to the end of the precept.” Our motto must ever be: *Excelsior!* Why? Because the measure of the love of God, to use St. Bernard’s expression, is to love Him without measure.⁴⁹ This doctrine of St. Thomas is warmly praised by Pope Pius XI in the Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*: “For St. Thomas, it was a most certain doctrine that the love of God must always be on the increase: ‘This is evident from the very form of the commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart: the whole is the same as the perfect. The end of the commandment is charity, as the Apostle says (1Tim. 1:5), and the end is not subject to a measure, but only such things as are subject to the end IIa, IIae, Q. 184, 3).’ And that is why the perfection of charity falls under a commandment and why everyone, according to his state of life, is strictly bound to strive after the perfection of charity.”⁵⁰

But there are different degrees in charity, or perfection of life; that is to say, the precept may be fulfilled in ways varying in perfection. “And as that which falls under the precept can be carried out in different ways, the precept is not infringed by the mere fact that its prescriptions are not fulfilled in the best way possible. To avoid transgression of the precept, it is enough that it should be

49. “*Modus diligendi (Deum) sine modo diligere.*” (S. Bernard: “*De diligendo Deo,*” C. 1.)

50. The same doctrine is insisted upon by Pope Pius XI in the Encyclical, *Rerum Omnium*, for the third centenary of St. Francis de Sales, *Acta Apost. Sedis*, February, 1923, p. 50: “Christ has made the Church holy and the source of holiness, and it is the divine will that all those who take her as guide and mistress must strive after holiness of life: “This is the will of God,’ says St. Paul, ‘your sanctification.’ What kind of holiness? Our Lord Himself tells us: ‘Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.’ Let no one think that this invitation is addressed to a small and very exclusive number, and that it is permissible for the rest to remain in a lower degree of virtue. It is clear that this law obliges absolutely everybody without any exception.” (Translation, as found on p. 114 of *Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus: Four Studies*, has been used.)

On this point, see Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *La Perfection Chrétienne*, pp. 218–241. See also a little pamphlet: *De la vie d’Oraison (A l’Art Catholique, Paris)*, pp. 19–23.

fulfilled in some way.” Thus, “Christian perfection, that is to say, charity, even at the degree which shall be realized only in heaven, falls under the law.” (IIa, IIae, Q. 184, A. 3 ad. 2.) The degrees above the lowest do not concern the substance of the precept, but the way of accomplishing it, and they are commanded as the end towards which we must ever advance. Cajetan, the celebrated Dominican commentator on St. Thomas, says (in IIam, IIae, Q. 184, A. 3) on this point: “The perfection of charity is commanded as an end. We must desire to reach the end, the whole end. But precisely because it is the end, to avoid transgression of the precept, it is sufficient to be in the state of one day attaining this perfection, at least in eternity. Whosoever possesses even the lowest degree of charity, and is thus on the way to heaven, is in the way of one day reaching perfect charity. Thus, he avoids the transgression of the precept, which is necessary for salvation.”

“The lowest degree of divine love is met with when nothing is loved more than God or in opposition to God or as much as God. He who does not possess this degree of Christian perfection does not fulfil the precept at all.” (IIa, IIae, Q. 184, A. 3 ad 2.) He who does not get beyond this degree fulfils the precept imperfectly. It is only in heaven that the precept will be complied with perfectly. Here below, charity can succeed in excluding not only all that is incompatible with the existence of charity, like mortal sin, but also everything which prevents the soul from tending completely to God in love.⁵¹ The term to which love beckons here below is thus indicated for us. Those who have reached it love themselves for God alone and in God alone.

Charity, then, must continually develop as the first commandment of love demands. But the gifts, as habitual dispositions which render us docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, increase, like the infused virtues, with charity. By generosity, therefore, and fidelity, the soul comes more and more under the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost; the human manner of its activity will be ever more thoroughly subordinated to the manner of the inspirations of the divine guest and master indwelling by grace. “This latter mode must

51. IIa, IIae, Q. 184, A. 2, *omne illud quod impedit ne affectus mentis totaliter dirigatur ad Deum.*

finally dominate, and then we enjoy mystical life.”⁵² But why must the divine mode of the gifts finally prevail over the human mode of the virtues? Because, as has been already stated,⁵³ “the human mode of the infused virtues is essentially imperfect in relation to our supernatural end, for it is that of the human faculties in which these virtues are received. The gifts have precisely for end to remedy this imperfection by joining their action to that of the virtues, as happens especially in infused contemplation. It follows that the imperfection of the human mode of the virtues must be the more completely corrected, the more closely one approaches perfection. This becomes more evident when we consider that it is not merely question of believing the mysteries of our faith, but of adjusting one’s life to them and of habitually judging everything by their light. ‘Every being is perfect in the measure in which it has attained to union with the principle of its being.’⁵⁴ Each of our acts is the more perfect in proportion as God impresses thereon His inimitable seal. . . . Thus only does the soul reach that lively and profound knowledge of the infinite greatness of God and its own misery, the value of grace and the gravity of sin.”⁵⁵

We may fittingly bring this portion of the article to a close by quoting the exhortation of Pope Pius XI in the Encyclical Letter *Studiorum Ducem*: “If we wish to understand the first commandment and its extent and how charity and the accompanying gifts of the

52. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *La Perfection Chrétienne*, pp. 434–435.

53. Section III, Sub-section A.

54. “*In tantum unumquodque perfectum est, in quantum ad suum principium attingit*” (Ia, Q. 12, A. 1).

55. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.: *La Perfection Chrétienne*, p. 435.

“The just man, that is to say he who lives the life of divine grace and acts by the fitting virtues as by means of faculties, has need of those seven gifts which are properly attributed to the Holy Ghost. By means of them, the soul is furnished and strengthened so as to be able to obey more easily and promptly His voice and impulse. Wherefore these gifts are of such efficacy that they lead the just man to the highest degree of sanctity; and of such excellence that they continue to exist even in heaven, though in a more perfect way.” (Encyclical Letter: *Divinum Illud*, on The Holy Spirit, of Pope Leo XIII, May 4, 1897.)

Holy Ghost increase, if we would know all the many states of life, for instance, of perfection, the religious life, the apostolate, and in what they differ and what is their nature and force, if we are seeking to know these and such points of ascetical and mystical theology, we must, first of all, approach the Angelic Doctor.”

Nature of the Prayer of the Gifts

Father Lemonnyer, O.P., gives an admirable statement of the nature of the elements to be met with in this prayer. “The intellectual element which cannot be eliminated from any form whatsoever of truly human action, is therein represented by intuitional experiences, of the supra-logical and, in a measure, of the supra-conceptual order, conveyed to the soul by the Holy Ghost acting through the intellectual gifts. The affective gifts, in union with divine charity, which is everywhere supreme, flood mystical prayer, according to the good pleasure of God the Holy Ghost, with abundant outpourings of an affection wholly divine. These acts of love may be in small number and of little apparent volume, but they constitute the main portion of this mode of prayer. With regard to the knowledge element, mystical prayer and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, from which it proceeds, remain within the limits of the circle marked out by the theological virtue of faith. The theological virtue of charity (the perfect virtue, which remains in heaven) offers to the action of the Holy Ghost all that the exercise of both the intellectual and affective gifts can demand. We do not, then, quit the cycle of the divine life of which sanctifying grace is the foundation and of which the theological virtues map out the vast field. Mystical prayer is a lofty form of this life, but it is not super-added thereto from outside nor extraordinary properly so called.”⁵⁶

“Though, in different people, different gifts may manifest themselves in a predominating fashion, the gift of wisdom, which is the highest of all, and which is properly the gift of contemplation, must always govern in some way. It may dominate absolutely and

56. Article in *Revue Apologetique*, referred to in Section III, A.

draw all to it, thus raising the life of the soul to the pure and typical form of the contemplative states, or it may exercise its lofty influence on the whole activity of the soul and thus give it a participation more or less elevated in mystical contemplation. ...Contemplation supposes that the soul advancing in the way of self-denial and detachment abandons itself with docility to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. It is, as it were, the fruit of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul and of the invisible mission of the Son and the Holy Ghost. 'If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.' (Jn. 14:23.)⁵⁷ ...Contemplation is the fruit of the gift of wisdom. Now, although the gift of wisdom is a '*habitus*' perfecting the intelligence, which explains how for St. Thomas contemplation, ontologically considered, is intellectual in character, it depends essentially upon charity and accordingly on sanctifying grace, and it enables us to know God by a sort of

57. By grace the Blessed Trinity dwells in us, "*licet effectus gratiae sit etiam a Patre, qui inhabitat per gratiam, sicut et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus.*" (Ia, Q. 43, A. 4.) Grace makes us like unto God and gives us the power of enjoying the sweet possession of the divine persons, "*Habere potestatem fruendi divina persona est solum secundum gratiam gratum facientem.*" (Ia, Q. 43, A. 3.) The Father present in the soul sends it the Son. Both Father and Son send it the Holy Ghost. This invisible mission takes place each time that the soul increases in grace, and especially when it enters into a new order of the life of grace, "...when anyone in the fervor of charity faces martyrdom or renounces his goods or undertakes any arduous work." (I, Q. 43, A. 6 ad 2.) Cf. (Ia, Q. 45, A. 5, etc.). Cf. also *De la vie d'Oraison*, pp. 55, 56.

"Without any veil, without the slightest obstacle, the blessed in heaven contemplate the three divine persons. With the Father, they admire, love and rejoice in the ravishing splendor of the Word. With the Word, they admire, love and rejoice in the infinite perfection of the Father. The Father draws them towards the Son, the Son towards the Father. This eternal movement of love unites them in the Father and Son, consummating them in the unity of the Holy Ghost. On earth, we have but the beginning of this wonderful joy: yet we have a true participation, for the life of grace here below and that of glory in heaven are one and the same; grace commencing what glory perfects. There is then already in us something of this wonderful mystery of the circumincession of the three divine persons." (*From Holy Communion to the Blessed Trinity*, by M. V. Bernadot, O.P., p. 50.)

connaturality, in an affective, experimental manner, yet obscurely, because superior to every distinct concept and every image.⁵⁸ ... Thus, mystical contemplation penetrates and secretly enjoys the taste, so to say, of divine things in faith, but in virtue of love, which makes us one spirit with God. 'But he, who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.' (1Cor. 7:17.)"⁵⁹

58. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., pp. 330, 401–403. "Faith," writes John of St. Thomas, "attains to God in obscurity as if at a distance, inasmuch as faith is of things unseen. But charity attains to God in Himself, linking itself to that which is hidden in faith. Thus, though faith regulates love and union with God, inasmuch as it proposes the object of love, nevertheless, in virtue of that union by which love is united to God immediately, the intelligence is moved by a certain affective experience to judge of divine things in a higher way than faith alone in its obscurity would permit. This is because, thus moved, the intelligence penetrates and knows that there is more hidden in the things of faith than faith manifests, finding more to love and to relish in love. And because of this additional element that it knows, the intelligence judges more deeply of divine things, leaning, as it does, on the experience of loving rather than the mere testimony of believing, and assisted by the movement of the Holy Spirit who thus in a higher manner gives certitude to and moves the intellect." (John of St. Thomas, *Curs. theol.*, t. vi. Q. 70, A. 14, N. 13.)

59. *De la vie d'Oraison*, pp. 27–32. St. Thomas distinguishes between judging about God and divine things as a result of intellectual reasoning and forming a judgment about Him as a result of the intimate sympathy with the divine point of view (if the expression may be permitted) arising from union with God: "*Sic ergo circa res divinas ex rationis inquisitione rectum iudicium habere pertinet ad sapientiam quae est virtus intellectualis; sed rectum iudicium habere de eis secundum quandam connaturalitatem ad ipsas, pertinet ad sapientiam secundum quod donum est Spiritus Sancti: sicut Dionysius dicit in 2 cap de Div. nom. a med. Lect. 4, quod Hierotheus est perfectus in divinis, non solum discens, sed et patiens divina. Huiusmodi autem compassio, sive connaturalitas ad res divinas fit per charitatem quae quidem unit nos Deo, secundum illud I ad Corinth, vi. 17: 'Qui adhaeret Deo, unus spiritus est.' Sic ergo sapientia, quae est donum, causam quidem habet in voluntate, scilicet charitatem; sed essentiam habet in intellectu, cuius actus est recte iudicare, ut supra habitum est,*" etc. (IIa, IIae, Q. 45, A. 2.) Judging rightly because one's being vibrates in union with God is to be attributed to the gift of wisdom. "But there is another wisdom that comes down from above and judges of divine things by virtue of the natural affinity it has with them. This is the gift of the Holy Ghost...by which a

“To feel divine things or be the subject of divine action (*patis divina*) is the formula which expresses the mystical state. In the ascetical life, the soul plays an active part, practices virtue and acquires perfection by her personal acts with the ordinary help of grace. In the mystical life properly so called, the soul is passive, in this sense that she cannot by her own efforts bring about what she feels; but, on the other hand, her act is vital and meritorious, and since it is the very zenith of the spiritual life, it is truly intense and fruitful life. ...This higher knowledge of divine things is accompanied by an intense love of God; for just as the moral virtues are linked together in prudence, the gifts of the Holy Ghost are linked together in charity. ...Thus, for St. Thomas, the two elements which characterize the mystical state are: firstly, a higher knowledge of God and of the things of God, knowledge which man cannot give himself, but which is not miraculous; secondly, an intense love which our efforts are powerless to bring about and which the Holy Ghost Himself communicates to us by an all-powerful movement. These are the fundamental and essential characteristics. All the rest is accessory and accidental. That a person should have joys and consolations or trials, visions and ecstasies, that he should experience miraculous phenomena in his body or in his soul, all that is secondary, because it is supernatural (*quoad modum*) in mode or manner, not the essential supernatural (*supernaturale quoad essentiam*), which is the participation in the very life of God by knowledge and love. ...Setting aside, then, what is not essential, the mystical state, according to St. Thomas, is that in which the soul is passive under the action of the Holy Ghost (*patitur divina*), experiences divine things by a knowledge and love communicated supernaturally and which she could never procure for herself by her own efforts. Hence, to advance in the mystical life means to advance in this knowledge and love which know no limit. ...If the mystical life were miraculous, and necessarily accompanied by ecstasies and other strange phenomena, if infused ideas were indispensable for it, then evidently there would be presumption or rashness in asking for it: but if it consists essentially, man is made perfect in divine things, not only learning but also experiencing divine things.” (From Translation of *Studiorum Duce*m.)

as has been explained, following St. Thomas, in a super-eminent grace of knowledge and love, who would hesitate to long for it? Is it not desirable to know and love God more and more in that intimate fashion which begins on earth the perfection of heaven, especially when one remembers that the measure of divine love is to be without measure.”⁶⁰ God is always calling for love.

Dispositions for Contemplation

If we refer back to the diagram in Section III, A, we can see that life dominated by the gifts of the Holy Ghost is the summit of the normal development of the life of grace. Thus, though such a life may be rarely met with as a matter of fact, owing to the perfect generosity it supposes, yet it cannot be said to be extraordinary or abnormal in itself.⁶¹

60. Hugon, O.P., in *Divus Thomas*, May, 1924. From the Encyclical *Studiorum Duce*m we learn that St. Thomas’s sanctity was characterized by the marvelous union in his life of the two kinds of wisdom, acquired and infused, together with the charism which St. Paul calls “the word of wisdom” (1Cor. 12:8) to enable him to express them. In IIa, IIae, Q. 45, A. 5, we see that St. Thomas connects with this grace, *gratis data*, that elevated degree of the gift of wisdom which not only confers the contemplation of the loftiest mysteries, but makes us capable of manifesting them to others and directing others: “*Quidam autem altiori gradu percipiunt sapientiae donum et quantum ad contemplationem divinorum, in quantum scilicet altiora quaedam mysteria et cognoscunt et aliis manifestare possunt, et etiam quantum ad directionem... possunt alios ordinate.*” (Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, op. cit., p. 290, in note. Cf. IIa, IIae Q. 177, A. 1.) For traditional Thomistic explanation of distinction between *supernaturale quoad essentiam* and *supernaturale quoad modum*, see Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, Vol. I., pp. 202–217.

The theological teaching of St. Thomas in the *Summa* gives us the ontological structure of the spiritual organism of contemplation, but we must go to the mystical writers, St. Teresa, etc., for the description of the psychological signs which correspond to this structure. (Cf. *De la vie d’Oraison*, p. 32.)

61. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., op. cit., pp. 290 et seqq., for a full treatment of this point. The graces, *gratis datae*, like the gift of prophecy or the gift of languages or that of miracles, given *per se primo* for the sanctification of our neighbor, are extraordinary. A miraculous conversion, which, without any previous preparation, purifies a soul instantaneously and raises it

“To advance in the spiritual life and fit oneself for the grace of contemplation, we must make use of the great means the Church gives to all: reception of the sacraments, assistance at Holy Mass, frequent Communion, love of the Blessed Eucharist, devotion to the Holy Ghost, filial recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Blessed Virgin.⁶² “But, to make use of the means which the Church holds out to all, certain interior dispositions are necessary. Spiritual writers usually name five: (1) purity of heart; (2) simplicity of mind; (3) profound humility; (4) love of recollection and prayer; (5) fervent charity.⁶³

Humility, as we have already seen, is absolutely indispensable for a life of prayer. It must be profound in order that the soul may be admitted to the secrets of the King. “For the Lord bestows His blessing there where He finds the vessels empty; and the more perfectly one forsakes these things below, and the more he dies to himself by the contempt of himself, the more speedily grace cometh, entereth in more plentifully, and the higher it elevateth the free heart.” (*Imitation of Christ*, Book IV, Chapter XV)

Purity of heart and simplicity of mind indicate to us the conditions of intelligence and will demanded for complete union with our Mystical Head, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our intelligence must be under the dominion of faith which sees that the real life of

to a high level of the mystical life immediately is, of course, extraordinary. Such was the conversion of St. Paul. Visions may also be classed among extraordinary graces, even if they are directed to the sanctification of the soul receiving them. They are not, then, graces, *gratis datae*, it is true, but they are accessory phenomena of the mystical life.

62. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., op. cit., p. 481. The distinguished author adds in a note that we ought to link together more and more closely the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and that to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, to give thanks to Our Lord for the act of supreme love by which He gave us the Blessed Eucharist: “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” (Jn. 13:1.) The Immaculate Heart of Mary beat in perfect unison with the Heart of Jesus on Calvary.

63. Cf. *La Perfection Chrétienne*, pp. 483–492, for Father Garrigou-Lagrange’s development. Here they are developed somewhat differently. Cf. Meynard, O.P., *Somme de Théologie Ascétique et Mystique*. New edition, by Father Gerest, O.P., Vol. I, pp. 406–407,

every soul is the life of grace coming from Our Lord Jesus Christ crucified on Mount Calvary, and takes sense-life and rational-life into account only inasmuch as they are connected with or favor that real life. This is to use the divine balance, to weigh reality. Our will, then, in complete detachment from everything natural except in so far as it favors the divine life in ourselves and in others, tends upwards to God in love through Our Lord Jesus Christ (*Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum...*). In other words, we must aim at thinking and willing always as living members of Our Lord's Body, that is, as Our Lord thinks and wills. By faith and charity, we can think and will as He thinks and wills.⁶⁴

God is love. Accordingly, His life in us is a "form" of love ever seeking to exteriorize itself through us so that God may pour His life through the sacred humanity into us and through us draw others into His Mystical Body. For the world really lives in God's eyes in proportion as all men and all nations, organized groups of men, acknowledge Christ as King, and that not only in word but in deed, so that the whole order of society in all its activities is not only not a hindrance to the diffusion of the divine life, but favors and helps it.⁶⁵ We must, therefore, ever aim at looking on ourselves as beings

64. "To want the good to be done by ourselves, or at least by our religious family, by our convent or house, after our fashion, such tendencies do not dispose for contemplation, which is characterized by action after the fashion of God. 'I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.' (Matt. 11:25.) Sometimes in obscure little convents which do not seem to have any influence, one finds the most contemplative and holiest souls." (Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., op. cit., p. 493.)

"How much is lost to God and the universe when, in our actions, we consider anything but the sheer goodness of God! God with His fan will separate the wheat from the chaff, as John the Baptist has said (Matt. 3:12). In His wisdom, He will divide the pure from the impure, He will gather the grain into His barn, the chaff He will burn in unquenchable fire—that is to say. He will winnow our good deeds from our bad, and reward only what we have done or endured for His love only." (*On the Ways of God, Opusc.* attributed to St. Thomas; translation of Fr. Bernard Delany, O.P.)

65. "While nations insult the beloved name of our Redeemer by suppressing all mention of it in their conferences and parliaments, we must all the more

animated with the divine life, on whom it is incumbent to meet the events of a world ruled by His love with a corresponding love.

But this habit of acting in union with God cannot be acquired and maintained without love of recollection and prayer. At this epoch of feverish activity, it is indispensable to set aside a certain time for mental prayer, and we ought to give as much time to it as the duties of our state in life allow. “An instant of pure love,” St. John of the Cross teaches, “is more precious in the eyes of God and the soul and more profitable to the Church than all other good works together, though it may seem as if nothing were done. . . . In a word, it is for this love that we are all created. Let those men of zeal, who think by their preaching and exterior works to convert the world, consider that they would be much more edifying to the Church, and more pleasing unto God—setting aside the good example they would give—if they would spend at least one half their time in prayer, even though they may not have attained to the state of unitive love. Certainly they would do more, and with less trouble, by one single good work than by a thousand: because of the merit of their prayer, and the spiritual strength it supplies. To act otherwise is to beat the air, and to do little more than nothing, sometimes nothing and occasionally even mischief; for God may give up such persons to vanity, so that they may seem to have done something, when in reality their outward occupations bear no fruit; for it is quite certain that good works cannot be done, but in the power of God.” (St. John of the Cross: *A Spiritual Canticle*, Stan, xxviii.)

Such, then, in brief outline, are the dispositions which will enable Him whom Holy Church styles “the sweet guest of the soul” (*dulcis hospes animae*, of the prose: *Veni Sancte Spiritus*), to be at His ease in our souls and to pursue unhindered in us the work of

loudly proclaim His kingly dignity and power, all the more universally affirm His rights. . . . Nations will be reminded by the annual celebration of this feast that not only private individuals, but also rulers and princes, are bound to give public honor and obedience to Christ. It will call to their minds the thought of the last judgment, wherein Christ, who has been cast out of public life, despised, neglected and ignored, will most severely avenge these insults.” (Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pope Pius XI, instituting the Feast of the Kingship of Christ. Translation of *The Tablet* of January 16, 1926.)

fashioning us to the image of the Crucified, for all holiness is a reproduction of the infinitely imitable sanctity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. As we often invite that “Sweet Guest” to come to us and fill our hearts with His light and His love, should we not strive to prepare the guest-chamber for His coming?

Perfection of life is in charity, and the means *par excellence* to reach the perfection of charity and practice it—means, that is linked with the end—is divine contemplation, or union with God by an experimental loving and ineffable knowledge which all may desire to receive from the grace of God, in particular by the assiduous practice of mental prayer. . . . The contemplative life is better than the active life and constitutes, when it overflows in the apostolate of souls, the state of life that is purely and simply the most perfect. The contemplation of God, being at the very apex of Christian life, is not a means directed to the moral virtues and the labors of the active life as to an end. It is, on the contrary, the end to which these are directed as means and dispositions.⁶⁶ ‘The moral virtues bear to the contemplative life the relation of dispositions thereto.’⁶⁷ ‘The moral virtues prepare for contemplation by producing peace and purity in the soul.’⁶⁸ “Of the virtue of prudence, St. Thomas says that ‘it is in the employment of wisdom as the doorkeeper is in the employment of the king.’⁶⁹

But we cannot get on without the services of the doorkeeper. Without the practice of the moral virtues, without a radical detachment from all created things, without an extreme delicacy of conscience in maintaining purity of mind and will and in following the movements of the Holy Ghost, it is impossible to make progress in prayer and contemplation.⁷⁰

66. IIa, line, Q. 188, Art. vi., etc., etc.

67. IIa, IIae, Q. 180, Art. 2.

68. IIa, IIae, Q. 180, Art. 2 ad 2.

69. “*Non enim prudentia habet se intromittere de altissimis, quae considerat sapientia: sed imperat de his, quae ordinantur ad sapientiam; scilicet quomodo homines debeant ad sapientiam pervenire; unde in hoc est prudentia, seu politica, ministra sapientiae: introducit enim ad eam, praeparans ei viam, sicut ostiarius ad regem.*” (Ia, IIae, Q. 66, A. 5 ad 1.)

70. *De la vie d'Oraison*, pp. 24, 41, 42.

Part V

The Saints are the Truly Great Ones of this World

Before placing one of her children on the altars, Holy Church demands the presence of all the virtues in the heroic degree in the life of the saint. Now, heroic virtue is attributed by Saint Thomas to the gifts of the Holy Ghost. “That surpassing virtue which the Philosopher calls heroic or divine seems to us to belong to the gifts of the Holy Ghost.”⁷¹

If we refer back to the diagram in Sect. III, A, we see that a saint is one whose whole being tends to God in order under love (charity), the perfection of that ordered subordination to love being brought about by the action of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In the saint, then, we see not merely the domination of order in one department of life but in all. In the other men who are styled great, we see the triumph of spirit over matter in some particular section, but, in the saint, the triumph is not limited to one section. We find ourselves in presence of the complete victory of spirit over matter or of personality over individualizing elements. To use scholastic terminology, the saint is great purely and simply (*simpliciter*); the great men of the world are great, in a certain respect or from a certain point of view (*secundum quid*).

How different is the Catholic conception of a saint, as exposed by the Angelic Doctor, from Nietzsche’s idea of the “superman”!⁷² Above the common herd, who observe the old moral law which

71. IIa, IIae, Q. 159, A. 2 ad 1.

72. Frederick Nietzsche (1844–1900), German philosopher, though rejecting what Luther and Kant had maintained of Christianity and morality, was imbued with their negative theories and perfectly in the line of evolution of those men.

retains God, rises the elite, and from the bosom of this elite stand out the supermen. The superman has the moral code of a master, which knows no barriers except the impulses of genius. For the superman there is neither truth nor falsehood, neither good nor evil. These giants of history are above and beyond good and evil. The whole of morality is expressed in the will to be strong, which is the keynote of all our desires and passionate movements.⁷³

In that splendid little work, *Theonas*, M. Jacques Maritain contrasts the theory of the contemplative as established by Aristotle, ignorant of revelation, and the contemplative according to St. Thomas Aquinas:⁷⁴ “Wisdom was, for Aristotle, the aristocratic privilege of a few, because its enjoyment was the highest point of reason and the rarest joy in nature. Christian wisdom, crying out in public places, calls to itself all souls, because the enjoyment which is proper to it is the fruit of grace and of charity and is gathered on the cross, which is lacking to none. The Aristotelian superman contemplated for himself, and it was absurd to suppose a friendship between God and him. The Christian superman, united to God by charity and to other men by the communion of saints, cannot make an act of love without strengthening the equilibrium of the world. ...In the absolute order of metaphysical dignities, among human things, there is nothing better than the

73. It is easy to see what an appalling caricature is here presented of the saints who are guided by the higher rule of uncreated reason through the gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which we have spoken. The superman of Nietzsche ceases to be a man and becomes a higher animal. The saint remains a man, but a man ennobled, elevated, perfectly in order. (Cf. Paquier: *Le Protestantisme Allemand*. Maritain: *Theonas*, p. 28.) M. Maritain remarks that the word “superman was employed for the first time by St. Gregory the Great, where he says that “those who have the wisdom of divine things are, so to say, supermen.” “*More suo (Paulus) homines vocat omnes humana sapientes, quia qui divina sapiunt videlicet suprahomines sunt.*” (S. Greg. Magn., in Job xxvii. 21, Moral Lib. xviii. Cap. 54.)

The superiority of even the Aristotelian theory of the superman over that of Nietzsche shows that the human intelligence, having revolted against Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, gradually sinks down to depths far inferior to paganism.

74. *Theonas*, pp. 31–52.

intelligence; but charity is better than the best of human things. It is of more value here below than the intelligence: but it alone is worth more than the intelligence.⁷⁵ Again, “make no mistake about the intellectualism of St. Thomas. If he always proclaims the superiority of the intelligence over the will from the point of view of the absolute hierarchical order of the faculties and the pure sovereignty of the intelligence in the order of speculative truth, on the other hand, he maintains that it is by the will that man is good or bad purely and simply, and he makes the judgment and the intelligence, in the order of practical and prudential action, depend on the appetitive faculties and on their rectification by the virtues, and, above all, he affirms resolutely that here below it is better to love God than to know Him. ...Hence, the highest knowledge that man can acquire about God upon this earth, the ‘quasi-experimental’ knowledge of contemplation is realized in the intelligence, by charity only, because charity ‘connaturalizes’ us with God. Thus supernatural wisdom, though not ceasing to be a quality which perfects the intelligence, belongs to the affective order. Christian contemplation will accordingly be distinguished from the contemplation of Aristotle and the philosophers by the three following characteristics: firstly, instead of having as unique end the perfection of him who contemplates, it is for the love of Him who is contemplated; secondly, it does not stop in the intelligence as in its *terminus*, but passes into the will by love; thirdly, it does not exclude action, but, on the contrary, it flows over into action.”⁷⁶ The Little Flower of Jesus grasped the great truth when she cried out: “Charity provided me with the key to my vocation. I understood that since the Church is a body composed of different members, the noblest and most important of all the organs would not be wanting. I knew that the Church has a heart, that this heart burns with love, and that it is love alone which gives life to its members. I knew that if this love were extinguished, the Apostles would no longer preach the Gospel, and the martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. I understood that love embraces

75. *Theonas*, pp. 49–51.

76. *Theonas*, pp. 46–48.

all vocations, that it is all things, and that it reaches out through all the ages, and to the uttermost limits of the earth, because it is eternal. Then, beside myself with joy, I cried out: 'O Jesus, my love, at last I have found my vocation. My vocation is love! Yes, I have found my place in the bosom of the Church, and this place, O my God, Thou hast Thyself given to me: in the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love! Thus I shall be all things: thus will my dream be realized. ...'⁷⁷

The Little Flower was born Jan. 2, 1873. Thus she was about six and a half years old and had already grasped the order of God's world (she tells us in her life that from the age of three she wished to give herself to God), when Pope Leo XIII, in 1879, inaugurated the modern crusade for the liberation of the human intelligence by ordaining the return to St. Thomas Aquinas. The doctrine of St. Thomas which the Sovereign Pontiffs wish to be given to all, telling us to go to Thomas as of old Pharaoh told the Egyptians to go to Joseph, is found by some to be difficult. God, in His mercy and love, has taken pity on our feebleness. In the Little Flower, we behold the living exemplar of the ordered plan of life elaborated in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas, while the secret of that order is revealed to us in her autobiography in language of unsurpassed simplicity. And God has taken care that the world should know that this concrete model exists. Looking at the world with the eyes of faith, realizing that we owe our real life to our membership of our Lord's Mystical Body, may we not venture to say that, in this providential mission of the Little Flower, we catch a glimpse of one of those divine harmonies which will be made manifest to all on the Last Day?

77. *Life*, Chapter XI, pp. 182–184 passim. In Definitive Edition (Burns, Oates & Washbourne: 1927), p. 203.