

## **Recent Proposals for the Pastoral Care of the Divorced and Remarried: A Theological Assessment**

JOHN CORBETT, O.P.  
*Dominican House of Studies*  
*Washington, D.C.*

DOMINIC LEGGE, O.P.  
*Dominican House of Studies*  
*Washington, D.C.*

ANDREW HOFER, O.P.  
*Dominican House of Studies*  
*Washington, D.C.*

KURT MARTENS  
*The Catholic University of America*  
*Washington, D.C.*

PAUL J. KELLER, O.P.  
*Athenaeum of Ohio*  
*Cincinnati, OH*

THOMAS PETRI, O.P.  
*Dominican House of Studies*  
*Washington, D.C.*

DOMINIC LANGEVIN, O.P. THOMAS JOSEPH WHITE, O.P.  
*Dominican House of Studies* *Dominican House of Studies*  
*Washington, D.C.* *Washington, D.C.*

POPE FRANCIS has convoked an extraordinary Synod of Bishops for October of 2014, and an ordinary Synod of Bishops for the fall of 2015, both on the theme of “Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization.” Some initial proposals have emerged, most notably those outlined by Cardinal Walter Kasper in his address to the extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals on February 20, 2014. There, he analyzed the state of the family, concluding with two specific proposals concerning the divorced and remarried for the Synods’ consideration. Soon after, his address was published in Italian, and then in the form of a small book (with a preface and additional reflections)

in English and German.<sup>1</sup> His proposals are similar to those that have appeared in the media in recent months as discussed by the German Bishops' Conference.

Although relatively simple in themselves, proposals such as these raise a wide array of important theological questions. As Catholic theologians serving on Pontifical Faculties or in other ecclesiastical institutions, we seek to offer an assessment of them from a theological perspective. Our goal in doing so is to aid the Church's reflection on these key questions. Consequently, we have endeavored to make our analysis of each question brief and concise, akin to an encyclopedia article, rather than a lengthy study. We hope that this assessment can thus serve as a scholarly reference for the Church's pastors, and a starting point for an ongoing discussion on an issue of major significance.

For ease of reference, our analysis is subdivided as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Kasper, "Bibbia, eros e famiglia," *Il Foglio*, March 1, 2014, Vaticano Esclusivo I-III; Walter Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family*, trans. William Madges (New York: Paulist Press, 2014); Walter Kasper, *Das Evangelium von der Familie: Die Rede vor dem Konsistorium* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2014).

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### A. Summary of Present Proposals

We take Cardinal Kasper's recent book (based on his Consistory address) as typical of the proposals on divorce and remarriage on offer for the Synods' consideration. Since this text was carefully prepared and has been published widely, it can serve as a clear and well-known point of reference. It contains two specific proposals.

First, it states that a valid marriage requires that the parties have faith in "the mystery that is signified by the sacrament," and since this is often lacking, that many marriages are not validly contracted even though they follow the correct ecclesiastical form. As a remedy, it proposes that, instead of following a "juridical path," "other, more pastoral and spiritual procedures" be used. Alternatively, it suggests that "a bishop could entrust [the decision about the validity of a marriage] to a priest with spiritual and pastoral experience as a penitentiary or episcopal vicar."<sup>2</sup>

Second, it addresses the case where there is "a valid and consummated marriage between baptized individuals, for whom the marital life partnership is irreparably broken and one or both partners have contracted a second, civil marriage." Pope Benedict XVI encouraged such persons to make a spiritual communion instead of receiving the Eucharist, which suggests that they are not "in contradiction to Christ's commandment." It then discusses various practices from the Patristic period.<sup>3</sup> Finally, it proposes that such persons be admitted to Holy Communion:

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<sup>2</sup> Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family*, 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

If a divorced and remarried person is truly sorry that he or she failed in the first marriage, if the commitments from the first marriage are clarified and a return is definitively out of the question, if he or she cannot undo the commitments that were assumed in the second civil marriage without new guilt, if he or she strives to the best of his or her abilities to live out the second civil marriage on the basis of faith and to raise their children in the faith, if he or she longs for the sacraments as a source of strength in his or her situation, do we then have to refuse or can we refuse him or her the sacrament of penance and communion, after a period of reorientation?<sup>4</sup>

We will address these proposals in reverse order.

## **B. General Principles**

### *B-1. Sacramental Marriage Is Indissoluble*

Christ elevated marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, and it signifies his spousal love and his unbreakable fidelity to the Church (Eph 5:32). According to the Lord's own words, "whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery (Mk 10:11-12)."

Between two baptized persons, natural marriage cannot be separated from sacramental marriage.

The sacramental nature of marriage between the baptized is not an accidental element that . . . could just as well not be, but is rather so tied into the essence of it as to be inseparable from it. . . [T]he Church cannot in any way recognize that two baptized persons are living in a marital state equal to their dignity and their life as 'new creatures in Christ' if they are not united by the sacrament of matrimony.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>5</sup> International Theological Commission, "Propositions on the Doctrine of Christian Marriage" (1977), in *Texts and Documents, 1969-1985*, ed. Michael Sharkey (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), nos. 3.1, 3.2.

A ratified and consummated marriage between two baptized persons cannot be dissolved by any human power, including the vicarious power of the Roman Pontiff. Pope John Paul II, citing a long list of his predecessor's statements, taught that this point is settled. He concluded:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, with the great doctrinal authority conferred on it by the involvement of the whole Episcopate in its drafting and by my special approval . . . read[s]: “Thus the marriage bond has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved. This bond, which results from the free human act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guaranteed by God’s fidelity. The Church does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom.”<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, the Church insists (even in the face of great pressure) that where a valid bond exists, no second marriage is possible during the life of the first spouse. (For an analysis of the early Church’s practice, see section C-2, below.) Even before Nicaea, this teaching was enshrined in formal declarations.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the papal Magisterium has clarified that private judgments or an individual’s personal conviction (e.g., that one’s previous marriage was invalid) may not form the basis for setting aside a marriage’s validity. A judgment about the validity of a sacramental marriage “belongs to the Church by divine institution,” and so “reference must be made to the judgment correctly emanating from legitimate authority” according to objective norms.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Pope John Paul II, “Address to the Roman Rota” (Jan. 21, 2000). St. John Paul added: “[A] ratified and consummated sacramental marriage can never be dissolved, not even by the power of the Roman Pontiff. . . . [Pius XII] presented this doctrine as being peacefully held by all experts in the matter.”

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Can. 9 of the Synod of Elvira (300-303), in Heinrich Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43rd ed., ed. Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012) [hereinafter, “DH”], no. 117.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, “Address to the Roman Rota” (Feb. 10, 1995). Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, c. 135 §3; c. 1085.

*B-2. The History of the Definition of Adultery and of Church Teaching  
on Divorce*

The Sixth Commandment states: “You shall not commit adultery (Ex 20:12).” Jesus gives the definitive interpretation to this commandment. “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery (Lk 16:18).” Indissoluble marriage was intended by God from the beginning; the Torah permitted divorce only as a concession to the hardness of the human heart (Mt 19:8). Christ does allow the separation of spouses “due to unchastity [mê epi porneia],” but the Church, the infallible interpreter of sacred Scripture, has always understood this as permitting separation in cases of adultery, not remarriage (unless the first marriage was invalid).<sup>9</sup> In fact, given the Jewish practice at the time of Jesus, his teaching and its shocking novelty (even his disciples found it difficult) would make no sense unless he were articulating it in just the sense in which the Church has always understood it.

The prohibition of divorce and remarriage is clear even in the earliest official pronouncements of the Catholic Church.<sup>10</sup> Since the Reformation, Popes have repeatedly reaffirmed it. For example, in 1595, Pope Clement VIII issued an instruction on the rites of Eastern Catholics in Italy, noting that bishops were in no way to tolerate divorce. Similar teachings on the impossibility of divorce for Eastern rite Catholics were reiterated by Urban VIII (1623-1644), and Benedict XIV (1740-1758).<sup>11</sup> In eighteenth-century Poland, the abuse of annulments was particularly widespread, prompting Benedict XIV to address three strongly-worded apostolic letters to the Polish Bishops to correct it. In the second of these, in 1741, he issued the constitution *Dei miseratione*, requiring a canonical defender of the bond for every marriage case.<sup>12</sup> In 1803, Pius VII reminded the German bishops that priests could in no way celebrate second mar-

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<sup>9</sup> On the united testimony of the Latin Fathers regarding this interpretation (which anticipates the doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church), see G. H. Joyce, *Christian Marriage: An Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948), 304-31. See also section C-2, below.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Synod of Elvira (c. 300-303), DH 117; Council of Carthage, Canon 11 (407); and Council of Angers, Canon 6 (453).

<sup>11</sup> Joyce, *Christian Marriage*, 400-401.

<sup>12</sup> Benedict XIV, *Dei miseratione* (1741).

riages, even if required of them by civil law, since this would “betray their sacred ministry.” He decreed: “As long as the impediment [of a prior bond of marriage] endures, if a man is conjoined to a woman, it is adultery.”<sup>13</sup> Permissive practices by Eastern rite bishops in Transylvania gave rise to an 1858 decree of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith underscoring the indissolubility of sacramental marriage.<sup>14</sup> Finally, Leo XIII’s teaching against divorce in 1880 in *Arcanum*, his encyclical on marriage, could hardly be stronger.

As this history shows, the proclamation of Christ’s teaching on adultery and divorce has always been difficult, and calls every epoch to conversion. That it remains so in our age is unsurprising. This is all the more reason for the Church to bear witness to this truth today.

### B-3. Marriage Is Essentially Public

Some proposals for the Synods would move assessments about the existence of valid marriages into the subjective sphere of conscience or into private judgments, rather than addressing marriage as a public reality. However, marriage has an essentially public nature, in three respects: (1) it is a public contract between the spouses; (2) it serves the public good by providing and educating children; and (3) the sacrament is a public witness and sign of Christ’s fidelity and love for his Church.

First, marriage is a covenantal contract between a man and woman. This contract is, and must be, public. There are witnesses in every marriage ritual; being married imposes duties on the spouses as well as giving them rights and benefits. Among these, it entails that spouses are faithful to each other (especially in their conjugal life), that they will help and care for each other in good times and in bad, and that they will cooperate in raising their children. What is more, they are, and should be, treated as a unit under law: they form a single marital community with common

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<sup>13</sup> Pius VII, Brief *Etsi fraternitatis* to the Archbishop of Mainz (1803), DH 2705-06. The latter quoted sentence is not reproduced in Denzinger; we have translated the Latin text reproduced in Joyce, *Christian Marriage*, 407 n. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, Instr. ad Archiep. Fogarasiens. et Alba-Julien. *Non latet* (Mar. 24 1858), in P. Gasparri & J. Serédi, eds., *Codicis Iuris Canonici Fontes* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1923-1949), doc. no. 4844.

resources, empowered to represent each other, and with the right not to be separated nor positioned against each other.

Second, marriage serves the common good inasmuch as married couples bring children into the world and commit themselves to raising them. Admittedly, it has become controversial in many places to teach that a central good of marriage is the procreation and education of children. It is even regarded as a form of prejudice by those who advocate legally-sanctioned homosexual unions. Yet if the Church acquiesces to the growing pressure to fall silent about this public dimension of marriage, it will be taking a step towards these negative developments, and will be abandoning an essential element of and reason for marriage. Where marriage is no longer identified as a public institution worthy of legal and cultural support, it becomes little more than a personal profession of love.

Third, the sacrament of matrimony perfects the marital union of baptized Christians. The indissolubility of this union is not only central to God's divine plan for man and woman (Mt 19:3-10), but it allows their permanent and faithful love to serve as a sacramental sign of Christ's love for and fidelity to his bride, the Church (Eph 5:32).

The Church now stands as one of the few remaining voices in Western culture that faithfully proclaims the truth about marriage. Her theology, law, and liturgical practice highlight the importance of marriage and family in society and in the Church. Married couples cooperate with God in the creation of new life, are the first teachers of the faith, and thus participate in the generation of new adopted sons and daughters of God destined to share in his eternal inheritance. In their fidelity, they are public witnesses to Christ's unwavering fidelity to his people.

### **C. Analyzing Proposals for Holy Communion for the Divorced and Remarried**

#### *C-1. Despairing of Chastity?*

At the heart of the present proposals is a doubt about chastity. Indeed, removing the obligation of chastity from the divorced is their principal innovation, since the Church already permits the divorced and remarried who, for a serious reason (like the raising of children), continue to live together, to receive Communion if they agree to live as brother and sister,



and if there is no danger of scandal. Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI taught this.

The assumption of the present proposals, however, is that such chastity is impossible for the divorced. Does this not contain a hidden despair about chastity and about the power of grace to conquer sin and vice? Christ calls every person to chastity according to his or her state in life, whether unmarried, celibate, married, or separated. He promises the grace to live chastely. In the Gospels, Jesus repeats this call and promise, along with a vivid warning: what causes sin should be “plucked out” and “cut off,” because “it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell (Mt 5:27-32).” Indeed, in the Sermon on the Mount, chastity is the heart and soul of Jesus’s teaching about marriage, divorce, and conjugal love.

This chastity is a fruit of grace, not a penance or a deprivation. It refers not to the repression of one’s sexuality, but to its right ordering. Chastity is the virtue by which one subjects sexual desires to reason, so that one’s sexuality serves not lust, but its true end. Its result is that the chaste person governs his passions rather than being enslaved by them, and hence becomes capable of a total and permanent gift of self. In short, it is indispensable for following the way of Christ, which is the only authentic path to joy, freedom, and happiness.

Today’s culture claims that chastity is impossible or even harmful. This secular dogma is directly opposed to the Lord’s teaching. If we accept it, it is hard to see why it should apply only to the divorced. Is it not equally unrealistic to ask single people to remain chaste until marriage? Should not they too admit themselves to Holy Communion? The examples could be multiplied.

Some civilly-remarried couples *do* try to live chastely as brother and sister. They may find it hard, and may sometimes fall, but, moved by grace, they rise again, confess, and start over. If the present proposal were accepted, how many of them would give up the struggle to be chaste?

Of course, many divorced and remarried persons do not live chastely. What distinguishes them from those who try for (and sometimes fail at) chastity is that they *do not yet recognize unchastity as seriously wrong*, or at least *do not yet have any intention to live chastely*. If they are permitted to receive the Eucharist, even if they go to confession first, intending all the while to live unchastely (a radical contradiction), there is a real danger

that they will be confirmed in their present vice. They are unlikely to grow in their understanding of the objective sinfulness and gravity of their unchaste actions. One might wonder whether their moral character will be improved, or whether it is more likely to be disrupted or even deformed.

Christ teaches that chastity *is* possible, even in difficult cases, because God's grace is more powerful than sin. The pastoral care of the divorced should be built on this promise. Unless they hear the Church proclaim Christ's hopeful words that they can truly be chaste, they will never try.

### *C-2. The Precedents from Early Councils and the Church Fathers*

The nearly universal witness in the early Church affirms the unicity and indissolubility of marriage as the teaching of Christ himself, and is what distinguishes Christian from Jewish and pagan practices. Divorce and re-marriage was out of the question; indeed, even whether one could marry after a spouse's death raised serious concern. St. Paul allows this second marriage "only in the Lord," but encourages the widow to "remain as she is" (1 Cor 7:39-40). The great patristic writers, following Matthew 19:11-12 and St. Paul's exhortations, generally emphasize the good of virginity and chaste widowhood as preferable to the good of marriage.

Recently, it has been claimed that the First Council of Nicaea (325) addressed the admission of the divorced and remarried to Communion. This is a serious misreading of that Council and misunderstands the second and third century controversies over marriage. Various rigorist and heretical sects in the second century forbade marriage in general, in contradiction to Christ's teaching (and to St. Paul's). Others in the second and third centuries, especially the Novatianists, forbade a "second marriage" after a spouse's death. Canon 8 of Nicaea I aims precisely at the error of the Novatianists about a "second marriage," commonly understood to be *after a spouse's death*.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Council of Nicaea (325), Canon 8, DH 127: "It is fitting that they [the Novatianists] profess in writing . . . to remain in communion with those who have been married twice and with those who have lapsed during persecution." Cf. Henri Crouzel, *L'Église primitive face au divorce: du premier au cinquième siècle* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1971), 124. Thus, St. Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403), writing against the Novatianists, explains that the clergy may not remarry after a spouse's death, while the laity may. *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis: Selected Passages*, trans. and ed. Philip R. Amidon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 205.

This is confirmed in the Byzantine interpretation of a fourth-century canon on “second marriage” and the reception of Communion. The canon was applied specifically to young widows and widowers who, induced by “the arising of the fleshly spirit,” remarried after a spouse’s death. They were criticized for this “second marriage,” but were nonetheless permitted to receive Communion if they completed a period of prayer and penance.<sup>16</sup>

There are some ambiguous fourth-century texts dealing with divorce and an adulterous second relationship. They speak of admitting one who has entered such an adulterous relationship to Communion only after a lengthy period of penance (e.g., seven years). It is implausible, however, that they permitted that second relationship—which they expressly condemn as adulterous—to continue. The more natural reading is that repenting of adultery formed a part of the penance necessary for Communion.<sup>17</sup>

In sum, the Church Fathers and the early Councils bear a very strong witness against admitting the divorced and remarried to Holy Communion.

### C-3. *The Eastern Orthodox Practice*

In the early Church, it was disputed whether one could remarry after a spouse’s death, but divorce and remarriage was forbidden (see section C-2, above). Some Eastern Fathers (e.g., St. Gregory of Nazianzus) preached against lax imperial laws permitting remarriage. Gregory called subsequent unions “indulgence,” then “transgression,” and finally “swinish.”<sup>18</sup> These were not permissions for divorce and remarriage, but attempts to curtail subsequent unions, even after a spouse’s death.

Over time, and under pressure from the Byzantine emperors who

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew Blastares, *The Alphabetical Collection*, Gamma (chap. 4, about Laodicea 1), in Patrick Demetrios Viscuso, ed. and trans., *The Alphabetical Collection of Matthew Blastares: Selections from a Fourteenth-Century Encyclopedia of Canon Law* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008), 95.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., St. Basil the Great, Canon 77, in St. Basil’s Epistle 217. In St. Gregory of Nazianzus’s Oration 37.8, Gregory is most likely preaching before the Theodosian court in Constantinople in order to change the lax laws on marriage of the Empire. The ambiguity in Gregory’s preaching is clarified in his Epistle 144, where he calls divorce “completely disagreeable with our laws, even if those of the Romans [of the Empire] judge otherwise.”

<sup>18</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 37.8.

asserted an aggressive authority over the Eastern Church, Eastern Christians came to conflate “second marriages” after a spouse’s death with divorce and remarriage, and to re-read patristic texts in this light. In the tenth century, Byzantine Emperor Leo VI effectively forced the Eastern Orthodox to accept divorce and remarriage.<sup>19</sup> Their present approach permits, by the practice of “economy,” second and third marriages after divorce, although with wedding rites outside the Eucharist. Since these unions are not considered adulterous, the divorced and remarried are admitted to Communion.

This practice diverges from the clearest tradition of the early Church common to both East and West. As the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declared in 1994: “Even if analogous pastoral solutions have been proposed by a few Fathers of the Church and in some measure were practiced, nevertheless these never attained the consensus of the Fathers and in no way came to constitute the common doctrine of the Church nor to determine her discipline.”<sup>20</sup> Such a determination accurately reflects the historical record.

Further, the Catholic Church has repeatedly determined that it cannot admit the Eastern Orthodox practice. The Second Council of Lyon (1274), specifically addressing the Eastern Orthodox practice, declared that “neither is a man allowed to have several wives at the same time nor a woman several husbands. But, when a legitimate marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the spouses, [the Roman Church] declares that a second and afterward a third marriage are successively licit.”<sup>21</sup>

What is more, present proposals advocate what even the Eastern Orthodox would not accept: Communion for those in unblessed *civil* (adulterous) unions. The Eastern Orthodox admit the divorced and remarried

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<sup>19</sup> Concerning Emperor Leo’s Novella 89, Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff laments: “the Church was obliged not only to bless marriages which it did not approve, but even to ‘dissolve’ them (i.e., give ‘divorces’). . . . The Church had to pay a high price for the new social responsibility which it had received; it had to ‘secularize’ its pastoral attitude towards marriage and practically abandon its penitential discipline.” John Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1975), 29.

<sup>20</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church concerning the reception of Holy Communion by the divorced and remarried members of the faithful” (1994), §4.

<sup>21</sup> Profession of Faith of Michael Paleologus, DH 860.

to Communion only if their subsequent union has been blessed in an Eastern Orthodox rite. In other words, admitting the divorced and remarried to Communion would inevitably require the Catholic Church to recognize and bless second marriages after divorce, which is clearly contrary to settled Catholic dogma and Christ's express teaching.

#### *C-4. These Questions Were Decided in the Reformation Controversies*

The Reformation directly contested the Church's teachings regarding marriage and human sexuality, using arguments quite similar to those used today. Clerical celibacy was said to be too difficult, exceeding what fallen human nature can bear, even under grace.<sup>22</sup> The sacramental nature of Christian marriage was denied, as was its indissolubility.<sup>23</sup> Civil divorce was introduced in Germany with the argument that the state could not be expected to privilege, promote and defend life-long marriage.<sup>24</sup> In effect, the Reformation radically redefined marriage.

The Council of Trent responded to this crisis in four ways. First, the Council dogmatically defined the traditional teaching on the sacramentality and indissolubility of Christian marriage, explicitly identifying remarriage as adultery.<sup>25</sup> Second, the Council made mandatory a public, ecclesial form of marriage, correcting the abuse of private or secret marriages. (In such cases, one spouse sometimes abandoned the marriage based only on his private and subjective decision and then remarried publicly. The Council forbade this subjective and privatized approach.)<sup>26</sup> Third, Trent defined as dogma the Church's jurisdiction over marriage cases, requiring for the sake of the integrity of the sacraments that they be judged by objective standards in ecclesiastical courts.<sup>27</sup> Fourth, the Council ex-

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<sup>22</sup> Martin Luther, *An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality*, III, 14; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV, c. 13, nos. 15, 17.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, §5.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Martin Luther, *Brief an den Rath zu Danzig*; Philip Melancthon, *De Coniugio*, cited in Joyce, *Christian Marriage*, 409-29. See also John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV, c.19, nos. 34-37.

<sup>25</sup> Council of Trent, Decree and Canons on Marriage (1563), DH 1797-1812. On remarriage as adultery, see Can. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Council of Trent, Decree *Tametsi* (1563), DH 1813-16.

<sup>27</sup> Council of Trent, Canon 12 on Marriage, DH 1812. Pius VI later clarified Can. 12's meaning: "these cases belong to the tribunal of the Church alone . . . because the

pressly taught that adulterers lose the grace of justification: “Adulterers” and “all others who commit mortal sins,” “even though [their] faith is not lost,” lose “the grace of justification” and are “exclud[ed] from the Kingdom of God,” unless they repent, give up and detest their sin, and make a sacramental confession.<sup>28</sup> (Elsewhere, Trent decreed that they may not receive Holy Communion until they do so.)<sup>29</sup>

It is simply not possible to admit those persevering in adultery to Holy Communion and also to affirm these conciliar doctrines. Trent’s definitions of adultery, of justification (which implies charity as well as faith), or the meaning and significance of the Eucharist, would be changed. Neither may the Church treat marriage as a private matter, nor one to be adjudicated by the state, nor something to be decided by individual judgments of conscience. After long debate, these issues were clearly resolved by an ecumenical council in the most solemn manner. Those declarations have been repeatedly reiterated by the contemporary Magisterium, including the Second Vatican Council and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>30</sup>

#### *C-5. The Precedent of the Modern Anglican Communion – A Slippery Slope?*

Over the past century, the Anglican Communion has largely followed a practice of pastoral accommodation to the changing social and sexual mores in Europe and North America. It has liberalized divorce, allowed contraception, admitted those engaged in homosexual activity to communion and even (in some places) to the ordained ministry, and begun to bless same-sex unions. Some of these changes were initially justified on the pretext that they would apply only to rare cases, yet these practices are now widespread.

This has caused bitter divisions and even open splits, if not outright schism, in the Anglican Communion. In the same period, its active mem-

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marriage contract is truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the evangelical law.” Pius VI, *Deessemus nobis* (1788), DH 2598. John Paul II reiterated this in his 1995 Address to the Roman Rota.

<sup>28</sup> Council of Trent, Decree on Justification (1547), c. 15, DH 1544; on the need to confess, see c. 14, DH 1542-43.

<sup>29</sup> Council of Trent, Decree on the Eucharist (1555), DH 1646-47.

<sup>30</sup> *Lumen Gentium* (1964), §11; *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), §§47, 49, 50; CCC, §§1415; 1640, 1650. See also John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), §§13, 19, 20, 83, 84.

bership in England and North America has collapsed dramatically. While the cause of this collapse is debatable, no one can reasonably argue that accommodation has helped it (or other Protestant denominations) to retain members.

The Catholic Magisterium has not taken this path. Already in 1930, Pope Pius XI foresaw the serious threat posed by contraception, divorce, and abortion,<sup>31</sup> a view reaffirmed by Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, and Vatican II.<sup>32</sup> John Paul II reiterated the Church's teachings on divorce, contraception, homosexuality and abortion,<sup>33</sup> underscored the reproductive end of marriage, and offered a theological grounding for the Church's teaching in his catechesis on the theology of the body. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* repeats these perennial teachings, treating human sexuality in light of the virtue of chastity.<sup>34</sup> And in 2003, the Congregation of the Doctrine for the Faith declared that legal recognition of homosexual unions can in no way be approved; this is part of the moral law, accessible to reason by way of the natural law.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the Church has borne a consistent witness in the contemporary world to the full truth about human sexuality and the complementarity of the sexes. The good of human sexuality is intrinsically related to its potential to generate new life, and its proper place is in a shared life of mutual, loving fidelity between a man and a woman. These are saving truths that the world needs to hear; the Catholic Church is, increasingly, a lone voice proclaiming them.

Although the present proposals concern only the divorced-and-remarried, adopting them—even as a “merely” pastoral practice—requires that the Church accept in principle that sexual activity outside of a permanent and faithful marriage is compatible with communion with Christ and with the Christian life. If accepted, however, it is hard to see how the Church could resist admitting to Holy Communion unmarried co-

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<sup>31</sup> Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* (1930), DH 3715.

<sup>32</sup> See, e.g., Pius XII, *Address to Midwives* (Oct. 29, 1951); John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (1961); *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. §§48, 51; Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* (1968).

<sup>33</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981); *Veritatis Splendor* (1993); *Evangelium Vitae* (1995).

<sup>34</sup> CCC, §§1621-65; 2380-2400.

<sup>35</sup> Congregation of the Doctrine for the Faith, “Considerations regarding proposals to give legal recognition to unions between homosexual persons” (2003).

habiting couples, or persons in homosexual unions, and so forth. Indeed, the logic of this position suggests that the Church should bless such relationships (as the Anglican communion is now doing), and even accept the full gamut of contemporary sexual “liberation.” Communion for the divorced-and-remarried is only the beginning.

*C-6. Spiritual or Sacramental Communion  
for the Divorced and Remarried?*

It is argued that divorced and remarried Catholics with a valid first marriage might receive Holy Communion, according to the following reasoning: (1) Pope Benedict XVI suggested that such persons should make a spiritual communion; (2) but a person who makes a spiritual communion is also worthy of receiving Holy Communion sacramentally; (3) therefore, the divorced and remarried should be admitted to Holy Communion.

The problem here is an ambiguous use of the phrase “spiritual communion.” Depending on the context, it may refer to either (a) the ultimate fruit or effect of a sacramental reception of the Eucharist, namely, a perfect spiritual communion with Christ in faith and charity; (b) the same spiritual communion with Christ, but without a sacramental Communion (e.g., a daily communicant who misses a weekday Mass and so renews, by an act of living faith, the perfect communion with Christ previously received sacramentally); or (c) the desire for Communion of a person conscious of grave sin or living in a situation that objectively contradicts the moral law, who does not yet have a perfect communion with Christ in faith and charity.<sup>36</sup>

This third meaning is very different from the other two, because the person desires the Eucharist without yet renouncing a grave obstacle to perfect communion with Christ. (In the first two cases, “spiritual communion” refers to the accomplishment of this perfect communion.) It is very good for such a person to foster this desire, since through it, and with the help of grace, he may finally be converted from sin and restored

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<sup>36</sup> See Paul J. Keller, O.P. “Is Spiritual Communion for Everyone?” *Nova et Vetera* (English) 12 (2014): 631-55. Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, O.P., “Communion sacramentelle et communion spirituelle,” *Nova et Vetera* 86 (2011): 147-53. See also St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [ST] III, q. 80, aa. 1-4.



to the fullness of ecclesial communion and the state of grace (faith vivified through charity, and thus a full communion with Christ). But—and this is the key—this desire is valuable *precisely insofar as it aids him to renounce the obstacle*.

Were he admitted to the Eucharist without renouncing the obstacle, the situation would be worse. He would make a sacramental Communion while unable to receive Christ in faith and charity, because of his ongoing attachment to grave sin or to an objectively disordered living situation. He might be lulled into thinking his situation is unproblematic. Clearly, Pope Benedict encouraged the divorced and remarried to desire the Eucharist so they would align themselves with Christ's teaching on marriage, not so that they would dispense themselves from it.

Moreover, to receive the Eucharist, the sacrament of charity containing Christ himself, while conscious of grave sin, is itself a grave sin (1 Cor 11:27-31). The divorced and remarried who remain bound by a valid first marriage are living in objective contradiction to Christ's command; conjugal acts in such a relationship are adulterous, a serious sin. Such persons may not receive Communion.

They should, however, be encouraged to desire union with Christ and to pray for the grace to conform their lives to him. Assisting at Mass will help them on their journey away from sin and towards new life in God and in the Church. Premature sacramental Communion will only hinder them from arriving at a true and perfect spiritual communion with Christ.

#### *C-7. Forgiveness is Impossible without Repentance and Firm Purpose of Amendment*

It has been suggested that a divorced and civilly-remarried person, while remaining bound by a valid first marriage, nonetheless could be admitted to the sacrament of Penance (and then to Communion), if he or she "is truly sorry that he or she failed in the first marriage," if the first marriage cannot be restored nor the second relationship abandoned "without new guilt," and "if he or she strives to the best of his or her abilities to live out the second civil marriage on the basis of faith and to raise their

children in the faith.”<sup>37</sup> No mention is made of living as brother and sister; although the words “repentance” and “conversion” are used, it seems implicit that conjugal life would continue in the second relationship.

According to Christ’s words, “whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her (Mk 10:11).” If a first marriage is valid, then one who knowingly and freely engages in marital acts with another (even after civil remarriage, and even assuming the mitigating circumstances mentioned) commits adultery. Objectively, this is grave matter and leads to mortal sin.<sup>38</sup>

To posit that such a person could receive forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance without repenting of and confessing this sin is simply incompatible with definitive Catholic doctrine. Indeed, the Church has solemnly declared this as Catholic dogma and a matter of divine law. As the Council of Trent’s Canon 7 on the sacrament of Penance says:

If anyone says that for the remission of sins in the sacrament of penance it is not necessary by divine law to confess each and all mortal sins that one remembers after a due and diligent examination . . . let him be anathema.<sup>39</sup>

Scripture teaches that repentance is necessary for the forgiveness of sins and communion with Christ: “If we say we have communion with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth (1 Jn 1:6).” As St. John Paul II wrote: “Without a true conversion, which implies inner contrition, and without a sincere and firm purpose of amendment, sins remain ‘unforgiven,’ in the words of Jesus, and with him in the Tradition of the Old and New Covenants.”<sup>40</sup> According to Trent, one must “detest the sin committed” and “resolve not to sin any more” to be forgiven.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family*, 32, 45-46.

<sup>38</sup> CCC, §§1856, 1858, 2380-81, 2400.

<sup>39</sup> Council of Trent, Canon 7 on the Sacrament of Penance (1551), DH 1707. See CCC §1456, which repeats Trent’s text verbatim. See also Trent’s Decree on Justification (1547), DH 1542-44, which also affirms this.

<sup>40</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986), §42.

<sup>41</sup> Council of Trent, Decree on the Sacrament of Penance (1551), c. 4, DH 1676. See also CCC §1451.

Regardless of which sacrament is involved (whether Penance or the Eucharist), Catholic doctrine excludes the possibility of the forgiveness of sins without contrition for all mortal sins and firm purpose of amendment. To suggest such a possibility to the divorced and remarried would lead them astray from the truth, with potential consequences for them of the utmost gravity.

#### *C-8. Consequences of Taking Holy Communion while in Grave Sin*

The Eucharist is holy, and it demands holiness. We reverence and adore this sacrament because it contains Christ himself. St. Paul cautioned against its unworthy reception: “Anyone who eats and drinks unworthily, without discerning the body of the Lord, eats and drinks judgment upon himself” (1 Cor 11:29). The Church has always applied this to those in grave sin. As Trent declared: “those whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin, no matter how contrite they may think they are, first must necessarily make a sacramental confession if a confessor is available. If anyone presumes to teach or preach or obstinately maintain or defend in public disputation the opposite of this, he shall by the very fact be excommunicated.”<sup>42</sup>

The reason for St. Paul’s “fearful” warning (as Trent called it) is simple: the sign and meaning of Communion is that one is united to Christ. One who lacks faith animated by supernatural charity is not, and cannot be, united to Christ. By definition, a person in mortal sin lacks this charity. Were he to receive the Eucharist, his act would contradict what the sacrament itself signifies. This is, properly speaking, sacrilege.<sup>43</sup>

The proper sacramental remedy for one in grave sin is confession, where the sinner expresses his repentance and his firm purpose of amendment. In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, St. John Paul II explains this at length. “The celebration of the Eucharist . . . cannot be the starting-point for communion; it presupposes that communion already exists, a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection.”<sup>44</sup> He quotes St. John Chrysostom: “I too raise my voice, I beseech, beg and implore that no one

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<sup>42</sup> Council of Trent, Canon 11 on the Eucharist (1555), DH 1661.

<sup>43</sup> See CCC, §2120, which identifies it a sin against the first commandment; see also *ST* III, q. 80, a. 5.

<sup>44</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), §35.

draw near to this sacred table with a sullied and corrupt conscience. Such an act, in fact, can never be called ‘communion,’ . . . but ‘condemnation,’ ‘torment’ and ‘increase of punishment.’”<sup>45</sup> John Paul II solemnly concludes: “I therefore desire to reaffirm that in the Church there remains in force, now and in the future, the rule by which the Council of Trent gave concrete expression to the Apostle Paul’s stern warning when it affirmed that, in order to receive the Eucharist in a worthy manner, ‘one must first confess one’s sins, when one is aware of mortal sin.’”<sup>46</sup>

It is hard to imagine how this teaching could be modified without undermining the doctrine of the Eucharist. Rather, as the International Theological Commission wrote (speaking about admitting the divorced and remarried to Communion), “if the Church could give the sacrament of unity to those who have broken with her on an essential point of the mystery of Christ, she would no longer be the sign of the witness of Christ but rather a countersign and counterwitness.”<sup>47</sup>

### *C-9. Reviving a Rejected Moral Theory?*

Consider a divorced and remarried couple who acknowledge a first marriage as valid but nonetheless are freely living together as husband and wife. This amounts to an admission of adultery and hence of mortal sin. According to the Church’s teaching, the couple should be helped to see that in such a spiritual state they must abstain from the Eucharist.

Is there another alternative? Could we admit that the first marriage was valid and that the couple’s current sexual relationship is morally problematic, or at least not in full accord with the Gospel, and yet hold that, at least in some cases, this does not reverse their belief in and love for God, that they are still in friendship with him, and thus can fruitfully receive the Eucharist? Perhaps such individuals should even be encouraged to receive Communion, on the theory that the Eucharist will fortify their relationship with God with new graces and help them grow as Christ’s disciples.

This point of view depends upon a broad version of “fundamental

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, §36.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* (emphasis added).

<sup>47</sup> International Theological Commission, “Christological Theses on the Sacrament of Marriage” (1977), §12.

option” theory, which claims that one can distinguish a person’s concrete behavior from his or her basic orientation towards or away from God. Couples should be warned away from the false comfort of this approach, on two grounds.

The first is the teaching authority of the Church itself. St. John Paul II’s encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor* condemns just such a “fundamental option” approach, denying that one “could, by virtue of a fundamental option, remain faithful to God independently of whether or not certain of his choices and his acts are in conformity with specific moral norms.”<sup>48</sup> “With every freely committed mortal sin, [one] offends God . . . ; even if he perseveres in faith, he loses ‘sanctifying grace,’ ‘charity’ and ‘eternal happiness.’ As the Council of Trent teaches, ‘the grace of justification once received is lost not only by apostasy, by which faith itself is lost, but also by any other mortal sin.’”<sup>49</sup>

The second is internal to fundamental option theory: a fundamental option is likely in play when one makes basic decisions about the orientation of one’s life. A decision regularly to engage in sexual relations outside of a valid marriage is surely such a decision. It is a chosen habituation and a way of life. It is hard to describe this as a fleeting sin of weakness or passion.

Of course, there is no problem with the remarried couple who try to live as brother and sister and sometimes fail. These can (and do) confess this; in principle, they can receive Communion. The problem arises if they have no intention of foregoing sexual relations. In this case, it is not a matter of struggling to live continently. Admitting them to the Eucharist will not help them overcome their attachment to sin, but will likely confirm them in the option they have already chosen.

#### *C-10. Admitting the Remarried to Communion Would Cause Grave Scandal*

“Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. The person who gives scandal becomes his neighbor’s tempter.”<sup>50</sup> One person’s bad example misinforms the intellect or weakens the will of another, leading to sin.

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<sup>48</sup> *Veritatis Splendor*, §68.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> CCC, §2284.

The Church has been constant in teaching that divorce and remarriage cause grave scandal. Vatican II called divorce a “plague,” and decried the “obscuring effect” that it has upon the “excellence” of “marriage and the family.”<sup>51</sup> As the *Catechism* explains: “Divorce is immoral . . . because it introduces disorder into the family and into society. This disorder brings grave harm to the deserted spouse, to children traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them, and because of its contagious effect which makes it truly a plague on society.”<sup>52</sup> Remarriage after divorce magnifies this scandal.<sup>53</sup>

Some may argue that the greater frequency of divorce in our age and its widespread acceptance diminish any scandal, and therefore are reasons to admit the divorced and remarried to Communion. “Would anyone be shocked by it today?”

This misunderstands the evil of scandal, which is not a psychological shock but a temptation to others to sin. The offender need not intend to tempt his neighbor; the temptation is an effect of the sin itself. When sins become socially common, the scandal grows instead of shrinking. With each new person who gives in to it, the resolve of others to resist is endangered and the social pressure to accept is increased. Indeed, the Church teaches that widespread acceptance of sinful behavior creates a social structure of sin, an institutionalization of scandal.<sup>54</sup> The Christian finds it increasingly difficult to live in such a society without cooperating in or tolerating the sinful behavior. The Church exhorts the faithful to resist such structures of sin.

In *Familiaris Consortio*, John Paul II named scandal as a reason that the divorced and remarried cannot receive Holy Communion: “if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church’s teaching about the indissolubility of marriage.”<sup>55</sup> To depart from this traditional prohibition would tell the faithful, at least implicitly, that divorce and remarriage are acceptable. It

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<sup>51</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, §47.

<sup>52</sup> CCC, §2385.

<sup>53</sup> CCC, §2384.

<sup>54</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, §25; John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (1984), §16, and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), §36. On such structures and Christian marriage and family, see *Familiaris Consortio*, §81.

<sup>55</sup> *Familiaris Consortio*, §84.

would also raise the question why others in grave sin could not receive Communion too. The scandal would increase.

Receiving Holy Communion is, objectively, a sign of communion with Christ and thus with the Church. It publicly proclaims that the recipient is living in accord with the faith and with good morals. To admit those in a public state of sin to the Eucharist would lead others to conclude that the Church's teaching on that sin is not of grave import and that the sin can be tolerated. This is the essence of scandal.

#### **D. Analyzing Proposals to Change the Annulment Process**

##### *D-1. Is Authentic Faith Necessary for a Valid Marriage?*

It is sometimes suggested that when a couple marries in the Church without an authentic commitment to the Church's faith or without an understanding of marriage's sacramental dimension (for example, a poorly catechized couple who are Catholics in name but lack a personal engagement with the faith), something is defective in the sacrament itself, despite their valid consent according to the Catholic form. This argument is incompatible with Catholic doctrine and pastoral practice, for three reasons.

First, the Church teaches that sacramental, indissoluble bonds of marriage can be contracted between Catholics and baptized non-Catholics (*e.g.*, Orthodox or Protestants).<sup>56</sup> In such cases, the non-Catholic does *not* profess the Catholic faith in its full integrity. Likewise, when a Protestant couple becomes Catholic, the Church regards their marriage as sacramental and indissoluble, even if, at the time of their wedding, they did not believe marriage to be a sacrament and intended only the natural ends of marriage.<sup>57</sup> Yet the above argument suggests that professing the integral Catholic faith is necessary for sacramental validity. This would effectively make all mixed marriages and non-Catholic marriages non-sacramental.

Second, this argument would undermine a central pillar of the sacramental economy: valid sacraments do not depend on the minister being in the state of grace (something ultimately unknowable) but on the

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<sup>56</sup> Benedict XIV, *Matrimonia quae in locis* (1741), DH 2515-20; Code of Canon Law, c. 1055 §1, c. 1059.

<sup>57</sup> See *Matrimonia quae in locis*, DH 2517-18; c. 1099.

correct form and matter. The spouses are the ministers of matrimony. If they lack faith formed by charity (*i.e.*, if they are not in a state of grace), then they may not benefit from the graced *effects* of the sacrament, but *the sacrament itself is valid*, assuming they exchange valid consent and intend to do what the Church does, as Benedict XVI clearly taught.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, this question was resolved in the fourth-century controversy with the Donatists, who had claimed, like the argument above, that ministers not in the state of grace could not validly confect the sacraments.

Third, this argument would change the Church's express teaching that a valid marriage requires only that a person intend the natural goods of marriage. As John Paul II explained, "the Church does not refuse to celebrate a marriage for the person who is well disposed, even if he is imperfectly prepared from the supernatural point of view, provided the person has the right intention to marry according to the natural reality of marriage. In fact, alongside natural marriage, one cannot describe another model of Christian marriage with specific supernatural requisites."<sup>59</sup> In fact, in his address to the Roman Rota in 2013, Benedict XVI responded directly to the argument that defective faith invalidates marriage, and pointedly reaffirmed the teaching of John Paul II that intending marriage's natural ends is sufficient.<sup>60</sup>

#### *D-2. Annulments Cannot Be Granted Absent Canonical Expertise and Procedures*

The process for the declaration of nullity of marriage is not just another procedure: it is essentially connected with the perennial teaching of the Church expressed by canon 1141: "A marriage that is *ratum et consummatum* can be dissolved by no human power and by no cause, except death." Underlying this canon are two rotal allocutions of Pius XII and, above all, *Gaudium et Spes* §48. Moreover, marriage possesses the favor of law: the

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<sup>58</sup> Benedict XVI, "Address to the Roman Rota" (Jan. 26, 2013): "The indissoluble pact between a man and a woman does not, for the purposes of the sacrament, require of those engaged to be married, their personal faith; what it does require, as a necessary minimal condition, is the intention to do what the Church does." Cf. c. 1060; CCC, §1640.

<sup>59</sup> John Paul II, "Address to the Roman Rota" (Jan. 30, 2003); "Address to the Roman Rota" (Jan. 27, 1997).

<sup>60</sup> Benedict XVI, "Address to the Roman Rota" (Jan. 26, 2013).



validity of a marriage must be upheld until the contrary is proven (c. 1060). The procedure for the declaration of nullity of marriage aims at the declaration of a juridic fact (cf. c. 1400 §1) and is a search for the truth. The judge must have moral certitude about the marriage's nullity in order to pronounce the sentence (c. 1608 §1). The norms of the Code of Canon Law and of the instruction *Dignitas connubii*<sup>61</sup> safeguard this search for the truth and protect against the false mercy St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI warned against in their rotal allocutions of 1990 and 2010 respectively.

The best guarantee that marriage cases will be handled with both justice and efficiency is for the procedural and substantive norms of canon law to be followed faithfully, and for them to be undergirded by a proper theological understanding. This, however, depends on a proper canonical and theological formation of the tribunal's ministers, who must *sentire cum Ecclesia*.

The lack of these basic requirements is often a major source of problems with the annulment process. For example, the Roman Rota is sometimes criticized for taking years to decide cases, but the problem usually originates in first instance tribunals where cases have not properly been instructed and the procedures have not been followed. It is extremely difficult (if not impossible) to correct at a higher level what has been done improperly at first instance. Basic formation and continuing education are therefore key to a well-functioning process. This is why ministers of the tribunal must be decreed canon lawyers (cc. 1420 §4, 1421 §3, and 1435). Further, ministers of the tribunal need sufficient time to dedicate themselves to the cases assigned to them and should not be overburdened with other time-consuming tasks.

If cases are properly instructed, the requirement of the double conforming sentence is not an obstacle but a guarantee of justice. The procedure is fairly simple, and the mandatory review of the first decision is a practical incentive for the first instance tribunal to follow the law carefully. Abandoning this second review will surely lead to a loss of quality at the first instance tribunal.

A pastoral approach is often seen as opposed to a canonical one. This

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<sup>61</sup> Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, "Instruction To Be Observed by Diocesan and Interdiocesan Tribunals in Handling Causes of the Nullity of Marriage," *Dignitas Connubii* (2005).

is a false dichotomy. Benedict XVI exhorted seminarians “to understand and—dare I say it—to love canon law, appreciating how necessary it is and valuing its practical applications: a society without law would be a society without rights. Law is the condition of love.”<sup>62</sup> A canonical approach is pastoral in essence, because it lays down the conditions necessary in truth for changing hearts. Where this does not happen, canon law itself has been misunderstood. Unfortunately, what is often called a pastoral approach leads to arbitrary and thus unjust decisions. That is the imminent danger when one considers abandoning the procedures outlined by the law.

### *D-3. The Impossibility of Subjective or Personalized Judgments in Marriage Cases*

Could a more pastoral approach to annulment cases replace a juridical process? It is sometimes alleged that the present canonical process is impersonal, bureaucratic, and insensitive to the unique personal dimension of particular situations. Further, some of the divorced and remarried are subjectively convinced in their conscience that their previous marriage was invalid. Their pastor may agree. In such cases, why not permit a determination of nullity in a personal discernment involving an individual and his or her pastor, or with a priest named as a special episcopal vicar for such matters?

There is a long history behind these questions. During the Reformation, various Protestants proposed that, in some cases, one could divorce if a divorce decree were granted by civil authorities, irrespective of the Church’s tribunals. The Council of Trent condemned this view: “If anyone says that matrimonial cases do not belong to ecclesiastical judges, let him be anathema.”<sup>63</sup> Pope Pius VI later clarified that such cases belong to Church tribunals alone, since sacramental validity is at stake.<sup>64</sup> The recent Magisterium has definitively ruled out subjective or internal forum resolutions of annulment cases.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Benedict XVI, “Letter to Seminarians” (Oct. 18, 2010): AAS 102 (2010) 796; English translation in *Origins* 40/21 (Oct. 28, 2010): 323–24.

<sup>63</sup> Council of Trent, Canon 12 on Marriage (1563), DH 1812.

<sup>64</sup> Pius VI, *Deessemus nobis* (1788), DH 2598.

<sup>65</sup> Thus, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith rejected an “internal forum

Why cannot decisions about one's freedom to marry be decided in a private process? First, even on a natural level, marriage is a permanent, public act between one man and one woman that establishes a family, the basis for society. There are therefore no "purely private" or "purely internal" resolutions of marriage cases. Second, the marriage between two baptized persons is a sacrament. The reception of any sacrament is an ecclesial act, never totally private. And it is proper to the Church to judge the validity of the sacraments according to objective criteria.

Moreover, following a personalized process could easily produce injustice. Consider a husband tempted to adultery. He could make a private judgment based on an erroneous conscience that his marriage was invalid and that he was free to depart and even to marry the second woman. His pastor might not learn the whole truth without making an inquiry, for which some process would be necessary. This is precisely the task of a marriage tribunal, which is better situated to carry it out with appropriate safeguards for all concerned. Further, the man's wife and family have rights that the Church is bound in justice to uphold. Even setting aside the implications for the integrity of the sacrament, permitting an erroneous judgment to issue from a private process would do grave harm to his wife, his children, and, indeed, the whole community.

Finally, disorder would result. If one priest rejects a "solution" but another approves it, or if a couple is not known to be married but acts as if they are, the Church's life will be marred by confusion and scandal.

### **E. Elements of a Positive Proposal for the Upcoming Synods**

The Church's teachings regarding marriage, sexuality, and the virtue of chastity come from Christ and the Apostles; they are perennial. They cannot be changed, but they are always in need of being articulated anew. Given the crisis of marriage and the family in our epoch, this task is particularly urgent. To this end, the following points seem promising to us.

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solution" for annulments, with the express approval of Pope John Paul II, in the letter "Concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful" (Sept. 14, 1994), in *AAS* 86 (1994): 974–79. See also Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, "Concerning the Admission to Holy Communion of Faithful Who Are Divorced and Remarried" (June 24, 2000); English translation in *Origins* 30/11 (Aug. 17, 2000): 174–75.

First, renewing and deepening the understanding and practice of the virtue of chastity would be an important positive step towards rebuilding family life. There is a veritable crisis of chastity in the contemporary world, and it plays no small part in the crisis of marriage and family life. Today's secular culture misunderstands what this virtue is about and doubts that it can be lived. Indeed, this is even the case for some couples married in the Church and for some of the clergy, as recent scandals manifest. A defense, explanation, and instruction regarding the practice and freedom of the life of chastity—and even an “anthropology of chastity”—would be a major contribution. Addressing the epidemic of pornography, the dangers it poses to the family, and making practical recommendations for a pastoral response for those afflicted by this plague, would also be of great value.

Second, it would be valuable to articulate anew the transforming love and mercy of God, which does not stop at forgiving past guilt but transforms the person from within, so that he or she may live in freedom from vice and sin. That God's grace not only forgives but heals and elevates its recipient is a classic mark of Catholic teaching. Explaining how this works in the individual sacraments (especially Matrimony, Penance, and the Eucharist), revitalizing catechesis on this point, and encouraging the practice of regular and worthy reception of these sacraments (especially Penance, without which it is difficult to uproot vices and cultivate virtues), would be another considerable step forward.

This good news about grace and mercy is a dimension of the full truth about marriage. When the Gospel is proclaimed with love and hope, its truth has the power to bring the hearer to encounter Jesus himself, and thus to be changed by his grace. The truth that Christ teaches—including the truth about human sexuality—liberates the sinner and provides, by grace, a way out, a path of hope.

Third, with respect to the divorced and remarried, the Synods could investigate how to build pastoral structures to implement the teaching of *Familiaris Consortio* in the concrete. The divorced and remarried

should be encouraged to listen to the word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts in favor of justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the

spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God's grace. Let the Church pray for them, encourage them and show herself a merciful mother, and thus sustain them in faith and hope.<sup>66</sup>

What can be done on the diocesan and parish level to facilitate a deeper pastoral solicitude for those living in such a situation? Offering Communion is, in a certain sense, both too much and too little. The truth about the situation must be acknowledged, with compassion and mercy, with prayer and patience.

Fourth, in many places, the preparation for marriage needs to be greatly strengthened. In reality, building healthy marriages also depends on a good preparation for the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Renewing and augmenting sacramental preparation would be a great help.

Fifth, marriage tribunals of the first instance need to be strengthened. They perform an essential service that cannot be transferred to others without causing even greater problems. Ministers of these tribunals need an adequate canonical and theological formation, and should follow a regular program of continuing education (as is common among civil lawyers). Tribunals need to be adequately staffed and supported so that cases can be treated with dispatch while following sound canonical norms and procedures. Those assigned to tribunals need sufficient time to carry out their duties and should not be saddled with other time-consuming charges.

Finally, the Synods might articulate anew why the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality does not involve prejudice, bigotry, or the condemnation of persons, but rather aims at the authentic good of all persons. This is particularly needed with regard to homosexuality, since many contemporary Catholics face immense pressure to conform to a secular, permissive ethos that regards all opposition to homosexuality as irrational. (Offering practical strategies for the appropriate pastoral care of persons with homosexual tendencies would also be of great value.) To exposit the truth of the natural law clearly, and in relation to the universal vocation of Christian love, would shore up the family against the powerful destabilizing currents that prevail in many places.

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<sup>66</sup> *Familiaris Consortio*, §84.

## **F. Conclusion**

The Church is aided in every age by the Holy Spirit, promised to her by Christ himself (Jn 15:26). Therefore, whenever the Church faces great challenges in evangelization, she also knows that God is willing to accord her the graces needed for her mission. Many of our contemporaries find themselves in the midst of great suffering. The sexual revolution has caused millions of casualties. They have deep wounds, hard to heal. Challenging as this situation is, it also represents an important apostolic opportunity for the Church. Human beings frequently have an awareness of their failings and even their guilt, but know of the remedy offered by the grace and mercy of Christ. Only the Gospel can truly fulfill the desires of the human heart and heal the deepest wounds present in our culture today.

The Church's teaching on marriage, divorce, human sexuality, and chastity can be hard to receive. Christ himself saw this when he proclaimed it. However, this truth brings with it an authentic message of freedom and hope: there is a way out of vice and sin. There is a way forward that leads to happiness and love. Recalling these truths, the Church has reason to accept the task of evangelization in our own age with joy and hope. **N&V**

## Is Spiritual Communion for Everyone?

PAUL JEROME KELLER, O.P.  
*Athenaeum of Ohio*  
*Cincinnati, OH*

PERHAPS ALL BUT FORGOTTEN by many Catholics (and unheard of by most) until Cardinal Walter Kasper's recent reference to it, the notion of a spiritual communion has made headlines in the Catholic press of late. The Cardinal addressed an extraordinary consistory of cardinals on marriage and the family on February 20, 2014, in anticipation of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will take up the theme of "pastoral challenges for the family in the context of evangelization."<sup>1</sup> Among other things during the last part of his talk, the Cardinal wondered about the possibility of those who are divorced and remarried being reunited with the Church and permitted to take Holy Communion. Referring to the 1994 Letter to Bishops from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concerning the reception of Holy Communion by the divorced and remarried, Cardinal Kasper reflected on the option for the divorced and remarried to participate in a spiritual communion on account of their inability to receive sacramentally. The Cardinal admits that spiritual communion does not apply for all divorced people, but only those who are well disposed. But, he asks, if a person who receives spiritual communion is one with Jesus Christ, how can he or she be in conflict with the commandment of Christ? Why, then, cannot the same person receive

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<sup>1</sup> The announcement of the Cardinal's address is found at the website of the Vatican Information Service, Holy See Press Office, February 20, 2014.

sacramental communion? The Cardinal alludes to the answer when he subsequently wonders about the possibility of the divorced and remarried returning to the sacrament of penance and communion.<sup>2</sup> However, it is the question of the meaning of a spiritual communion that is at stake, first and foremost. In light of Pope Francis' statement during his interview with *Corriere della Sera*, regarding the importance of intense discussion about Cardinal Kasper's propositions, I seek to clarify, in this article, the significance of spiritual communion and its relation to sacramental communion. Then we will be able to see what truly would be necessary for divorced and remarried persons to receive the graces of Communion. Third, I would like to consider an allied issue: the importance of fulfilling the precept to attend Mass on days of obligation, even for those who are not properly disposed to receive Holy Communion. Finally, I propose that the Church's age-old and constant teaching on being properly disposed to receive Holy Communion is an aid in bringing the sinner to repentance in order to benefit from a proper Eucharistic reception.

### The Theological Meaning of "Spiritual Communion"

In his twelfth century *Sentences*, Peter Lombard begins his tract on the

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<sup>2</sup> The Italian text of the Cardinal's address, upon which I base my remarks, is found in the on-line version of *Il Foglio Quotidiano: Vaticano Esclusivo* 19, no. 51 (March 1, 2014): "Un avvertimento ci ha dato la Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede già nel 1994 quando ha stabilito – e Papa Benedetto XVI lo ha ribadito durante l'incontro internazionale delle famiglie a Milano nel 2012 – che i divorziati risposati non possono ricevere la comunione sacramentale ma possono ricevere quella spirituale. Certo, questo non vale per tutti i divorziati ma per coloro che sono spiritualmente bene disposti. Nondimeno molti saranno grati per questa risposta, che è una vera apertura. Essa solleva però diverse domande. Infatti, chi riceve la comunione spirituale è una cosa sola con Gesù Cristo; come può quindi essere in contraddizione con il comandamento di Cristo? Perché, quindi, non può ricevere anche la comunione sacramentale? Se escludiamo dai sacramenti i cristiani divorziati risposati che sono disposti ad accostarsi ad essi e li rimandiamo alla via di salvezza extrasacramentale, non mettiamo forse in discussione la struttura fondamentale sacramentale della Chiesa? Allora a che cosa servono la Chiesa e i suoi sacramenti? Non paghiamo con questa risposta un prezzo troppo alto? Alcuni sostengono che proprio la non partecipazione alla comunione è un segno della sacralità del sacramento. La domanda che si pone in risposta è: non è forse una strumentalizzazione della persona che soffre e chiede aiuto se ne facciamo un segno e un avvertimento per gli altri? La lasciamo sacramentalmente morire di fame perché altri vivano?"



Eucharist by noting that while baptism cleanses us from sin, the Eucharist perfects us in the good; it also restores us spiritually. The Eucharist is a “good grace” because, besides increasing virtue and grace in the recipient, one also wholly receives “the fount and origin of all grace.”<sup>3</sup> However, not all partake of the Eucharist in the same way. He explains that St. Augustine taught that there are “two ways of taking the Eucharist: one sacramental, namely the one by which the good and bad eat of it; the other spiritual, by which only the good eat.”<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere, Augustine explains that to eat Christ is “to remain in him, and have him remain in oneself.”<sup>5</sup> “For he eats spiritually who remains in the unity of Christ and the Church, which the sacrament signifies.”<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, Augustine says that to receive communion but not to be in “concord with Christ” is to eat unto one’s own condemnation<sup>7</sup> and “he acquires a great punishment,”<sup>8</sup> “for a wicked person receives a good thing wickedly.”<sup>9</sup> Peter Lombard insists that those who are good, that is, disposed to consume the Eucharist worthily, receive Christ’s Body both sacramentally and spiritually. He refers to Pope St. Gregory the Great: “The true flesh of Christ and his true blood are indeed in sinners and in those who receive them unworthily, but in their essence, not in their saving effectiveness.”<sup>10</sup>

In the next century, when St. Thomas Aquinas takes up the topic of spiritual communion (*spiritualem manducationem*) he refers, first and foremost, to something that is meant to issue from the sacramental recep-

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, bk iv, d. 8, ch. 1. We call to mind the words of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium* §11, which describes the Eucharistic sacrifice as “totius vitae christianae fontem et culmen.”

<sup>4</sup> Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, bk. iv, d. 9, ch. 1, 1, quoting Augustine, *Sermo* 71, c. 11, n. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Lombard, bk. iv, d. 9, ch. 1, 1, quoting Augustine, *In Ioannem*, tr. 26, n. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Lombard, bk. iv, d. 9, ch. 1, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Lombard, bk. iv, d. 9, ch. 1, 1, quoting Augustine in Prosper of Aquitaine, *Sententiae*, n. 341.

<sup>8</sup> Lombard, bk. iv, d. 9, ch. 1, 2, quoting Augustine, *Sermo Mai* 129, n. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Lombard, bk. iv, d., 9, ch. 2, 2, quoting Augustine, *In Ioannem*, tr. 62, n. 1. Augustine is drawing, of course, on the teaching of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:27ff concerning those who receive the Eucharist unworthily and draw condemnation upon themselves, which is discussed further below.

<sup>10</sup> Lombard, bk. iv, d. 9, ch. 2, 1, quoting Lanfranc, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, ch. 20, after the words of Gregory, *Dialogi*, bk. 4, 59.

tion of Holy Communion.<sup>11</sup> Only secondarily does Aquinas understand spiritual communion (*voto*) to refer to an interior desire to be united to Christ (73, 3). This is an important point, for it is the actual eating, consuming, of the Body and Blood of Christ that integral to the Eucharist, just as Jesus himself taught as recorded in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John. Nevertheless, the physical eating has spiritual effects.

Aquinas distinguishes two ways of eating (*modi manducandi*) the Eucharist.<sup>12</sup> The perfect way is the actual reception of the Sacrament such that by consuming it one receives its effect—namely, spiritual nourishment as we journey through life on our way to the glory of heaven.<sup>13</sup> In this way of receiving, we are joined to Christ in faith and charity. For just as we take natural food to sustain the life of the body, the Eucharist sustains the divine life of grace in the soul, which is begun in us at our baptism and which can be lost only by committing mortal sin.

A second way of taking (eating) the Eucharist is without receiving its effect. This is an imperfect reception of the sacrament, Aquinas notes, as when the recipient is impeded from being joined more perfectly in faith and love to Christ. One might think here of situations whereby a person receives the Sacrament distractedly, or unaware, or even after unrepented mortal sin. St. Thomas is very clear: it is possible that no spiritual reality, grace, is received even though one has partaken of the Eucharist. In other words, the reception of Holy Communion necessarily requires proper preparation and disposition, including, at least, both the ability and the intention to receive the grace it contains. The increase of grace in the soul is not automatic, and it certainly is not magical. Just as in human relationships the bond of friendship grows or diminishes based on whether the persons involved are actively seeking each other's good, the grace of deeper friendship with Christ in Holy Communion presumes our hungering for Christ, which is itself a grace from God.

It is important to recognize that Aquinas is making a distinction about what takes place in the act of receiving Holy Communion. In other words, one receives the physical species of the Eucharist *in or-*

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (ST) III, q. 80, a. 1, ad 2.

<sup>12</sup> ST III, q. 80, a. 1.

<sup>13</sup> ST III, q. 73, a. 1.

der to obtain the spiritual reality of loving union with Christ and the Church. The possibility of receiving the Sacrament without the effect should be an anomaly, not the norm. Otherwise, the purpose of receiving Holy Communion becomes pointless. The corrective is to remedy the situation by removing the obstacle to an effective reception, namely by giving proper attention to Christ's presence while taking the Sacrament in a worthy state. This last point is paramount. Before turning to it, however, let us see what Aquinas has to say about the other sense of the term "spiritual communion."

Today, what we commonly call "spiritual communion" (see page 638) is, for Aquinas, a communion of desire (*in voto*). It is distinct from a spiritual reception, which, as seen above, is the intended effect of actually receiving Holy Communion. Aquinas compares communion *in voto* with baptism of desire (*flaminis*). The baptism of desire is typically understood in the context of a catechumen, who, dying before being baptized with water, but explicitly desiring baptism, is assured salvation (CCC, §1259). However, like baptism, communion *in voto* is an exception to the divine plan for our participation in the Body and Blood of Christ. In other words, Christ established the sacraments to be taken in reality, and not only, or even principally, *in voto*.

Aquinas says that communion *in voto* happens when a person earnestly longs for the actual sacrament. Such a person receives the effects of Holy Communion before receiving it actually or sacramentally. Examples might include the person praying before the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass, or the person confined to a sickbed, or a prisoner confined to prison cell, etc., yet who devoutly desires union with Christ in Holy Communion. Such a reception, *in voto*, though, is secondary to the sacramental eating because it is the actual consuming of the Eucharist that produces in us a greater effect than the effect that comes by a communion of desire.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the person who devoutly desires the Eucharist, though unable to receive it sacramentally, may obtain the graces of the Eucharist, including: a deeper spiritual union with Christ; healing of the effects of past sins and protection from future ones (venial and mortal); forgiveness of venial sins; a closer union with all the members of Christ's mystical body; and an increase in char-

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<sup>14</sup> ST III, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3.

ity that shows itself in caring for the those in need.<sup>15</sup> In short, it is our preparation for heaven, where we will enjoy Christ directly and live in perfect love for all eternity.<sup>16</sup>

### The Council of Trent on Spiritual Communion

Calling on the teachings of the Fathers, the Council of Trent explains the tri-fold distinction concerning reception of Holy Communion.<sup>17</sup> One may receive

only sacramentally because they are sinners. Others receive it only spiritually; they are the ones who, receiving in desire the heavenly bread put before them, with a living *faith* ‘working through love’ (Gal. 5:6), experience its fruit and benefit from it. The third group receive it both sacramentally and spiritually (can. 8); they are the ones who examine and prepare themselves beforehand to approach this divine table, clothed in the wedding garment (cf. Matt. 22:11f).<sup>18</sup>

In the chapter just prior to this teaching on Eucharistic reception, during its thirteenth session, the Council insists that the Holy Eucharist may only be received worthily. Given the holiness of this sacrament (and, indeed of all sacraments), the Fathers of Trent reiterate the warning of St. Paul that anyone who eats and drinks of the Eucharist unworthily “eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Cor. 11: 29). No one aware of personal mortal sin is to partake of Holy Communion without first having made a sacramental confession, a practice for all Christians, including priests.<sup>19</sup>

Canon 11 of the same session of the Council of Trent is even more explicit on the matter of receiving worthily:

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<sup>15</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1391-1401.

<sup>16</sup> Aquinas also allows for a spiritual communion (*voto*) to take place in anticipation of the sacramental reception of the Eucharist.

<sup>17</sup> There appears to be no direct conciliar teaching about spiritual communion prior to the Council of Trent.

<sup>18</sup> *Council of Trent: Decree on the Sacrament of the Eucharist*, session 13, ch. 8, DS 1648 (all emphases original).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, DS 1647.

If anyone says that faith alone is sufficient preparation for receiving the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist, let him be anathema. And, lest so great a sacrament be received unworthily and hence unto death and condemnation, this holy council determines and decrees that those whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin, no matter how contrite they may think they are, first must necessarily make a sacramental confession if a confessor is available. If anyone presumes to teach or preach or obstinately maintain or defend in public disputation the opposite of this, he shall by the very fact be excommunicated.<sup>20</sup>

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, issued by Pope Pius V, explains that those who receive only sacramentally are “sinners who do not fear to approach the holy mysteries with polluted lips and heart.”<sup>21</sup> Quoting Augustine, the catechism continues: “He who dwells not in Christ, and in whom Christ dwells not, most certainly does not eat spiritually His flesh, although carnally and visibly he press with his teeth the Sacrament of His flesh and blood” (*In Joan. Tract. xxvi*, 18). Those who receive the Eucharist spiritually only are those who “partake in wish and desire” though not sacramentally and who receive “if not the entire, at least very great fruits.” To receive both sacramentally and spiritually one must approach the Eucharist with great preparation, wearing “the nuptial garment” (Matt. 22:11) and thus “derive from the Eucharist those most abundant fruits.” To deliberately satisfy oneself with only a spiritual communion is to deprive oneself “of the greatest and most heavenly advantages.” Among the necessary preparations, the catechism includes personal discernment (acknowledgement) of the Real Presence, being at peace with our neighbor, humility, recollection, fasting, and being free of mortal sin through contrition and confession.<sup>22</sup>

This teaching has been maintained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that the German bishops had taken up the

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, DS 1661.

<sup>21</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests, Issued by Order of Pope Pius V*, trans. John P. McHugh, O.P., and Charles J. Callan, O.P. (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1934), 245-246.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 247-48.

<sup>23</sup> See §1385, 1415.

matter in their 1985 catechism for adults, highlighting the triple form of reception of Holy Communion.<sup>24</sup> Stating that “unworthy reception of communion by the sinner, whose heart is not prepared for union with Jesus Christ, works not salvation but judgment,” the German bishops insist that “for a spiritually fruitful reception of communion there must be an *examination of conscience and a careful preparation.*”<sup>25</sup>

### The Meaning of “Spiritual Communion” in Recent Documents

It is something of surprise to find no mention of eucharistic spiritual communion in either the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Council or the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>26</sup> It is, perhaps, for this reason that the notion of making a spiritual communion is not a familiar option for the faithful of our day. When spiritual communion is mentioned in official Church teaching, it seems to be solely in terms of a communion of desire. For example, Pope John Paul II makes reference to the teaching of St. Teresa in his 2003 encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* when he writes about attaining perfect union with God:

Precisely for this reason it is good to *cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist*. This was the origin of the practice of ‘spiritual communion,’ which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Originally published as *Katholischer Erwachsenen katechismus: Das Glaubensbekenntnis der Kirche* (Bonn: Verband der Diözesen Deutschlands, 1985), the English translation appeared as *The Church's Confession of Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Communio Books) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987). As David L. Schindler, the general editor for Communio Books notes in his opening remarks, the German catechism for adults was “authored largely by Walter Kasper under the aegis of the German Bishops' Conference” (6).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>26</sup> However, the catechism of the German bishops instructs the faithful about “two ways of communion. There is a simultaneously sacramental and spiritual communion, in which the body of Christ is received bodily and taken into the ready heart at the same time, and also a purely spiritual communion, in which there is union with Jesus Christ through the longing in faith for communion (DS 1648)” (*The Church's Confession of Faith*, 292).

<sup>27</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, §34, AAS 95 (2003), 456 (emphasis in original).

St. Teresa of Avila is one of the masters that Pope John Paul II has in mind. Her teaching is set in the context of instructing her sisters about how to receive more perfectly the fruits of Holy Communion. In her *Way of Perfection*, St. Teresa writes:

When you do not receive Communion, daughters, but hear Mass, you can make a spiritual communion. Spiritual communion is highly beneficial; through it you can recollect yourselves in the same way after Mass, for the love of this Lord is thereby deeply impressed on the soul. If we prepare ourselves to receive Him, He never fails to give in many ways which we do not understand. It is like approaching a fire; even though the fire may be a large one, it will not be able to warm you well if you turn away and hide your hands, though you will still get more heat than you would if you were in a place without one. But it is something else if we desire to approach Him. If the soul is disposed (I mean, if it wants to get warm), and if it remains there for a while, it will stay warm for many hours.<sup>28</sup>

An even earlier reference to St. Teresa is found in Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's 1994 *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church Concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by the Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful*, which serves as the basis for Cardinal Kasper's question about Holy Communion for the divorced and remarried. In his letter as the Prefect for the CDF, Cardinal Ratzinger upholds the constant teaching of the Church that members of the faithful who live together as husband and wife with someone who is not a legitimate

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<sup>28</sup> St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection*, 35,1, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 2, trans. Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. and Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2000), 174-75. *Santa Teresa: Obras Completas*, ed. Tomás Álvarez, (Burgos: Editorial Monte Carmelo, 2009), 606-7: "Y cuando no comulgareis, hijas, y oyereis misa, podéis comulgar espiritualmente, que es de grandísimo provecho, y hacer lo mismo de recogeros después en vos, que es mucho lo que se imprime el amor así de este Señor. Porque aparejándonos a recibir, jamás por muchas maneras deja de dar que no entendemos. Es llegarnos al fuego que, aunque le haya muy grande, si estáis desviadas y escondéis las manos, mal os podéis calentar, aunque todavía da más calor que no estar adonde no haya fuego. Mas otra cosa es querernos llegar a Él, que si el alma está dispuesta – digo que esté con deseo de perder el frío – y se está allí un rato, para muchas horas queda con calor."

spouse may not receive Holy Communion, but are to be instructed in the various ways that they should participate in the life of the Church.

This does not mean that the Church does not take to heart the situation of these faithful, who moreover are not excluded from ecclesial communion. She is concerned to accompany them pastorally and invite them to share in the life of the Church in the measure that is compatible with the dispositions of divine law, from which the Church has no power to dispense. On the other hand, it is necessary to instruct these faithful so that they do not think their participation in the life of the Church is reduced exclusively to the question of the reception of the Eucharist. The faithful are to be helped to deepen their understanding of the value of sharing in the sacrifice of Christ in the Mass, of *spiritual communion*, of prayer, of meditation on the Word of God, and of works of charity and justice (cf. Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 84).<sup>29</sup>

The theme of spiritual communion was taken up by Ratzinger again, this time as Pope, in his 2007 post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*. He addresses the issue in the context of *actuoso participatio*, or fruitful participation in the Sacred Liturgy, a matter of cultivating the proper inner disposition for worship. The Pope explains that, while the fullest participation in the Liturgy normally involves

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<sup>29</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “Epistula ad catholicae ecclesiae episcopos de receptione communionis eucharisticae a fidelibus qui post divortium novas inierunt nuptias,” §6, AAS 86 (1994): 977 (emphasis mine). Cardinal Ratzinger mentions St. Teresa’s teaching on spiritual communion in footnote 13 of his Letter. He also refers to St. Alphonsus de’Liguori’s *Visite al SS. Sacramento e a Maria Santissima*. St. Alphonsus briefly recalls the teaching of Aquinas on spiritual communion and then gives examples of non-sacramental spiritual communions in the lives of various persons, including St. John of the Cross, Bl. Agatha of the Cross, and St. Peter Faber (made a saint by Pope Francis in December, 2013, using the “equivalent canonization” process), the first companion of St. Ignatius of Loyola. St. Alphonsus recommends making a spiritual communion during visits to the Blessed Sacrament and during Mass. The remainder of his treatise includes meditations and prayers concerning the Holy Eucharist. It should be noted that Pope John Paul II’s 1981 apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, makes no reference to a eucharistic spiritual communion for divorced and remarried persons in the entirety of the document.



the reception of Holy Communion, not all may approach the altar as though Eucharistic reception is a right or even an obligation. Speaking about the faithful, he says that

care must be taken lest they conclude that the mere fact of their being present in church during the liturgy gives them a right or even an obligation to approach the table of the Eucharist. Even in cases where it is not possible to receive sacramental communion, participation at Mass remains necessary, important, meaningful and fruitful. In such circumstances it is beneficial to cultivate a desire for full union with Christ through the practice of spiritual communion, praised by Pope John Paul II and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life.<sup>30</sup>

As he had done in his 1994 Letter, Pope Benedict references St. Teresa of Avila, and mentions that “the doctrine [of spiritual communion] was authoritatively confirmed by the Council of Trent, Session XIII, c. VIII.”<sup>31</sup> The Pope also refers to the teaching of Aquinas, which we have discussed above.

Perhaps there have been, as Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, O.P., puts it, “signs of an insufficiently precise drafting” when it comes to recent texts dealing with the issue of spiritual communion (and to which we will return later).<sup>32</sup> It is in this framework that we may proceed to examine Cardinal Kasper’s query about Holy Communion for

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<sup>30</sup> Benedict XVI, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (February 22, 2007), §55, AAS 99 (2007): 148: “Attamen cavendum est ne haec iusta affirmatio forsitan introducat inter fideles quendam automatismum, quasi quispiam ob solam praesentiam in ecclesia, liturgiae tempore, ius habeat, vel forsitan etiam officium, ad Mensam eucharisticam accedendi. Etiam cum non datur facultas ad sacramentalem Communionem accedendi, participatio Sanctae Missae manet necessaria, valida, significans et fructuosa. Bonum est his in rerum adiunctis desiderium plenae cum Christo coniunctionis colere per consuetudinem exempli gratia communionis spiritalis, memoratae a Ioanne Paulo II et commendatae a Sanctis vitae spiritalis moderatoribus.”

<sup>31</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, n171: “Qui sunt exempli gratia S. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 80, art. 1, 2; S. Teresa a Iesu, *Iter perfectionis*, cap. 35. Doctrina haec confirmata est auctoritate Concilii Tridentini, sess. XIII, c. VIII (DS 1648).”

<sup>32</sup> Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, O.P., “Communion sacramentelle et communion spirituelle,” *Nova et Vetera* 86 (2011): 152.

the divorced and remarried, making clear what is at stake concerning spiritual communion.

### Who May Make a Spiritual Communion?

When Cardinal Kasper wonders if a person who is able to make a spiritual communion (*in voto*) cannot also receive sacramentally, we must respond *sic et non*. Yes, on the one hand, a person who makes a spiritual communion may also receive sacramentally, provided that he or she is properly disposed. But, no, the improperly disposed person may not receive communion sacramentally or even spiritually.

As we have seen, when Aquinas refers to spiritual communion as a communion of desire (*in voto*), he says that it is very much akin to the catechumen desiring baptism (*flaminis*). To desire the sacrament truly is to desire its effect, which, in the case of the Eucharist, is a union of love with Christ and his Church. This union of love necessarily entails, then, desiring and loving all that Christ and the Church desire and love, while at the same time being transformed interiorly, becoming what we consume. The effects of a spiritual communion (*voto*), Aquinas says, are the same as those of sacramental communion.

Cardinal Kasper intimates something similar when he asks how a person who makes a spiritual communion and is one with Jesus Christ can be in contradiction with the commandment of Christ.<sup>33</sup> The Cardinal has come to the heart of the problem: one must accept Christ in his entirety in order to be in communion with him. Since Christ has established the sacramental matrimonial bond as indissoluble, on account of which Christ does not permit divorce and remarriage, a person who attempts remarriage while a previous putative sacramental bond of marriage continues to exist may not lay claim to be one with Jesus Christ, for such a one contradicts at least this part of the commandment of Christ. Thus, such a person is not able to receive communion sacramentally or even spiritually. Only the person who is presently seeking to rectify that which impedes him or her from full communion with Christ may begin to be in a state of making a spiritual communion. This would be exemplified, of course, by the person's external actions which would witness to his or her

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<sup>33</sup> Kasper, *Il Foglio*, "Infatti, chi riceve la comunione spirituale è una cosa sola con Gesù Cristo; come può quindi essere in contraddizione con il comandamento di Cristo?"

full acceptance of all that Christ is and all that he teaches. In the meantime, we might speak of a desire for the Eucharist in a person who is not yet in full communion with the commandment of Christ, and this can be the impetus by which such a person takes the practical steps necessary for making both a spiritual and sacramental communion possible.

In an effort to elucidate the problem of the language of desire, Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole offers a helpful distinction between a sacrament of desire and desiring a sacrament, though I modify his definition of each.<sup>34</sup> The sacrament of desire is usually understood as an explicit desire for a sacrament (*voto*) with no interior obstacles from receiving the sacrament, but with some exterior obstacle preventing the person from actually having or receiving the sacrament.<sup>35</sup> Thus, as we have already seen, the baptism of desire in the catechumen gives him or her, when the sacramental rite (*sacramentum tantum*) cannot be administered, a participation in the graces (*res*) of baptism, though without baptismal character (*res et sacramentum*). Such would also be the case when St. Teresa urges her sisters, who are unable to receive sacramental communion but who desire to approach the Lord; they receive many graces (the *res* of Communion) insofar as their souls are disposed. Moreover, when it comes to the Eucharist, the sacrament of desire permits a participation in the *res* of the sacrament even in the absence of the *sacramentum tantum*. Such would be the case when one makes a spiritual communion outside of the context of the Mass, even in the absence of the Sacramental Presence.

Desiring a sacrament (*desiderium*), on the other hand, entails explicitly wanting a sacrament but not being properly disposed to receive the *res*

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<sup>34</sup> La Soujeole, 149-150: "De façon général, il faut distinguer entre un sacrament de désir et le désir d'un sacrament." Fr. La Soujeole seems to restrict the sacrament of desire (*voto*) to the non-Christian "who has never encountered the ecclesial mediation," but who can be baptized by an *implicit* desire and receive the *res* of the sacrament. On the other hand, La Soujeole thinks of the desire of a sacrament as the case of the catechumen with *explicit* desire, which, if animated by faith working through charity, also gives the *res* of the sacrament, though the catechumen would still lack sacramental character.

<sup>35</sup> Explicit desire exists in the case of catechumens. There is, of course, the possibility of salvation by implicit desire (*votum implicitum*) "when a person suffers from invincible ignorance" but possesses "a good disposition of soul whereby a person wishes his will to be conformed to the will of God" (*Letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston, August 8, 1949, DS 3870*).

of the sacrament.<sup>36</sup> Both the sacrament of desire and desiring a sacrament involve an explicit desire or wish for the sacrament. They differ, however, inasmuch as the latter, the desire for a sacrament, involves some obstacle (*obex*) to receiving the *res* of the sacrament. So, for example, a person who desires baptism merely in order to mask his affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan would not receive the *res* of baptism. Moreover, such an obstacle could make the baptism fictitious, and the celebration of the *sacramentum tantum* would involve sacrilege. With regard to the Eucharist, merely desiring to receive Holy Communion, even should one whole-heartedly believe in the Real Presence, is insufficient to receive the *res* of the Eucharist. Though the catechumen must possess faith in order to receive baptism, the communicant must possess faith enlivened by charity.<sup>37</sup> While the Eucharistic *res* itself increases charity (among its several effects), the absence of charity typically places an *obex* to the *res* of the sacrament. This is true both for sacramental as well as spiritual communion.<sup>38</sup>

We must be clear about this: not all desiring may be fulfilled.<sup>39</sup> This is the case, not because the object is unattainable, but because one lacks the disposition or ability to attain the object. Desire, in and of itself, is not the necessary pre-condition for attaining an object. This is important for our understanding of what is involved in a spiritual communion. While one

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<sup>36</sup> *Desiderium* is my Latin distinction, and is not found in La Soujeole's article.

<sup>37</sup> Concerning the necessity for faith, see *ST* III, q. 68, a. 8. Among the graces infused by baptism is supernatural charity. Cf. *ST* III, q. 69, a. 6, ad 1. Nevertheless, in *ST* III, q. 66, a. 11, when Aquinas speaks about *baptisma flaminis*, as James J. Cunningham, O.P., says, *flaminis*, or the baptism of desire "is not a simple desire for baptism nor the intention to receive the sacrament . . . [it] is rather the result of the activity of the Holy Spirit moving a person to intense charity and burning faith whereby he is drawn to a conversion of life and a complete acceptance of Christ" (*Summa Theologiae*, vol. 57, *Baptism and Confirmation* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975], 49). The point about *flaminis* as more than simple desire is essential to understanding a true communion of desire.

<sup>38</sup> It is true that Canon Law provides for the necessity of, say, a priest needing to celebrate Mass and receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin, but with the proviso that he will avail himself of the sacrament of penance as soon as possible. Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cans. 915, 916.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston, August 8, 1949, DS 3872*, with regard to the desire for baptism: "Nor can it be thought that any kind of desire (*quodcumque voto*) of entering the Church suffices for one to be saved. It is necessary that the desire by which one is related to the Church be animated by perfect charity. The implicit desire (*votum implicitum*) can produce no effect unless a person has supernatural faith."

may wish or desire to go to Holy Communion at some particular Mass, or even wish for the Sacrament from afar (as when not present at Mass), without the proper dispositions to be able to enjoy union with Christ and the Church, the desire amounts to not much more than wistful thinking. It is an inherently frustrated desire. One might say it is not a real desire, for to desire the end is to desire the means to the end. To desire union with Christ, one must also desire to remove whatever obstacles one has placed to this union. No more can a man say that he desires to share in a banquet with an estranged friend while at the same time refusing to lay aside his animosity for the friend than we can approach the Lord's banquet without repenting of our sin. To desire Holy Communion rightly, to make a true spiritual communion, entails being *able* to make such a communion.

So, to reiterate, in response to Cardinal Kasper's concern, yes, the person who makes a spiritual communion should also make a sacramental communion, if he or she is properly disposed. However, it cannot be the case that someone who is not properly disposed to make a sacramental communion could be thought to be able to make a spiritual communion, no matter the circumstances.

### Necessary Clarifications

Recalling the Thomistic distinction between spiritual communion as a spiritual eating (*spirituale manducatio*) and as spiritual desire (*voto*), it is clear that for the person who has placed an obstacle to union with Christ by living apart from his commandment neither kind of spiritual communion is possible. As La Soujeole points out, using the same term, spiritual communion, to refer to two different moral situations and two very different relationships to the Eucharist is problematic.<sup>40</sup> We are speaking here about proper versus improper disposition for either kind of communion. Though *Sacramentum Caritatis* §55 infelicitously uses the term "spiritual communion" as an option for divorced and remarried persons, a possible reading is that the Holy Father meant to encourage such persons to begin to desire (*desiderare*) appropriately Holy Communion (rather than a communion of desire, to use La Soujeole's distinction), and thus, to rectify their moral situation. Otherwise, the words would indicate that someone

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<sup>40</sup> La Soujeole, 152.

improperly disposed for sacramental communion might still make a spiritual communion. This confusion leads to the logical question raised by Cardinal Kasper. If one is permitted to make a spiritual communion, then why not a sacramental communion?

We must avoid the mistake of thinking that a spiritual communion is the substitute for a sacramental communion for the divorced and remarried, and indeed for anyone prevented from Eucharistic reception on account of mortal sin, La Soujeole warns. The pastoral danger inherent in this belief is that error and confusion about the doctrine of the Church will prevail, leading people “to think that sin which impedes sacramental communion ‘is not so bad’ because one can have the reality of communion anyways. In this case, it is the ordering of sacramental communion to spiritual communion that disappears. Thereby, it is the unity—or better, the identity—of the sign and Eucharistic reality (the true Body of the resurrected Christ) that is at stake.”<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, the salvation of souls is at stake. Rather than bringing people to conversion from sin to life in Christ, the flawed solution such as spiritual communion for someone in mortal sin lulls the sinner into a pretense of living the Christian life, including the embrace of the cross of Christ and assuming responsibility for one’s actions and decisions. The inspired words of Scripture, found in St. Paul’s admonition are relevant: “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. . . . For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.”<sup>42</sup>

In order to receive the graces of communion with Christ, both sacramental and spiritual, for all persons in any state of life, what is necessary is interior conversion to Christ and a manifestation of this conversion in one’s exterior actions and manner of life. Our external moral life is not the sole indicator of the interior disposition of the soul toward union with God, but the two must at least harmonize. Let us not forget that the end of the sacraments, which Christ himself instituted for our salvation, is a sharing in the Trinitarian com-

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<sup>41</sup> La Soujeole, 153.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Cor 11:27, 29 (RSV). See also *ST* III, q. 80, a. 4: “Et ideo manifestum est quod quicumque cum peccato mortali hoc sacramentum sumit, falsitatem in hoc sacramento committit; et ideo incurrit sacrilegium, tanquam sacramenti violator, et propter hoc mortaliter peccat.”

munion. God, who desires not the death of the sinner (2 Pet 3:9), but that all be saved (1 Tim 2:4), insists that we renounce all that is contrary to his plan for our salvation so that we may attain true and eternal communion with him.

Pope John Paul II spelled out the difficulty in his apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*:

The Church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of not admitting to Eucharistic Communion divorced persons who have remarried. They are unable to be admitted thereto from the fact that their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist.<sup>43</sup>

Then, speaking of the necessary interior conversion for the divorced and remarried, he continues:

Reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance which would open the way to the Eucharist, can only be granted to those who, repenting of having broken the sign of the Covenant and of fidelity to Christ, are sincerely ready to undertake a way of life that is no longer in contradiction to the indissolubility of marriage. This means, in practice, that when, for serious reasons, such as for example the children's upbringing, a man and a woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate, they "take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence, that is, by abstinence from the acts proper to married couples."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, §84, AAS 74 (1982): 185: "Nihilominus Ecclesia inculcate consuetudinem suam, in Sacris ipsis Litteris innixam, non admittendi ad eucharisticam communionem fideles, qui post divortium factum novas nuptias inierunt. Ipsi namque impediunt ne admittantur, cum status eorum et condicio vitae obiective dissideant ab illa amoris coniunctione inter Christum et Ecclesiam, quae Eucharistia significatur atque peragitur."

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, §84, AAS 74 (1982): 186: "Porro reconciliatio in sacramento paenitentiae—quae ad Eucharistiae sacramentum aperit viam—illis unis concede potest, qui dolentes quod signum violaverint Foederis et fidelitatis Christi, sincere parati sunt vitae formam iam non amplius adversam matrimonii indissolubitati suscipere. Hoc postulat revera ut, quoties vir ac mulier gravibus de causis—verbi gratia, ob liberorum educationem—non valeant necessitate separationis satisfacere, "officium in se suscipiant omnino continenter vivendi, scilicet se abstinendi ab actibus, qui solis coniugibus competent." Cf. John Paul II, Homily at the Close of the Sixth Synod of

### Cultic Implications

A truly pastoral response to the person snared in sin and its consequences is not to ignore the situation, or smooth over differences by offering easy solutions as if moral choices have no serious consequences, but to seek the glory of God and the good of all persons through the ministry of the Church. Pope John Paul II urges pastors not to abandon the divorced and remarried to their own devices but to “make untiring efforts to put at their disposal her means of salvation.”<sup>45</sup> Not only pastors, but the entire community of the faithful, must solicitously take up the responsibility to come to the aid of the divorced and remarried so that “they do not consider themselves as separated from the Church, for as baptized persons they can, and indeed must, share in her life.” The means are plentiful:

They should be encouraged to listen to the word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts in favor of justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God’s grace. Let the Church pray for them, encourage them and show herself a merciful mother, and thus sustain them in faith and hope.<sup>46</sup>

A too superficial understanding of the working of grace might lead one to think the aforementioned situation is too easy or too hard. On one hand, one may be tempted to think that the Christian life is measured chiefly by external participation (deeds), such as mentioned above: listening to the word of God, attending Mass, and so forth. Such thinking may lead to the conclusion that, if one does these things, then one must

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Bishops, 7 (Oct. 25, 1980), AAS 72 (1980): 1082.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 84, AAS 74 (1982): 185: “Nitetur propterea neque umquam defessa curabit Ecclesia ut iis praesto sint salutis instrumenta.”

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: “Hortandi praeterea sunt ut verbum Dei exaudiant, sacrificio Missae intersint, preces fundere perseverent, opera caritatis necnon incepta communitatis pro iustitia adiuvent, filios in christiana fide instituant, spiritum et opera paenitentiae colant ut cotidie sic Dei gratiam implorent. Pro illis Ecclesia precetur, eos confirmet, matrem se exhibeat iis misericordem itaque in fide eos speque sustineat.”



be in communion with God, and is therefore fully participating in the Catholic life. This view leads to the denial of (sacramental) reconciliation after a serious fall in sin in order to be in union with God. On the other hand, there is the temptation to view the call to greater participation in divine matters, especially for the person in sin needing reconciliation with God and the Church, as too difficult or even impossible. Such a person labors under the weight of an exaggerated feeling of unworthiness, or worse, hopelessness. This view leads to an abandonment of the life of prayer, going to Mass, and all things associated with God.

However, grace is always at work. Even the “preparation of man for the reception of grace is already a grace.”<sup>47</sup> The divine plan is to rectify and sanctify every person, so that every person may experience full human flourishing and enjoy the eternal fruits of the friendship that God offers. We must not cloud over the distinction between living in the state of grace and the grace of being moved to contrition. Both habitual graces and actual graces are divine initiatives working to move us to deeper communion. So it is that Pope John Paul II urges divorced and remarried persons to open themselves to the movement of actual graces, such as listening to the Scriptures, attending Mass, praying, and so forth.

The Pope is teaching about the essence of Christian cult. In other words, at the heart of the Catholic Mass is the worship of God the Father as fulfilled in Christ through his perfect and obedient sacrificial self-offering perpetuated in the Eucharist. Ever since the revelation of Christ and the institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the only adequate form of worship due to God is through and in Christ, and is supremely consummated through the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. This is true for all the baptized, whether they are able to participate in Holy Communion or not.<sup>48</sup> While it is true that the fullest participation in the Sacred Liturgy includes reception of Holy Communion, it is possible (and necessary) to participate in this revealed form of worship without receiving Holy Communion. Reception of the Eucharist indicates communion with Christ and his Church, that, in the state of grace, one holds and believes

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<sup>47</sup> CCC, §2001.

<sup>48</sup> See my article “How ‘Catholic’ is the Sacred Liturgy? Or: A Mass for the Masses,” *Antiphon 17* (2013): 212-24.

all that Christ and the Church teach. Among said beliefs is the indissolubility of the sacramental bond of matrimony. As a result, the divorced and remarried, though not properly disposed for the reception of Holy Communion, are able to, and must, worship God by their participation in the Sacred Liturgy.<sup>49</sup>

Participation, of course, is understood as more than mere presence or attendance at the Mass. As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* points out, full, conscious and active participation (*actuosam participationem*) “is demanded by the nature of the liturgy itself; . . . such sharing [*participatio*] is the first, and necessary, source from which believers can imbibe the true Christian spirit.”<sup>50</sup> Later the Second Vatican Council Fathers spell out the essential aspect of this participation when they describe the heart of Catholic worship:

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God’s word and be nourished at the table of the Lord’s body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, *they should learn also to offer themselves*; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.<sup>51</sup>

Participation in the Eucharist is not a spectator sport, but involves personal sacrificial offering to the Father through Christ. This is the kind of worship that leads to opening oneself to the grace of repentance and transformation as well as to the grace of perfection.

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<sup>49</sup> See USCCB, “Happy Are Those Called to His Supper: On Preparing to Receive Christ Worthily in the Eucharist,” (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 2006), 9, especially n17.

<sup>50</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §14.

<sup>51</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §48 (emphasis mine).

We find a similar explanation of *participatio* in *Sacramentum Caritatis*:

The Church's great liturgical tradition teaches us that fruitful participation in the liturgy requires that one be personally conformed to the mystery being celebrated, offering one's life to God in unity with the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of the whole world. . . . [Let the] faithful be helped to make their interior dispositions correspond to their gestures and words.<sup>52</sup>

As a result of this kind of proper worship, the entirety of one's life is transformed by the grace of configuration to Christ.

Christianity's new worship includes and transfigures every aspect of life: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). Christians, in all their actions, are called to offer true worship to God. Here the intrinsically eucharistic nature of Christian life begins to take shape. The Eucharist, since it embraces the concrete, everyday existence of the believer, makes possible, day by day, the progressive transfiguration of all those called by grace to reflect the image of the Son of God (cf. *Rom* 8:29ff.). . . . Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, since it is lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, §64, AAS 99 (2007): 152-53: "Ecclesiae insignis liturgica traditio docet ad fructuosam participationem necessarium esse ut quis personaliter respondere studeat Mysterio celebrato, propriam Deo offerens vitam, in coniunctione cum Christi sacrificio pro totius mundi salute. . . . fidelibus intima interiorum sensuum convenientia cum actibus verbisque concinenda curaretur."

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, §71, AAS 99 (2007): 159: "Novus christianus cultus complectitur omnem existentiae rationem eamque transformat: "Sive ergo manducatis sive bibitis sive aliud quid facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite" (1 Cor 10, 31). In omni vitae actu christianus vocatur ut verum cultum Deo significet. Ex quo formam sumit vitae christianae natura intrinsece eucharistica. Quippe quae credentis humanas res in cotidiana eius ratione involvat, Eucharistia efficit ut de die in diem transfiguretur homo, qui gratia ad imaginem Filii Dei adipiscendam vocatur (cfr *Rom* 8, 29s). . . . Itaque cultus Deo placens novus fit modus vivendi omnia rerum adiuncta existentiae in qua omne singulare elementum exaltatur, quoniam vivitur in relatione cum Christo et sicut oblatio Deo exhibita."

There is no one who will fail to profit from participating, that is, worshipping, at the Mass. Even the person prevented from the fullest expression of worship, the reception of Holy Communion, is still able to receive prevenient graces for repentance, and actual graces for worship.

### **Not Starvation, But Hunger**

In response to Cardinal Kasper's questions about the prospect of Holy Communion for the divorced and remarried, we have shown that it is not possible. Beginning in the patristic era and continuing to our day, we may distinguish two basic forms of receiving Holy Communion. The first, and most efficacious, is the *sacramental reception* of the Body and Blood of the Lord by which one is simultaneously united spiritually to Christ by a kind of spiritual eating. The second is a *spiritual communion (in voto)* when one is not able to make a sacramental Communion, granting one is in a state of grace and is able to participate in all the benefits of a sacramental Communion.

Aquinas makes a further distinction with regard to spiritual communion. A spiritual communion, properly speaking, is the spiritual nourishment one receives when partaking of the Eucharist sacramentally; the effects of the Eucharist are produced in the soul of the recipient. Only secondarily does Aquinas think of spiritual communion as a matter of sheer desire for the sacrament (*in voto*) but without access to the sacrament. Nevertheless, it is possible, on account of the love for Christ and wanting to receive him into the soul, that the effects of communion are able to be produced in the soul.

From the teaching of St. Paul to our own day, Tradition has consistently taught the necessity for the recipient of Holy Communion to be in the state of grace. To partake of the Eucharist without the proper disposition, especially failing to seek reconciliation with Christ and the Church through the sacrament of penance when conscious of a mortal sin, is to invite divine judgment, and is itself another serious sin.

While there may be some confusion about the meaning of spiritual communion in recent magisterial teaching, it remains the case that a true spiritual communion is possible only for someone who would normally be disposed to receive communion sacramentally. A spiritual communion is not possible for someone in the state of mortal

sin, including those who have divorced and remarried but whose prior sacramental marital bond continues to exist. Such persons must, by divine law (and even according to natural law), continue to worship God. Every Catholic is obliged to worship God by offering himself or herself to God in union with the offering made through the hands of the priest at Mass.

The Church does not ask, as Cardinal Kasper seems to suggest, that divorced and remarried persons find salvation extra-sacramentally. They are offered the same possibility for conversion and full communion (ecclesially and sacramentally) as for anyone. As he indicates, non-participation in the Eucharist can indeed be a sign of the sacredness of the sacrament. The Cardinal asks if this non-reception of the Eucharist is too high a price to pay? The answer to this question depends on the willingness of the individual to be conformed to Christ. However, we must be clear. It is not the Church who has imposed the obstacle to full communion; it is, rather, the individual who perpetuates a choice to violate a sacramental bond of matrimony. By that action, as with anyone who commits mortal sin, he or she has broken communion. The Church, on the other hand, offers reconciliation for the truly repentant, as she always has.

Then, Cardinal Kasper poses this red herring: Is the rule of non-reception of the Eucharist an exploitation of the person who is suffering and asking for help if we make him a sign and warning for others?<sup>54</sup> This question more than suggests that the Church has no place in protecting the faithful from the condemnation they bring upon themselves, as St. Paul warns. Were the Church to remain passive and permit Holy Communion for one not properly disposed, she would be liable to judgment for a different kind of exploitation: the failure to keep her children from wrongdoing and sin, as well as the failure to guard faithfully and dispense the sacraments. The Church's long-standing watchfulness is not exploitation or manipulation; it is charity pure and simple. It is the concern of the mother that her children not ingest the wrong medicine lest it become a poison.

As we have already noted above, *Sacramentum Caritatis* teaches that no one has a right to Holy Communion by the mere fact of be-

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<sup>54</sup> See note 2 above for the Italian original.

ing present at Mass. Pope John Paul II also instructs us on this point when he says that “the celebration of the Eucharist, however, cannot be the starting-point for communion; it presupposes that communion already exists, a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection.”<sup>55</sup> Communion, especially as it unites us to the Trinity, presupposes, the Pope says, the life of grace and the practice of the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. He insists, in the words of St. John Chrysostom: “I too raise my voice, I beseech, beg and implore that no one draw near to this sacred table with a sullied and corrupt conscience. Such an act, in fact, can never be called ‘communion,’ not even were we to touch the Lord’s body a thousand times over, but ‘condemnation,’ ‘torment’ and ‘increase of punishment.’”<sup>56</sup> Then John Paul II urges:

I therefore desire to reaffirm that in the Church there remains in force, now and in the future, the rule by which the Council of Trent gave concrete expression to the Apostle Paul’s stern warning when it affirmed that, in order to receive the Eucharist in a worthy manner, “one must first confess one’s sins, when one is aware of mortal sin” (cf. Ecumenical Council of Trent, Sess. XIII, *Decretum de ss. Eucharistia*, Chapter 7 and Canon 11: DS 1647, 1661). The two sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance are very closely connected. Because the Eucharist makes present the redeeming sacrifice of the Cross, perpetuating it sacramentally, it naturally gives rise to a continuous need for conversion, for a personal response to the appeal made by Saint Paul to the Christians of Corinth: “We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). If a Christian’s conscience is burdened by serious sin, then the path of penance through the sacrament of Reconciliation becomes necessary for full participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, §35, AAS 95 (2003): 457.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, §36, quoting *Homiliae in Isaiam* 6, 3, PG 56, 139.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, §§36-37, AAS 95 (2003): 458.

Then, as if anticipating the counterargument involving a person's interior judgment, the Pope continues:

The judgment of one's state of grace obviously belongs only to the person involved, since it is a question of examining one's conscience. However, in cases of outward conduct which is seriously, clearly and steadfastly contrary to the moral norm, the Church, in her pastoral concern for the good order of the community and out of respect for the sacrament, cannot fail to feel directly involved. The Code of Canon Law refers to this situation of a manifest lack of proper moral disposition when it states that those who "obstinately persist in manifest grave sin" are not to be admitted to Eucharistic communion."<sup>58</sup>

There is no exploitation of the suffering person, be it the divorced and remarried or even the catechumen (who also must be sacramentally justified before receiving Holy Communion). There is only the outstretched and pierced hand of the Crucified and Risen One who, through the Church, offers salvation for any person who chooses to turn to Christ, embracing him alone even in the most difficult decisions of life. He offers his Body and Blood continually so that all who choose to don the white wedding garment (cf. Mt 22:11-14; Rev 19:8) may enter his eternal banquet. There is, spread before each and every person, the feast of the Eucharist, laid out suchwise that we may all hunger more and more for the Bread of Life, both sacramentally and spiritually. For each and every Christian, repentance is the transformation of starvation into hunger, a hunger Christ promises to satisfy beyond our wildest imaginings. **N&V**

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., §37, AAS 95 (2003): 458. Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 915; *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, can. 712.





## The Craftsman's Tools: MacIntyre on Education

CHRISTOPHER O. BLUM

*Augustine Institute  
Denver, Colorado*

If someone were to enter a carpenter's workshop who did not understand the use of the craftsman's tools, they would seem to him to be needlessly multiplied, whereas, to the one who looks upon them having the virtue of the craft, the reason for their multiplication is apparent.

--St. Thomas Aquinas, Q. D. *de Veritate*, q. 5, art. 5, ad 6

AN ATTEMPT to elucidate the educational ideal of one who has declared that "any conception of the philosophy of education as a distinct area of philosophical enquiry is a mistake" must proceed with caution.<sup>1</sup> Yet it ought to be made, for over the past half-century Alasdair MacIntyre has provided arguably the most trenchant and original commentary on education in the English language. The reason he gave for his claim that there can be no independent philosophy of education—that "all teaching is for the sake of something else" and that therefore "enquiries into education" are always a "part" of "enquiries into the nature and goods of those activities into which we need to be initiated by education"—is a principle that has animated his thoughts on the subject since the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Yet as his own conception of the human good has been

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<sup>1</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre and Joseph Dunne, "Alasdair MacIntyre on Education: In Dialogue with Joseph Dunne," *Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain* 36 (2002): 1–19, at 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

progressively articulated, so also has the standard to which he has held the role of the teacher and the institutions of schools and universities. An examination of MacIntyre's writings on education, therefore, promises to shed light on the broader tendencies of his thinking. What may be more surprising, however, is to see the way in which the end-point of the development of his thoughts on education represents a further extension of his response to the crisis of secular rationality.

MacIntyre has written memorable lines about the philosopher as a craftsman, and so it is fitting to attend to his discussions of the craft—to his shoptalk—over the decades of his labor. From his participation in the New Left in the 1950s through his more recent writing as a Catholic and Thomist, he has consistently raised important theoretical issues while discussing the practices of the university life he has led. At the same time, his theoretical writings include many passing references to, as well as sustained treatments of, educational matters. Given the number of these passages, it will be necessary to choose but a few as representative. Yet even these reveal the trajectory of his thought: from his early concern that the reform of educational institutions be a part of the quest for a just society, through the broader discussions of the role of higher education in the life of moral virtue during the middle decades of his career, to his renewed appreciation of the speculative virtues in the last two decades of his life. Each stage in this development has been a refining rather than an abandonment of the previous analysis, and the conclusion of it has been an integrated reflection upon the practices, virtues, institutional structures and communities that make possible the attainment of the highest of speculative virtues, wisdom. It is in MacIntyre's recent discussions of exemplars of a philosophical life that his treatment of education finds both its deepest significance and its greatest relevance to the malaise of secular modernity.

### **A Voice from the Moral Wilderness**

One constant of Alasdair MacIntyre's career is certain: its moral seriousness. From the third decade of his life to the ninth, his writing has been characterized by an earnestness about the human good worthy of a Solzhenitsyn or a Wojtyła. As a committed Marxist, his reaction to the unmasking of Soviet tyranny in the 1950s was neither cynical nor

romantic: it was to seek from the “moral wilderness” of his loss of confidence in communism a first principle sturdy enough to serve as the foundation of an ardent quest for the common good. Since at least 1956, he has robustly affirmed the priority of the common to the private or individual good, together with the truth that such a common good must be accessible to reason and indeed must be a good of reason.<sup>3</sup> His earliest discussions of education are in conformity with this principle and, like it, emerge from his opposition to classical liberalism. He insisted that the work of cultural criticism needed to remain “part of the political and industrial struggle,” and, with other New Left writers, held that the “whole way of life which capitalism imposes” was the essential source of the moral failures of the age.<sup>4</sup> The necessary response was to struggle for a just society. “The philosophers,” as he memorably put it, echoing Marx, “have continued to interpret the world differently; the point remains, to change it.”<sup>5</sup>

MacIntyre’s most sustained discussion of education from the 1950s, an essay titled “Manchester: The Modern Universities and the English Tradition,” was written with a reforming zeal to match his more overtly political essays. The concern that seems to have prompted the piece was a fear that the distinctive tradition of the provincial universities was soon to be eroded by the tide of incoming young faculty trained at Oxford and Cambridge who were not much inclined to respect the character of the institutions they were joining. Their unwillingness to think through the problems that these universities faced in light of the traditions proper to them had led to a “rash of Oxbridge solutions to Redbrick problems.” MacIntyre found such proposals wanting: “To turn the provincial universities into residential institutions, to deplore specialist training and pine over something called general education, to long for

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<sup>3</sup> See Alasdair MacIntyre, “Notes from the Moral Wilderness-II,” *New Reasoner* (1956): 89–98, at 96–97.

<sup>4</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, “The ‘New Left,’” *Labour Review* 4 (1959): 98–100, at 99, 100. On MacIntyre’s participation in the New Left, see Émile Perreau-Saussine, *Alasdair MacIntyre: Une biographie intellectuelle. Introduction aux critiques contemporaines du libéralisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005), 19–61.

<sup>5</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, “Breaking the Chains of Reason,” in *Out of Apathy*, ed. E. P. Thompson (London: Stevens, 1960), 195–240, at 240, with thanks to Christopher Lutz for pointing out the connection to Marx.

a tutorial system; this is to replace glorified technical colleges by rather inglorious imitations of Oxbridge.”<sup>6</sup>

Worse than merely unrealistic, the attempt to imitate the ivy-covered colleges was the result of misaligned intention. Instead of a genuine spirit of service, these academics seemed chiefly to want to reproduce the trappings of a comfortable life of privilege. Speaking of these “immaculately attired young men on the teaching staff whose accents and umbrellas” signaled their pedigree, MacIntyre took a satirical turn: “After one has heard from them a dozen times how grossly inferior Manchester or Sheffield or Leeds is to Oxford or Cambridge one begins to weary of a nostalgia which is as inordinate as that of Ovid’s Black Sea exile, but lacks all his elegiac charm.” The sharpness of his rhetoric was proportionate to his concern that genuine goods were threatened. He admired the nonconformist tradition of English radical Protestantism, and spoke in praise of the “poetic standards of Watts and Wesley.” And just as those Protestant traditions risked being contemptuously discarded, so also did the other great dissenting tradition of the British Isles risk having its character leached out by the acid bath of affluence. English Roman Catholics, he warned, were all too likely to have “learned from . . . upper-class converts to seek an Oxbridge elegance.”<sup>7</sup> Against this danger, MacIntyre sought to identify—so as to defend—what he called the “provincial tradition” of English university life. He identified four characteristics of this tradition, two of which—their intellectual seriousness and liberalism—are not surprising. But two others are. He praised these institutions for having been “immersed in the life of local communities,” a connection that helped to protect them from the creation of “an ingrown and hot-house social life.” Again, there is a strong note of social critique in his account: “That one should not live on a campus or in a university town, but close to mills and factories . . . is as good a way as any of preserving the university teacher from illusions about his place in society.” The fourth characteristic was “a certain quality of thought,” which he described as “an impatience with intellectual cant and with nonsense of all kinds,” explaining what he meant in this

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<sup>6</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, “Manchester: The Modern Universities and the English Tradition,” *Twentieth Century* 159 (February 1956): 123–29, at 128.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 123–25.

paraphrase, “the contempt of the provincial for what he sees as the fripperies of aestheticism.” What MacIntyre was most suspicious of was the elitism of the Oxbridge colleges, an elitism whose darker side he readily perceived, warning of “small collegiate communities” in which “it is easy for those with power to appoint like-minded people.”<sup>8</sup> His indictment of the leading institutions of higher education in England was that they did not serve excellence and the common good so much as privilege and smug self-satisfaction.

In 1960, in another essay that addressed the topic, MacIntyre again sounded the note of class critique, making reference to an “American sociologist” who had “pictured our university teachers in a state of complacent delight, drinking port and reading Jane Austen” and jabbing at the “sweet smell of the academic’s social success.”<sup>9</sup> That essay, a jeremiad entitled “Breaking the Chains of Reason,” bemoaned the complacency and irrelevance of academics and ascribed the apathy and conservatism of university scholars to their inability to affirm a substantive conception of human freedom based upon the exercise of reason. In an analysis that anticipated the central argument of *After Virtue*, he argued that capitalist society engenders habits of living and of thinking that mutually reinforce one another: “The vices of our lives and the errors of our concepts combine to keep both in being.”<sup>10</sup> And because these vices are inculcated by the power structures of capitalist society, the attempt to fix habits of thought by themselves will be futile: “you can only carry through any effective educational effort as part of the political and industrial struggle.”<sup>11</sup>

### Communities of Virtue

Whether or not MacIntyre’s immigration to America should be taken to represent his coming to terms with the structures of liberal democracy, his active participation in leftwing politics did come to an end with the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 126–27.

<sup>9</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, “Breaking the Chains of Reason,” in *Out of Apathy*, ed. E. P. Thompson (London: Stevens, 1960), 195–240, quotations from 195, 196.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>11</sup> MacIntyre, “The ‘New Left,’” 100.

tumultuous 1960s.<sup>12</sup> During the 1970s, his great labor was one of intellectual conversion, documented in the pages of *After Virtue*. In addition to being a strikingly original work of moral philosophy, that book is also in important respects an example of confessional literature, and the conversion that it documents is one that brought MacIntyre to differ with his own previous academic life and so, necessarily, with the practices and institutions of the modern academy generally. The crucial difference is that whereas MacIntyre had earlier criticized university life as symptomatic of the cultural ills of capitalism, in *After Virtue* the modern university is singled out as a contributing cause of the misunderstanding of the moral life and, consequently, a barrier to be overcome if both the theory and the life of the virtues were to be regained. Over the next decade and a half, he would elaborate an alternative vision of university life that is at once a response to a crisis in the academy but also a part—and perhaps even a necessary one—of the moral regeneration of society.

MacIntyre's essential claim about education in *After Virtue* has lost none of its ability to surprise with the passage of thirty years: that the form taken by our academic life prevents us from rightly understanding the character of our age. The transition to modernity that he understands as a loss of the tradition of the virtues is one that is "invisible" from the value-neutral "standpoint of academic history." Moreover, the "habits of mind engendered by our modern academic curriculum" make it difficult, if not impossible, to see the connection between conceptual and social changes—shifts in our way of thinking and in our patterns of life. In view here is the habitual compartmentalization, or, as he put it, "the tendency to think atomistically about human action," that characterizes not only our moral lives in general, but our academic institutions and practices as well.<sup>13</sup> Philosophy, from having been the common habit of reasoning possessed by an entire educated public, has become a highly circumscribed and narrowly professional pursuit.<sup>14</sup> Not only is philosophy cut off from life, it is even rigidly separated from subjects that either

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<sup>12</sup> See Perreau-Saussine, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 47–61.

<sup>13</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd edition (1981; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 4, 61, 204.

<sup>14</sup> See *ibid.*, 50–51, and his subsequent elaboration of this point in "The Idea of an Educated Public," in *Education and Values: The Richard Peters Lectures*, ed. Graham Haydon (London: University of London Institute of Education, 1987), 15–36.

should be closely annexed to it or, arguably, should be thought of as its own subordinate parts, such as the sociology of morals. This artificial curricular division—the product of professionalization—itself reproduces the essential ways in which modernity earlier broke with traditional society and the morality of the virtues that enlivened it: by rejecting the broadly speaking Aristotelian conception of man as having both a nature and a function within a larger social whole. In MacIntyre's own words, "the disjunctions and divorces of the eighteenth century perpetuate and reinforce themselves in contemporary curricular divisions."<sup>15</sup>

The solution to the ills of modernity that MacIntyre proposed at the end of *After Virtue* is well known. Yet it may not have been sufficiently realized just how central to his conception of a community of virtue is the role of teacher and the institution that is the school. The very choice of St. Benedict as his archetypal exemplar did point in that direction, for Benedict famously called the monastery a "school for the Lord's service" and understood the mutual teaching of the brother monks to be an essential part of their quest for virtuous living. MacIntyre himself subsequently stressed that all of the virtues "have to be developed throughout one's entire life" and that our quest for happiness must be understood as "a lifelong process of learning and imparting truths," a process that unfolds in a context of "mutual relationships of teaching and learning."<sup>16</sup> The school, then, and the student-teacher relationship, turn out to be places where the pursuit of virtue is condensed and, as it were, crystallized. If we ought to consider our lives as a whole as being a kind of education, then it seems fitting that we consider our formal education as essentially serving that larger and more universal pursuit of the good. Educational practices and institutions, therefore, not only provide evidence or symptoms of our success or failure in the pursuit of virtue, they are microcosms and the crucial test cases of that pursuit.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 72–73, 82.

<sup>16</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Privatization of Good: An Inaugural Lecture," *Review of Politics* 52 (1990): 344–61, at 358.

<sup>17</sup> Thus, presumably, his readiness to address the concerns of teachers and teachers themselves. See, for instance, his "Traditions and Conflicts," *Liberal Education* 73

Nowhere does MacIntyre's earnestness about education impress itself upon the reader more than in his inaugural lecture at the University of Notre Dame on "The Privatization of Good." Essential to the task of refuting secular liberalism in its various guises is the witness of a successful pursuit of the traditional virtues. The claim made by the traditional theory of the virtues, after all, is not merely that it manages to avoid contradicting itself, but also that, if the theory be followed, it will in fact result in a tolerable approximation of the good life. This is why, as MacIntyre put it, "the strengths of an Aristotelian and Thomistic position will only become clear insofar as it too is seen to be embodied in particularized forms of practice."<sup>18</sup> Having sounded this note, he closed the lecture by challenging his audience to join him in the attempt to make the academic community at Notre Dame provide in its common life compelling evidence of the truth that men and women are perfected by the virtues as traditionally understood. The passage is more than a little poignant: "as to that remaking of ourselves and our own local practices and institutions through a better understanding of what it is that, in an Aristotelian and Thomistic perspective, the unity of moral theory and practice now require of us, we have as much to hope for as we have to do, and not least within the community of this university."<sup>19</sup>

Overshadowed by MacIntyre's striking conception of a university as a battleground upon which competing traditions fight for the mastery, a conception developed in his *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (1990), the aspiration this passage expresses has been overlooked. Yet its significance within the course of his thinking should not be minimized, for if the tragedy of secular reason and the failure of the Enlightenment project have come about because of the progressive instantiation in social forms of a shift in philosophical principles, it seems reasonable to suppose that the shift back to an Aristotelian way of thinking and liv-

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(1987): 6–13; "How to Be a North American," lecture presented at the National Conference of State Humanities Councils (Washington, DC: Federation of State Humanities Councils, 1987); and "How Is Intellectual Excellence in Philosophy to be Understood by a Catholic Philosopher? What Has Philosophy to Contribute to Catholic Intellectual Excellence?" *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education* 12 (1991): 47–50.

<sup>18</sup> MacIntyre, "Privatization of Good," 360.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.



ing could be accomplished best—and perhaps even first—in a college or university, precisely because a school is the kind of institution in which principles and practices can and ought to be most closely harmonized. It is precisely this aspiration that makes sense of the tenor of much of his subsequent commentary on higher education.<sup>20</sup> The inability of the contemporary Catholic university to reverse the trend of the fragmentation of curricula and the narrow focus of undergraduate education upon preparedness for professional life—even, and perhaps especially, in the humanities—is nothing less than a tragedy because of the high promise of a well-thought-out and well-run educational institution: the formation of its students for lives of creative and trustworthy practical judgment about weighty matters.<sup>21</sup>

### Exemplary Philosophical Lives

By comparison to the prophetic tone of *After Virtue* and the high seriousness of the vision of intellectual combat offered in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, one is struck by what Reinhard Hütter described as the “disquieting, not to say despairing” tone of MacIntyre’s *God, Philosophy, Universities*.<sup>22</sup> On the subject of education, the volume appears to mark a decisive retreat from his earlier thought. It is, after all, a frankly professional model of philosophy that he discusses at the book’s end, which, though tempered by his discussion of John Paul II’s *Fides et Ratio* and his insistence that philosophy find both its origin and its destination in the questions asked by us all as “plain persons,” nevertheless seems much less idealistic than his earlier contributions. And at the level of controlling metaphor, it is one thing to be imitating St. Benedict, quite

<sup>20</sup> Even if perhaps expressed somewhat diffidently in his “Aquinas’s Critique of Education: Against His Own Age, Against Ours,” in *Philosophers on Education: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (London: Routledge, 1998), 95–108.

<sup>21</sup> See “Catholic Universities: Dangers, Hopes, Choices,” in *Higher Learning and Catholic Traditions*, ed. Robert E. Sullivan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 1–21; but also, and with greater insistence, his “The End of Education: The Fragmentation of the American University,” *Commonweal* (October 20, 2006): 10–14; and more recently, “The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman, and Us,” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 57 (2009): 347–62.

<sup>22</sup> Reinhard Hütter, “Seeking Truth on Dry Soil and under Thornbushes—God, the University, and the Missing Link: Wisdom,” in *Dust Bound for Heaven: Explorations in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 392.

another to bring a sweeping narrative of the history of philosophy to an end by tacitly recommending an apprenticeship to one who is most assuredly a philosopher's philosopher, Elizabeth Anscombe.<sup>23</sup> Such a retreat, moreover, would even seem to be a confirmed fact about the latter MacIntyre. For, at least on the face of it, to suggest that "perhaps the point of doing philosophy is to enable people to lead, so far as it is within their powers, philosophical lives," as he did in an essay published in 2006, seems to be worlds apart from his earlier rallying cry, "the philosophers have continued to interpret the world differently; the point remains, to change it."<sup>24</sup> An emphasis on the practical living out of philosophical convictions remains, to be sure, but his focus seems now to be decisively private and personal. Yet the retreat is merely apparent, and when *God, Philosophy, Universities* is placed in a broader context, its true significance can be better appreciated.

A work that should be considered if one is to understand the latter MacIntyre is his philosophical biography of the young Edith Stein. What at first glance may seem to be merely the report of a difficult bout of wrestling with phenomenology is in fact also a highly dramatic narrative of the pursuit of truth within the context of the modern university. At the heart of MacIntyre's narrative are the life, death, and philosophical inquiry of Stein's mentor and friend Adolf Reinach. Like other talented young philosophers of his generation—such as Max Scheler and Dietrich von Hildebrand—Reinach had come to Göttingen to learn from Edmund Husserl. Yet this was no easy task. Husserl's prickly and abstracted character was, to a degree, smoothed out and compensated for by his wife, but his students do not seem to have been really comfortable with him. They called him "the Master," feared disagreements with him, and learned to lower their expectations of his hospitality. The forbidding role of the professor in those days was only one of the challenges of German academic culture; Stein's colleagues and fellow students were also at times a cause of grief. MacIntyre writes of the "tiresome vani-

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<sup>23</sup> See *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 160–62.

<sup>24</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Ends of Life, the Ends of Philosophical Writing," in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 125–42, at 132; the earlier statement is from his "Breaking the Chains of Reason," cited above in note 5.

ty” of Scheler, gently points out the rudeness of another member of the Husserl circle by saying that the “focused intensity of his conversational manner sometimes alienated listeners,” and sums up the misanthropy of Martin Heidegger by explaining that after he left the Husserl circle, he entered into “relationships only with those who [were] prepared to acknowledge his superiority.”<sup>25</sup>

Adolf Reinach, to the contrary, was a model of the virtues necessary for the successful pursuit and sharing of truth. Both Reinach and his wife Anna were unstinting with the gift of their friendship, a gift that the young Edith Stein seems to have found especially valuable. Reinach, moreover, was known for his patient, teacherly expositions of Husserl’s turgid thought. He was generous with his time and encouraging with his advice. And, crucially, Reinach understood and practiced philosophy as a “cooperative enterprise,” as MacIntyre puts it. The academic life pursued by Adolf Reinach, Edith Stein, and a few others during the early 1910s in Göttingen was a common life of friendship in pursuit of truth. Although the friendships were not destined to be prolonged into a happy old age, they did much to shape the lives of those who enjoyed them. Reinach, a dutiful subject of the Kaiser, went off to the Great War, won the Iron Cross, and was killed in action. But not before he had been baptized a Christian. He took with him to the front his New Testament, the *Imitation of Christ*, and Augustine’s *Confessions*. From this spare but deep reading, he nourished his reflection upon his own personal experiences of God in prayer, leaving behind notes for a book on faith and reason. Writing to his wife from the front, he testified to his conviction that this inquiry was crucial: “To do such work with humility is most important today, far more important than to fight this war. For what purpose has this horror if it does not lead human beings closer to God?”<sup>26</sup>

In addition to his own noble death and his widow Anna’s equally noble reaction to it, Reinach bequeathed to Edith Stein an example of the serious and disinterested pursuit of truth that made it possible for her to choose a path in life that led—so far as these things

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<sup>25</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913–1922* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), quotations from 67, 90, 103, and 185.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, quotations from pages 139 and 146.

can be judged by outsiders—to a high degree of rational contentment. In place of the alienating and frustrating experiences of the German university system, she enjoyed a fruitful career as a secondary school teacher and part-time catechist and apologist for the Catholic faith, before joining the Carmelite order and pursuing her philosophical and theological studies with renewed vigor. Although it may require the perspective of faith in order fully to apprehend the nobility of her death and thus to be able to see her life as a successful and integrated whole, the more modest conclusions that MacIntyre offers in his study of her early life are readily appreciable. He takes the silence that followed her conversion to Christianity as an especially important sign. Unlike other philosophical conversions that he discusses in that study and elsewhere, Stein's seems incontestably to have brought about a deep satisfaction of mind, even a peace, which manifested itself first by years of quiet thoughtfulness and subsequently by her ability to give of herself generously to the community in which the truth she had been seeking—the truth about God—found a home.<sup>27</sup>

The lasting or deepest significance of *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue* within MacIntyre's corpus of work, then, may not be in its discussion of phenomenology, but instead in the way it provides a kind of completion to his discussions of education. The reforming zeal he had displayed in the 1950s has not been entirely lost here; indeed, he forthrightly portrays the failures of the German university system in the early twentieth century. The earnest seeker of truth that was Edith Stein did not find a lasting home at Göttingen or in the German university system as a whole, but instead in a Carmelite convent. With this story, MacIntyre offers an understated proposal that is just as important as his hope for a new St. Benedict or his defense of Manchester University, for Stein's life as a religious sister who wrote philosophical and theological works is an example of service to the truth every bit as eloquent as these earlier ones.

Yet there is another and still more important dimension to MacIntyre's *Edith Stein* and his recent essays touching on education, and that

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<sup>27</sup> On Stein's silence, see *ibid.*, 172–73. For MacIntyre's treatment of philosophical conversions, see chapter 15 of the same volume and also his essay covering much of the same ground, "Ends of Life, the Ends of Philosophical Writing."

is his increasing confidence in metaphysical affirmation. The trajectory of his metaphysical convictions may be rapidly sketched. In the 1950s and 1960s, although reading deeply in metaphysics, he nevertheless wrote as a reporter and a critic.<sup>28</sup> His discussions of education terminate with moral truths and social facts: his chief concern is not that undergraduates are failing to learn their proofs for the existence of God, but rather that they are being habituated for a life as upper-middle-class consumers of luxury goods. In the 1980s and 1990s, MacIntyre's analysis goes further. The essential failure of the modern university is that it deforms not merely the social aspirations of the students but the practical intellect itself. The fragmentation of the curriculum mirrors and reinforces the compartmentalization of life, and the end result of this must sooner or later be tragic.<sup>29</sup> Beginning in the 1990s, however, MacIntyre more and more robustly affirms propositions about the natures of things, beginning with the nature of man as a reasoning animal, but then more and more explicitly and insistently, propositions about truth and God.<sup>30</sup> His increasing attention to prior and more universal causes goes along with an increasing insistence about the guiding principle of education. It is in the context of this trajectory that *God, Philosophy, Universities* should be read, not as a retreat, but as a fresh start.<sup>31</sup> One ought to marvel at a philosopher in the evening of his life attempting such an endeavor, his earlier career having been so different, and even in important respects at variance with it. MacIntyre's address at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in 2011, "How to be a Theistic Philosopher in a Secularized Culture," brings the

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<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, his "Analogy in Metaphysics," *Downside Review* 69 (1950): 45–61, and "Being," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), I:273–77. It could be that his early convictions would be qualified as not merely detached from but positively negative about the possibility of traditional metaphysics. See his "A Society without a Metaphysics," *Listener* (September 13, 1956): 375–76, at 376: "to anyone working within contemporary philosophy it must be clear that the old metaphysical Absolutes are dead beyond recovery."

<sup>29</sup> In addition to the essays cited above in notes 17 and 21, see his "Social Structures and Their Threat to Moral Agency," *Philosophy* 74 (1999): 311–29.

<sup>30</sup> In addition to his *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 1999), one ought to note the essays "What Is a Human Body?" and "Truth as a Good: A Reflection on *Fides et Ratio*," both in *Tasks of Philosophy*.

<sup>31</sup> For such a reading, see Hütter, "Seeking Truth on Dry Soil," esp. 392, 402–3.

development of his thought about education to a kind of apogee with the statement that the difference between a theist and an atheist is not merely what they say about God, but what they say about everything else. “To be a theist,” he explains, “is to understand every particular as, by reason of its finitude and its contingency, pointing towards God.” To be a theist, accordingly, is “to hold that all explanation and understanding that does not refer us to God both as first cause and as final end is incomplete.”<sup>32</sup> This search for satisfactory explanations not only divides the theistic from the secular philosopher, but it also has immediate and evident ramifications for education.

### A Response to the Secular Mind

One may well ask just what sort of secular mind MacIntyre has in view by his division between the theistic and the atheistic philosopher. After all, the Stephen Weinbergs of the world do not seem to be lacking in their search for ever more capacious and powerful explanations. In the essay at hand, MacIntyre quite rightly responds to the physicalist reductionism that characterizes much contemporary atheism. Yet one may also observe that the ironic detachment exemplified by Richard Rorty seems to be just as characteristic of the secular mind, if not more so. For the closing off of systematic inquiry into causes seems much more likely to take place today at an earlier moment, long before elementary particles have been reached. Rorty’s astonishing assertion that it is literary criticism rather than philosophy that is the governing discourse—and his equally if not more astonishing display of philosophy as a kind of storytelling—does seem an accurate assessment of both our common culture and, in a certain sense the academy as well.<sup>33</sup> Rorty’s concern was to discover what effectually moves us to adopt a more tolerant attitude toward other men and women; his conviction is that the reading of novels and even the watching of movies and television shows today supplies the fuel for moral conviction that in the past was provided by philosophical conviction or religious belief. But his assessment, of course, applies more

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<sup>32</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, “On Being a Theistic Philosopher in a Secularized Culture,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 84 (2011): 23–32, at 23.

<sup>33</sup> See Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

broadly. In Rorty's pragmatism, practical judgments seem to rest not so much upon utility or profit or the avoidance of pain, but upon aesthetic sensibilities and passions. And this is why he seems indeed to have captured the secular mind almost perfectly—much like David Hume before him. For today, our mental preoccupations seem more than ever to rise from our changing desires as consumers of cultural products, whether those products be made in Hollywood or by a university press.

Why is MacIntyre's insistence that the theistic philosopher ought relentlessly to pursue the task of explanation until he has arrived at the consideration of the first cause and final end so important? Because the alternative to it is the suave sophistry of our age, in which communities of discourse artificially limited to matters of narrow scope threaten to stultify our pursuit of truth and the mental lives of our students. Just as in the case of Protagoras of old, the personal charm, ready wit, and moral authority conferred by success and rank that were enjoyed by Rorty himself and are shared by so many of our fellow academics today are qualities quite capable of generating a subculture—or even a dominant culture—that is almost impervious to critique. Socrates plainly thought that he needed to proceed to the drastic step of drinking the hemlock in order to convince friends like Crito that the rational life of the virtues was better than the life of pleasure. And, to recall MacIntyre's own examples, for Adolph Reinach, the experience of war seems to have been crucial in deepening his quest for truth, while for Edith Stein, Reinach's death and his wife's acceptance of it were the essential witnesses.

But what does all of this have to do with education? Precisely this: the culture of higher education—and this is increasingly true of secondary education as well—has been shaped by the Rortys of our time. The result has been a retreat into a professional mode of philosophizing in which the work of many of us is characterized by overly nice distinctions, an insistence upon apparatus over argument, and an overall soft skepticism in which affirmation is undervalued and politeness to interlocutors overvalued. These habits are chiefly to be seen in the writing and speaking of our professional lives, but they also have a way of making themselves felt in curricular discussions and even the grading of student papers. This is why more and more voices are warning that the intellectual life is being



dissolved into mere professionalism.<sup>34</sup> The challenge of affirming that, in the last analysis, it is the knowledge of God that perfects the human intellect is a test that is being failed even by philosophers and theologians of unimpeachable Christian seriousness.<sup>35</sup> But short of a serious attempt to make the difficult ascent toward the affirmation of propositions about things we cannot see—the virtues, the natures of things, truth, and God—we will not be able to put our educational practices and institutions into any satisfactory order. Their present disorder is so very grave, that even the danger of premature metaphysical affirmation seems worth running if the alternative is to acquiesce in the way we live now.

And so, by proposing as models Anscombe and John Paul II, Edith Stein and Adolf Reinach, Alasdair MacIntyre has at once offered a vision of academic life as well as a response to contemporary secularism. Against the self-satisfied and resolute aestheticism that takes any intellectual inquiry to be good so long as there is someone to desire it and insists that these intellectual goods have no order among them, MacIntyre has argued for a deeply purposeful approach to the life of the mind.<sup>36</sup> But perhaps just as crucially, he has exemplified it in his own philosophical

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<sup>34</sup> See, for instance, Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 3: “at the present time, the study of the humanities runs a risk of sliding from professional seriousness, through professionalization, to a finally disenchanting careerism.”

<sup>35</sup> For instance, Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood, *Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 180: “We have to reckon with the possibility that what some serious people take to be knowledge is not knowledge, and that that what some people take to be intellectual virtues are not virtues,” but the matter “could be decided only by a sort of metaphysical adjudication which is in all probability unavailable to human beings.” And, in a different key, but to a similar end, Paul J. Griffiths, *Intellectual Appetite: A Theological Grammar* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 111: “There is, however, no single, obvious, compelling taxonomic ordering of appetites: any particular ordering depends on and is deeply articulated with local catechesis.”

<sup>36</sup> See, on this point, the whole of his “Truth as a Good: A Reflection upon *Fides et Ratio*,” in *Tasks of Philosophy*, but especially this formulation of the typical stance of contemporary academics with respect to intellectual goods, at 208: “if we lacked any conception of such an absolute standpoint, we might well conclude that there is no such thing as a final terminus for enquiry concerning any particular subject matter. What directs enquiry on this alternative view are whatever may happen to be our explanatory interests and in taking this or that as the goal of enquiry in some particular area we are only giving expression to our interests as they happen to be now, but may not be in the future, interests that may also differ from social group to social group.”



life. Broad in his interests from the beginning of his career, he did most rigorously pursue his particular craft, moral philosophy; *After Virtue* will continue to be read as long as moral philosophy is studied in the English-speaking world. Yet by committing him to the defense of a tradition of inquiry encompassing more than ethics, that work led him to tackle progressively more capacious questions, and led him eventually to the philosophy of nature and metaphysics. As anyone conversant with his career can validate, MacIntyre is no dabbler: it is plain that he has been following out a line of inquiry with seriousness and skill. The virtue that has shaped that inquiry is his openness to consider difficulties with respect to progressively prior principles and, accordingly, progressively broader explanations. This openness is the precise opposite to the premature closure upon questioning that is seen in Rorty's prescription that we ought simply to accept as boundaries the sensibilities that history has bequeathed to us. In contrast to that antiphilosophical orientation, MacIntyre's life of inquiry is characterized by the relentlessness of a quest. His questions have deepened and broadened, from "What does justice require?" to "What sort of life will make me happy?" to "What sort of being am I?" to "What is truth?" and, finally, to Aquinas's question, "What is God?"

It is because of his fearless pursuit of truth that MacIntyre is the great craftsman-philosopher of our age. As his biographer the late Émile Perreau-Saussine aptly said, although MacIntyre was initially "carried away by the political passions of his century," in his later life he "progressively rediscovered wisdom."<sup>37</sup> He is like a furniture maker who, as a young man was trained to make chairs and then worried, and sweated, and toiled to make better ones, and succeeded. But then, instead of seeking only to profit from his chairs, he looked abroad and saw that in the making of chests further excellences remained for him to seek. So he acquired new tools, learned to use them, and made new works. He remains known for his chairs, chairs that have only improved because of his work on more difficult pieces. Yet he should especially be celebrated for his love for the craft, for he has exemplified the pursuit of the excellence it holds out. And, in the case of Alasdair MacIntyre, the craft he has shown us how to practice is the craft of crafts, the most

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<sup>37</sup> Perreau-Saussine, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 163.

human of arts, the art of thinking. In his recent address to the American Catholic Philosophical Association, he said that “what we need now are thinkers who combine philosophical acumen and argument with the wit of Chesterton and the satire of Waugh.”<sup>38</sup> Could it not be said that the quality we—and our students—need first is the thirst for truth of Alasdair MacIntyre? **N&V**

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<sup>38</sup> MacIntyre, “On Being a Theistic Philosopher,” 32.

## ***Reductio* as Pattern and Journey in Bonaventure**

SHAWN COLBERG

*College of St. Benedict's/St. John's University*  
*Collegeville, MN*

THE PRODIGIOUS WORKS of St. Bonaventure span three decades and a variety of theological genres. Their generic and topical scope attests to the riches of their content even as such breadth also raises challenges in terms of their overall schematization. Bonaventure's writings are sometimes classed into magisterial works, spiritual works, and collations to correspond to stages of his life as a Franciscan, yet a system as loose as this can fail to appreciate critical ideas transecting his works.<sup>1</sup> A particularly consistent theme in Bonaventure's treatments of Christian life is the notion of a "journey" that plots the potential progress of a wayfarer toward union with God. Works such as the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* or the *De triplici via* connote the notion of journey with their very titles, and their exposition illustrates a progressively ascending movement of the wayfarer into union with God. The present study identifies an overarching conceptual pattern for Bonaventure's practice of theology and presentation of the Christian life that not only accounts for its structure and goals in the spiritual works but also anchors the pattern in his theological method, metaphysics and doctrine of God. To that end, it will argue that Bonaventure patterns his presentation of journey on the conception of *reductio*, a notion that drives arguments

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<sup>1</sup> In the introduction to his *Bonaventure*, Ewert Cousins arranges Bonaventure's works into three chronological periods: scholastic treatises, spiritual writings, and lecture series. See *Bonaventure*, trans. E. Cousins (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 9.

throughout the corpus of his works. Having explicated his general definition and deployment of *reductio*, the study will clarify what is generally required for “reductive progress” into God with particular emphasis on the notion of exemplarity. It will then apply the theme of reduction to an investigation of Bonaventure’s spiritual works in order to illustrate that an enriched understanding of *reductio* provides thematic and structural integrity to these influential yet diverse treatises. In sum, the study claims that a full appreciation of *reductio* lends methodological and systematic coherence to Bonaventure’s overall theological system. *Reductio* links his metaphysics and doctrine of creation with his spiritual works and presentation of the Christian life, and it outlines a practical pattern for human action in the work of Christian sanctification.<sup>2</sup>

### Theological Method and *Reductio*

References to *reductio* and its methodological importance are disseminated through much of Bonaventure’s thought. The diffusion arises from its integral place in Bonaventure’s theological method and metaphysics so that *reductio* informs the way in which one can know and demonstrate something to be true.<sup>3</sup> The methodological role of *reductio* for proving theological arguments emerges, notably, in Bonaventure’s *Sentence Commentary* and *Breviloquium* where he uses it as a technique to prove any number of theological assertions. To that end, he draws on reductive arguments to demonstrate that certain points of doctrine

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<sup>2</sup> Studies of *reductio*, especially as an overarching motif in Bonaventure’s theology, are limited. Ilia Delio addresses its force, particularly in the spiritual journey to union with God, in the final chapter of her book *Simply Bonaventure* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2001), 158–72; the methodological technique of *reductio* is explicated in Guy Allard’s “La technique de la *Reductio* chez Bonaventure,” in *S. Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. 2, ed. Jacques Guy Bougerol (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura Grottaferrata, 1974), 395–416. The present study, however, seeks to expand significantly on the observations of Delio and Allard, and to argue, further, that the reductive motif unites and promotes a wider range of theological issues at stake in Bonaventure’s theological system and corpus of work.

<sup>3</sup> Guy Bougerol outlines four points of general orientation to Bonaventure’s theology, and the first of these is the concept of *reductio*. Bougerol further includes the themes of “proportion,” “necessary reasons,” and “arguments from piety” as parts of Bonaventure’s overarching dialectical method; see his *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. Jose de Vinck (Patterson, NJ: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1964), 75–81.

can be traced back to an authoritative source on which they depend for reliability.<sup>4</sup> In the most basic sense, Bonaventure reduces hosts of theological ideas back to God as first principle, supreme good, and the substance by which all else exists. For example, in the Prologue to the *Breviloquium*, he writes:

Because theology is, indeed, discourse about God and about the First Principle, as the highest science and doctrine it should resolve everything in God as its first and supreme principle. That is why, in giving the reasons for everything contained in this little work or tract, I have attempted to derive each reason from the First Principle, in order to demonstrate that the truth of Sacred Scripture is from God, that it treats of God, is according to God, and has God as its end.<sup>5</sup>

As discourse about God, Bonaventure reduces all of his discrete theological propositions back to God as first principle who reveals God's self in Scripture. This technique is typified and reinforced in the *Breviloquium* by his consistent use of the phrase "*Ratio autem ad intelligentiam praedictorum haec est,*" or "the reason for this should be understood as follows." The phrase often falls in the second paragraph of a given section in the *Breviloquium*, and it almost invariably indicates that Bonaventure will relate the foregoing assertion to God's nature as first principle. This same sense is underscored in the *proemium* to the *Sentence Commentary*

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<sup>4</sup> Bougerol explains: "In each case there is some reality which cannot subsist of itself and is not sufficient to itself, but which must be distinguished from the substance to which it is bound, because it is not this substance, and yet depends upon it" (*Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 76).

<sup>5</sup> Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, Prologue, 6.6. From *Works of Saint Bonaventure*, vol. IX, *Breviloquium*, trans. Dominic V. Monti, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2005). In his introduction to the work, Monti notes a distinction originally posited by Jean Gerson having to do with the difference between inductive and deductive methods in Bonaventure's theology; addressing the method that drives the *Breviloquium*, Monti writes: "The *Breviloquium*, in contrast, is grounded in theological metaphysics. It begins with the mystery of the Trinity, and from there proceeds to "reduce" or "retrace" the various beliefs proposed in the Catholic tradition to the foundational mystery of the self-diffusive first principle in order to demonstrate how they all logically flow from it" (XXXXVII). He contrasts the *Breviloquium* with the "inductive" method found in the *Itinerarium*; no less reductive, the *Itinerarium* leads the reader from lesser forms of being to the primordial source.

where Bonaventure affirms that God is the reductive subject matter of theology; he concludes: “For the subject, to which all things are reduced as to their *principle*, is *God Himself*.”<sup>6</sup>

One concrete example from his *Sentences Commentary*, taken from countless instances, is Bonaventure’s assertion that divine predestination is eternal because it is an expression of the divine will, which is retraced to God as eternal and first principle.<sup>7</sup> The practice of *reductio* thus provides Bonaventure with a methodological tool to substantiate his theological arguments, grounding them in the reliability of divine revelation and its particular affirmation of God as first principle.

Bonaventure’s methodological deployment of *reductio* is on greatest display in his *De reductione artium ad theologiam* where he argues that the fundamental insights of every branch of secular knowledge reduce analogically to the fullness of knowledge contained in the Incarnate Word.<sup>8</sup> For Bonaventure the eternal Word of the Father expresses the truth contained in the divine essence, providing mediated knowledge of the first principle and all that proceeds from it. This wisdom, expressed eternally in the Son, is further manifested in the economy through the Incarnation. Bonaventure argues: “Therefore all natural philosophy, by

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<sup>6</sup> *I Sent.*, Proem.1, resp; translations are the author’s and taken from *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1 (Quaracchi: Editiones PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1882). Prior to reaching this conclusion, Bonaventure outlines a threefold way in which God is reductive subject; he writes: “It ought to be said, that the ‘subject’ in any science or doctrine is able to be accepted in a threefold way. In one way a ‘subject’ in a science is called [that] to which all things are reduced as to their *root principle*; in another way, [that] to which all things are reduced just as to their *integral whole*; in a third manner, [that] to which all things are reduced just as to their *universal whole*.”

<sup>7</sup> See *I Sent.*, 40.1.1, resp. Bonaventure writes: “Because, therefore, the *principle signified* is eternal, so predestination is something eternal. *Again*, because it imports the antecedent of the signified to the connoted, and the antecedent is eternal, for that reason predestination is something eternal and from eternity. And the reasons for this ought to be conceded.”

<sup>8</sup> The *De reductione* endeavors to show the reductive relationship of the subjects of classical education to theology; Zachary Hayes writes: “As a cognitive term, the word [*reductio*] refers to the way in which the human subject comes to know and understand the realities of the created order in the light of this metaphysical conviction . . . the journey of human cognition is best understood as one dimension of the way in which the human, spiritual journey is involved in creation’s return to God.” See Hayes’s “Introduction,” in *Works of Saint Bonaventure*, vol. I, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, trans. Zachary Hayes, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1996), 1.

reason of the relation of proportion, presupposes the Word of God as begotten and incarnate, the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, that is, begotten in the beginning before all time, and incarnate in the fullness of time.<sup>9</sup> All the arts therefore reveal divine wisdom as expressed in creation and salvation through the Word, and when properly examined for their purpose and content, the arts lead the student back to the fullness of divine wisdom.<sup>10</sup> Reduction accordingly serves as a cognitive exercise that illumines the divine truth in all things, connecting all that can be known to God and God's providential direction of the cosmos.<sup>11</sup> As it does so, the practice itself cultivates an affective dimension that progressively enkindles the practitioner's desire for union with God. Bonaventure summarizes the *De reductione's* project thus:

And so it is evident how the manifold wisdom of God, which is clearly revealed in sacred Scripture, lies hidden in all knowledge and in all nature. It is clear also how all divisions of knowledge are servants of theology, and it is for this reason that theology makes use of illustrations and terms pertaining to every branch of knowledge. It is likewise clear how wide the illuminative way may be, and how divine reality itself lies hidden within everything which is perceived or known. And this is the fruit of all sciences, that in all, faith may be strengthened, God may be honored, character may be formed, and

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<sup>9</sup> *De reductione*, 20.

<sup>10</sup> Hayes writes: "This may be a helpful way to look at the argument of the *De reductione*. The divine wisdom lies hidden in every form of secular knowledge. We need but to find the key to discover and unfold the appropriate analogies to allow that which is hidden to shine forth. As a result, each of the arts and sciences is made to bear on: (1) the eternal generation of the Word and his humanity; (2) the Christian order of life; and (3) the union of the soul with God" (22).

<sup>11</sup> Hayes writes: "The general flow of the argument throughout the *De reductione* will be to highlight the analogical relations between the insights of the arts and these [three] concerns of the biblical tradition. In essence, this is the logic of the *reduction* (12). Bougerol adds: "This reduction is not merely a technique—it is the soul of the return to God; and since all knowledge depends on principles, and principles are born within us under the regulating and motivating action of divine ideas, the certitudes which seem most capable of being self-sufficient are necessarily linked, by means of first principles, with the eternal reasons and their divine foundation" (*Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, 76).

consolation may be derived from union of the Spouse with the beloved.<sup>12</sup>

Bonaventure's appreciation of *reductio* as providing a way to divine knowledge is not merely cognitive in the epistemological or methodological sense. He connects the practice of *reductio* in all branches of human knowledge to the doxological practice of glorifying God, and perhaps most importantly, to the progressive movement into a union between God as spouse and those who seek to know God. The *De reductione* sets that union in the language of charity where God unites God's self, as known, with human beings, as loved; Bonaventure describes it as "a union which takes place through charity: a charity without which all knowledge is vain because no one comes to the Son except through the Holy Spirit who teaches us *all the truth, who is blessed forever, Amen.*"<sup>13</sup> If all things can be reliably known as extending from God as their fontal source, then *reductio* operates as an organizing theme for Christian theology that informs the sequence of its arguments, the proofs by which it demonstrates the fittingness of Christian belief and, ultimately, the movement of human beings into loving union with God.

### Metaphysics and *Reductio*

The *De reductione*'s structural and methodological deployment of *reductio* is anchored in a metaphysics that promotes something more than a mere cognitive retracing of all knowledge to God. Indeed, Bonaventure insists that all that exists or has being can be retraced naturally to God as source of *esse*. This basic metaphysical conviction indicates that (1) all that exists comes forth from God who is the first principle of creation and so (2) returns to God as the consummation of its existence.<sup>14</sup> It establishes a basic metaphysical pattern of *exitus-reditus* for the cosmos in general and for the direction of human action in particular. Within that pattern, *reductio* indicates a journey of *reditus* or return to God

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<sup>12</sup> *De reductione*, 26.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Bonaventure addresses the principle of *exitus-reditus* explicitly in *I Sent.*, d. 36, p. 1, a. 3., q. 2, c. See also Christopher Cullen's discussion of metaphysics in his *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 61. He notes that Bonaventure likely adopted a general use of the *exitus-reditus* pattern from Alexander of Hales.



as source of existence. In his *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure undertakes one of his most integrated treatments of theology, and in the first collation, he famously writes: “Such is the metaphysical Center that leads us back, and this is the sum total of our metaphysics: concerned with emanation, exemplarity, and consummation, that is, illumination through spiritual radiations and return to the Supreme Being.”<sup>15</sup>

In this succinct summary, Bonaventure introduces the basic and reductive framework of all that exists—created things come forth from God; they contain an interior likeness to their fontal source; and by way of progressive exemplarity—particularly through divine illumination—they are lead back to God as source of their existence.<sup>16</sup> Wayne Hellman writes of Bonaventure’s method: “The thrust of Bonaventure’s theology concerns itself with the *reductio* (not as much with the *origo*). Salvation is nothing other than the ordering of all things back to their final end, God.”<sup>17</sup> Bonaventure’s metaphysics therefore gives a distinctive form to the way in which *reductio* applies to human salvation and movement into union with God.

Bonaventure’s affirmation of emanation, of the *exitus* of all that proceeds from God, emerges from his broader affirmation of God as *Sum-*

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<sup>15</sup> *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, I:17; all citations for the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* are taken from *Collations on the Six Days*, trans. Jose de Vinck (Patterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970). Romano Guardini also summarizes the interplay of these themes, including illumination, by recounting the ways in which *reductio* unfolds for Bonaventure; he writes: “The forms of this *reduci* are very diverse: belief, grace, the many forms of the *actus hierarchici*, especially enlightenment and inspiration; the gifts and works of the Holy Spirit; the five principal cardinal virtues; the eternal rule, and the powers, which through God, illuminate the soul.” Taken in translation from Wayne Hellman, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure’s Theology*, trans. J. M. Hammond (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2001), 22.

<sup>16</sup> Etienne Gilson affirms the threefold movement; he writes: “There are three metaphysical problems and three only: creation, exemplarism, and the return to God by way of illumination; the whole of metaphysics is contained in them, and the philosopher who solves them is the true metaphysician” (128). See *The Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan (Paterson, NJ: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1965). Delio argues that the intellectual notion of *reductio* informs God’s will for human beings and their path to union with God. She writes: “The movement of *reductio* is integral to the spiritual journey which is based on the notion of the human person as image of God. As image, the human person is God-oriented and cannot find rest anywhere except in God” (*Simply Bonaventure*, 160).

<sup>17</sup> Hellman, *Divine and Created Order*, 20. See his chapter “Basic Concepts in Bonaventure’s Understanding of Order,” 9–30.

*mum Bonum* and source of all that exists.<sup>18</sup> For Bonaventure, God shares divine goodness naturally; his conception of God is one of dynamic fecundity in which the Trinity itself reflects God as diffusive goodness. Working from the notion of God as first principle, Bonaventure reasons that the Father is the fontal source of all being, including the interior life of the Trinity. In his discussion of the divine persons, he assigns the quality of *innascibilitas* to the Father, which implies not only that the Father is without generation or origin but also that his original primacy is the fountain of all that exists.<sup>19</sup> Within the Godhead, the Father generates the Son and spirates the Holy Spirit in a perfect act of self-diffusion; the Trinity, *in se*, is a self-diffusing font of being.<sup>20</sup> Grounding God's

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Walsh's "The Principle of 'Bonum Diffusivum sui' in St. Bonaventure: Meaning and Importance" (dissertation, Fordham University, 1958) provides a comprehensive treatment of this topic. Bonaventure makes this point with his identification of God's triune life as *Summum Bonum* in the *Itinerarium*, 6. As the wayfarer reaches the summit of contemplative progress where she can conceive of God as *Summum Bonum*, Bonaventure writes: "For the good is said to be self-diffusive. But the greatest self-diffusion cannot exist unless it is actual and intrinsic, substantial and hypostatic, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, lacking nothing and perfect . . . and this is the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit—unless these were present, it would by no means be the highest good because it would not diffuse itself in the highest degree" (VI.2). All citations for the *Itinerarium* are taken from *Bonaventure*, trans. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978); 51–116; references refer to internal chapters and paragraph numbers.

<sup>19</sup> In *I Sent.*, d. 27, p. 1, a. 1., q. 2, Bonaventure explores the question of whether generation is the reason for paternity or the opposite, and in ad. 3, he writes: "For the Innascible is called the Father, because he is *not from another*; and to not be from another is to be first, and primacy is a noble *position*. For [being] first by reason of [primacy] to that extent is called a noble position and a condition, because, as will be seen, the positing of a second follows the positing of a first. Whence, because [he is] first, it follows that he is the beginning; and for that reason, whether in act or in habit, he is the beginning. Because, therefore the *reason of primacy* in some genus is the reason of [being] the beginning, for that reason, because the Father has primacy in respect to emanation, generation and procession, he generates and spirates." Bonaventure adds: "Because what moves one to say this, is first the ancient position of the great *doctors*, who said, that the innascibility in the Father is called the *font of plenitude*. But the font of plenitude consists in producing. But it is the case that the font of plenitude is said to be in Him not for this reason, because he produces a creature, because this fits with the three [divine persons]; nor for this reason, because he produces the Holy Spirit, because this fits with the Son: therefore the font of plenitude in the Father posits the generation in the same one."

<sup>20</sup> Ewert Cousins writes: "The Trinitarian processions, then, are seen as the expression of the Father's fecundity. In this perspective, Bonaventure developed a highly elab-

self-diffusion in the Trinity has profound implications for Bonaventure's metaphysics and doctrine of creation. Ewert Cousins writes:

[God's] transcendence consists precisely in his dynamic self-communication, but this self-communication is realized fully only at the heart of the divinity itself. His is a fecundity that breaks the bounds of all limitations and realizes itself adequately only in the generation of the Word and the spiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus God's fecundity does not have to be fitted on the Procrustean bed of creation. At the same time, his transcendent fecundity is the wellspring of creation and of his immanence in the world.<sup>21</sup>

The diffusion of God's being in the cosmos is not a necessary overflowing of the Godhead that an undernourished doctrine of emanation may suggest. Rather, the divine nature, originating in the Father and communicating itself perfectly in the Trinity, is the source of a wholly gratuitous and utterly fitting communication in the economy. All that exists freely originates in the innascible Father, and the *reditus* of creation will follow a similar arc of reduction to the Father.

The Word occupies a distinctive place as the wisdom of the Father in Bonaventure's doctrine of a dynamic and self-diffusing Trinity. As begotten, the Son expresses the *rationes aeternae* of the Father, and containing these fecund reasons, he not only reflects the wisdom of the Trinity *ad intra* but also communicates it *ad extra* in the divine act of creation.<sup>22</sup> All that comes forth from God through the Word shares a fundamental likeness to its creator, and as such, created things reflect back to the Son and, so, to the Father; they illumine a way to God.<sup>23</sup> Cousins writes:

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orated doctrine of the generation of the Son, as Image and Word of the Father. . . . Hence the mystery of the Trinity is seen precisely as the mystery of the divine fecundity rooted in the Father as source." See Cousins's *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 51–52.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>22</sup> Leonard J. Bowman offers a helpful introduction to this point in his "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," *Journal of Religion* 55 (1975): 181–98.

<sup>23</sup> Cousins suggests the following: "When the Father generates the Son, he produces in the Son the archetypes or *rationes aeternae* of all he can create. When God decrees to create *ad extra* in space and time, this creative energy flows from the Trinitarian

“Thus the Son is the link between the divinity and creation; for all of created reality is the expression of him and refers back to him, by way of exemplarism, that is by way of being grounded in him as in its eternal Exemplar.”<sup>24</sup> Alongside the doctrine of creation or emanation through the Word, Bonaventure integrates an Augustinian sense of the Platonic ideas as eternal forms in the divine mind, and as such, the divine mind is the formal exemplar of all that emanates from it, including created things.<sup>25</sup> In the *Collations in Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure writes: “Our intent, then, is to show that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that He Himself is the center point of all understanding.”<sup>26</sup> As eternal and incarnate Word, the Son expresses the content of divine knowledge and wisdom, himself becoming the hermeneutic for all understanding. In the *Lignum vitae*, Bonaventure speaks of Jesus as an “Inscribed Book” who, when properly read, leads back to union with the Father. He writes:

And this wisdom is written in Christ Jesus as in the book of life, in which God the Father has *hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col 2:3). Therefore, the only-begotten Son of God, as the uncreated Word, is the book of wisdom and the light that is full of living eternal principles in the mind of the supreme Craftsman, as the inspired Word in the angelic intellects and the blessed, as the incarnate Word in rational minds united with the flesh. Thus throughout the entire kingdom *the*

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fecundity and expresses itself according to the archetypes in the Son” (*Bonaventure*, 26). Zachary Hayes adds: “Here it is Bonaventure’s view that the divine mystery is within itself as a mystery of self-communicative love, and all that can come to be should the divine determine to communicate itself externally. Thus, internally and in terms of logical denotation, there is but one divine Word. But in terms of logical connotation, that single Word expresses the plurality of creatures in the cosmos external to God” (7).

<sup>24</sup> Cousins, *Bonaventure*, 26. In *Collationes in Hexaemeron* I:13, Bonaventure underscores this point when he writes: “From all eternity the Father begets a Son similar to Himself and expresses Himself and a likeness similar to Himself, and in so doing He expresses what He can do, and most of all, what He wills to do, and He expresses everything in Him, that is, in the Son or in that very Center, which so to speak is His Art.”

<sup>25</sup> See Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 72, for a treatment of Bonaventure’s appreciation of Augustine and the positing of forms in the mind of God.

<sup>26</sup> *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, I:11.

*manifold wisdom of God* (Eph 3:10) shines forth from him and in him, as in a mirror containing the beauty of all forms and lights as in a book in which all things are written according to the deep secrets of God.<sup>27</sup>

Bonaventure presents the Son as inspired and incarnate Word who expresses the eternal reasons—as deep secrets—of the Father for humankind. Moreover, the Son illumines or gives light to human understanding so that it may know divine wisdom.

### Exemplarity and Reductio

The presentation of Jesus as a book, or *liber*, is noteworthy. Inasmuch as creation reflects the Word in a variety of ways, it offers sources for reduction in the general return of all things into God.<sup>28</sup> Bonaventure tellingly refers to these ways of reduction as “books,” noting particularly the books of Scripture, nature, the soul, and Jesus himself.<sup>29</sup> Early in the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure makes an important reference to books and reduction; he writes: “From all we have said, we may gather that the created world is a kind of book reflecting, representing, and describing its Maker, the Trinity, at three different levels of expression: as a vestige, as an image, and as a likeness. . . . Through these successive levels, comparable to steps, the human intellect is designed to ascend gradually to the

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<sup>27</sup> *Lignum vitae*, 46. All quotations for the *Lignum vitae* are taken from “The Tree of Life,” in *Bonaventure*, ed. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978); citations refer to internal paragraph numbers.

<sup>28</sup> See parallel language in *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, II:12.

<sup>29</sup> George Tavard provides a helpful overview of the way in which Bonaventure thinks of “books” as means of reduction into God. He writes: “One of the viewpoints from which St. Bonaventure envisages many of his ideas is symbolically expressed in the word *liber*. The metaphor of the ‘book’ is indeed [sic] too frequent not to cover a typically Bonaventurian conception: man attains to God through reading Him in a book.” See *Transiency and Permanence: The Nature of Theology According to St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1974), 31. Tavard unpacks the books of Scripture, creation, and the soul in part one of his book. Concerning the book of Scripture, Thomas Herbst provides a strong example of the convergence of Christ, Scripture, and exemplarism in his essay “The Passion as Paradoxical Exemplarism in Bonaventure’s Commentary on the Gospel of John,” *Antonianum* 78 (2003): 209–48.

supreme Principle, which is God.”<sup>30</sup> Bonaventure adopts and regularly deploys the language of “vestige, image, and similitude” to describe the ways in which all things bear likeness to God. The books of Scripture, Christ, nature, or the soul illumine the wayfarer’s mind with knowledge of these vestiges, images, and similitudes, which, in turn, draw her back to God. Successful reading not only illumines but also promotes an exemplarity by which the reader can grow in resemblance to the Trinity through the Son. This positive affirmation of the cosmos’s character ties into Bonaventure’s deep Franciscan identity, which also appreciates the presence and doxological character of the Trinity’s *vestigia* in created things.<sup>31</sup> This strong sense of the divine wisdom, revealed in Christ and present in the various books of Christian reflection, sets the stage for the way in which *reductio* as journey leads all things into one in God.

Bonaventure’s doctrine of exemplarity registers value in the created natures of things precisely as expressions of the Word. He builds on the language of exemplarity set out in the *Breviloquium* in the *Itinerarium*; he writes: “In relation to our position in creation, the universe is a ladder by which we can ascend into God. Some created things are vestiges, others images; some are material, others spiritual; some are temporal, others everlasting; some are outside us, others within us. This means *to be led [deduci] in the path of God.*”<sup>32</sup> As intelligent natures, human beings begin as images, and through their *reductio* into God, they become similitudes or very close likenesses to God. Hellman suggests that Bonaventure’s exemplarism unfolds in both a “horizontal” and “vertical” relationship with God; he writes:

Each created nature is arranged in its inner constitution according to the exemplar of the horizontal order in the inner-Trinitar-

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<sup>30</sup> Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, II.12.1. Similar language is deployed in I *Sent.*, 3.1.2 and 2.1.1., ad 5; II *Sent.*, 16.2.3; *Collationes in Hexaemeron* 2.20–27 and 3.3–9; and the *Itinerarium* 1.2.

<sup>31</sup> Francis’s appreciation of God’s presence in and through nature in writings such as the “Canticle of the Sun” set the tone for Bonaventure’s work. These same prepositions, “in” and “through,” are the methodological ordering of the *Itinerarium*, which traces God’s presence in and through vestiges and images of God. See Delio’s study “The Canticle of Brother Sun: A Song of Christ Mysticism,” *Franciscan Studies* 52 (1992): 1–22.

<sup>32</sup> Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, I:2.

ian life of the one God. . . . The *reductio* of the human person to God (vertical order) is thereby effected by a conformity (*conformitas*), which is the horizontal order, not in the faintness of the *vestigium* or *imago*, but in the stronger way of *similitudo*.<sup>33</sup>

Human beings return or journey reductively into God in vertical ascent, but this unfolds through the ongoing and horizontal examination of God's presence in the created order and through grace. The horizontal order promotes increasing exemplarity, which aims at *similitudinem*, making full union with God possible. At the root of Bonaventure's doctrine of exemplarity, then, human beings are *capax Dei*, and action ordered to a person's return to God increasingly likens her to the Exemplar. The interior and immanent life of the Trinity, revealed most fully in Jesus, is the archetype for reductive human action, and Bonaventure's emphasis on exemplarity measures the progress of the journey. Made in the image of the Trinity through the eternal Word, human beings obtain the likeness of similitudes through the infusion of grace and corresponding human action. The outcome of reductive illumination, experienced through exemplarity, is a hierarchized soul that is increasingly conformed to Christ crucified so that final union is possible.

When addressing the specific *reductio* of human beings to God, Bonaventure consistently acknowledges the obstacle of sin and its injurious effects on the *imago Dei* in human nature. Christ's Incarnation and passion make a restoration possible, and so for Bonaventure, Christ's saving work lies at the center of the return of creation to God. Access to the saving effects of Christ's work, however, is gained through grace. Bonaventure writes: "It thus follows that [Jesus] restores us by enduring the penalty on our behalf in his assumed nature, and by infusing re-creating grace that binds us to its source, making us members of Christ."<sup>34</sup> Christ's *acta* and *passa* make salvation possible, and its effects are communicated through the infusion of sanctifying grace. Grace, including its expression in the sacraments, is therefore fundamentally restorative

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<sup>33</sup> Hellman, *Divine and Created Order*, 26.

<sup>34</sup> Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.3.3; see also 2 *Sent.*, 26.4, where Bonaventure identifies grace as the proximate principle of restoration from sin and the incarnate Word as its remote cause.

of human nature, healing it and enabling its increasing similitude to the exemplar image.<sup>35</sup>

Bonaventure divides the *Breviloquium* into seven parts with “On the Incarnation of the Word” falling at the exact center (part four); “On The Grace of the Holy Spirit” follows in part five and outlines the way of return in light of Christ’s saving act. In the first section of part five, Bonaventure defines sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*) as that which conforms the soul in increasing likeness to God.<sup>36</sup> He writes:

If then, the rational spirit is to become worthy of eternal happiness, it must partake of this God-conforming influence. This influence that renders the soul dei-form comes from God, conforms us to God, and leads us to God as our end. It therefore restores the image of our mind to likeness with the blessed Trinity—not only in terms of its order of origin, but also in terms of its rectitude of choice and of its rest in enjoying [God].<sup>37</sup>

Grace generally conforms the recipient’s *imago* to the exemplar. *Reductio* taken as the return of human beings to God thus depends on sanctifying grace as integral to its progress. Bonaventure additionally insists that the provision and effectiveness of grace is possible only through the free cooperation of the recipient, and so grace reducing the wayfarer to God depends on free, meritorious action.<sup>38</sup> He writes: “But once we possess this [sanctifying] grace, it merits its own increase if we make good use of it here below, and this merit is a just claim [*de digno*]. . . . Furthermore, our free choice is a source [of the increase of grace] by

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<sup>35</sup> For a treatment of Bonaventure on the sacraments, see Paula Jean Miller’s *Marriage: The Sacrament of Divine-Human Communion* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1996), 36–76, for its discussion of “The Sacramental Theory of St. Bonaventure.”

<sup>36</sup> Bonaventure writes: “Finally, grace is a gift that purifies, illumines, and perfects the soul; that vivifies, reforms, and strengthens it, that elevates it, likens it, and joins it to God, and thereby makes it acceptable to God. This is a gift of such kind that it is rightly and properly called ‘the grace that makes pleasing’ (*gratia gratum faciens*)” (*Breviloquium*, V:13).

<sup>37</sup> *Breviloquium*, V:13.

<sup>38</sup> For a full treatment of Bonaventure on grace and its relation to merit, see my dissertation, “‘Be Glad and Rejoice for Your Reward Is Very Great in Heaven’: ‘Reward’ in the *Theology of Aquinas and Bonaventure*” (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008), particularly chapter 4, “Bonaventure and Reward in the Systematic Works.”



virtue of its cooperating and meriting, to the extent that the free will cooperates with grace and makes what belongs to grace its own.”<sup>39</sup> The human action that prevents and follows grace is critical to progress. Bonaventure thus conceives of the *reductio* in salvation as a dynamic cooperation between God and human beings, which results in the increasing conformity or similitude of the human person to God through the Word. Grace and human action are the tools by which Bonaventure’s doctrine of exemplarity is unfolded in the economy. They make reading the books of nature, the soul, Scripture, and Christ possible, and insofar as these concepts underlie reductive progress, it opens an interpretive path to Bonaventure’s spiritual works.

### **Reductio in the Spiritual Works**

Bonaventure’s *mystical opuscula* comprise a variety of his most widely circulated and enduring works. This loose genre includes texts produced during his tenure as minister general of the Friars Minor (1257–74), especially from its early years as he endeavored to stabilize and focus the order’s identity.<sup>40</sup> The diversity of these works, even as a subset of Bonaventure’s larger corpus, is remarkable. While they generally commend a contemplative journey as a means of approaching union with God, the subject matter of these models varies widely.<sup>41</sup> They encompass a variety of *libri* including, loosely, the soul/nature (*De triplici via*, *Solilo-*

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<sup>39</sup> *Breviloquium*, V.2.4. Bonaventure’s affirmation of merit here is very strong; he makes the notable claim that, when the free will properly uses sanctifying grace, the person can make a “condign” claim to divine rewards. Bonaventure qualifies this claim with greater precision in the *Sentence Commentary*, where he stipulates that the condignity of merit arises not merely from the movement of the free will but also the power of the grace given by God and the manner of the meritorious work itself; see II *Sent.*, 26.2.3, resp.

<sup>40</sup> Bonaventure’s election as Minister General unfolds in the midst of controversy concerning his predecessor, John of Parma, who may have been pressured to resign for his support of the spiritual wing of the order and its interpretation of Joachimite ideas. See Rosalind B. Brooke’s “St. Bonaventure as Minister General,” in S. *Bonaventura Francescano*, ed. Cesare Vasoli et al. (Todi, Italy: Centro di Studi sulla Spiritualità Medievale, 1974), 75–105.

<sup>41</sup> Works belonging to this category include: *Soliloquium de quatuor mentalibus* (1259), *De triplici via* (1259), *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259), *Lignum vitae* (1260), *Legenda maior* (1263), *De perfectione vitae ad sorores* (1259), *De sex alis Seraphim*, and *Vitis mystica*. Some scholarly differences remain as to the precise dating of these works.

*oquium*, and *Itinerarium*), Jesus/Scripture (*Lignum vitae* and *Vitis mystica*), and St. Francis of Assisi (*Legenda maior*). When expositied through the lens of *reductio* as elucidated in Bonaventure's theological method, metaphysics, and doctrine of exemplarity, the journeys of these works gain not only greater theological significance but also overall coherence as complementary tools for *reditus ad Deum*. Appreciating the reductive quality of these works assists in (1) synthesizing their seemingly disparate contents and in (2) aligning their emphases on grace and human action with Bonaventure's larger vision of God's nature and the telos of creation. To that end, an examination of the *Itinerarium*, *Lignum vitae*, and *Legenda maior* on these points will demonstrate the thematic value of *reductio* for reading the spiritual works.

Bonaventure writes the *Itinerarium*, *Lignum vitae*, and *Legenda* in the early years of his generalate, and in their distinctive ways, all three works promote the spiritual identity of the Franciscan Order under Bonaventure, giving concrete expression to the way in which the friars practice a life aimed at union with God. The three works were broadly popular, enjoying wide manuscript dissemination, yet their subject matter differs in striking ways.<sup>42</sup> The *Itinerarium* uses the imagery of the six-winged seraph that appeared before Francis on Mount La Verna to structure an inductive journey using the material world, including the soul, to ultimately approach divine nature and reach the *transitus*. The *Lignum vitae* aims at a similar passing over, but it approaches that end through the *acta* and *passa* of Jesus who is the Tree of Life; exemplarity is cultivated by a direct meditation on Jesus's life.<sup>43</sup> Bonaventure writes the *Legenda* under different auspices than the *Itinerarium* and

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<sup>42</sup> *Legenda maior*, approved in 1266, is the most disseminated work of Bonaventure because its approbation included an order that every friary should receive a copy; more than four hundred manuscripts exist. The Quaracchi edition of the *Lignum vitae* (VIII:xli-1) lists 175 extant manuscripts in its introduction to the text. Arthur Holder reports that at least 138 extant manuscripts exist for the *Itinerarium*, with at least ninety-five coming before the end of the fourteenth century; see *Christian Spirituality and the Classics* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 118.

<sup>43</sup> Bonaventure states: "To enkindle in us this affection, to shape this understanding and to imprint this memory [of Jesus crucified], I have endeavored to gather this bundle of myrrh from the forest of the holy Gospel, which treats at length the life, passion, and glorification of Jesus Christ" (*Lignum vitae*, Prologue: 2). See parallels for the theological ordering of Scripture in *Breviloquium*, Prologue: V. Moreover, Bonaventure uses the same "Tree of Life" language for Christ in the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, I:17.

*Lignum vitae*; the 1260 General Chapter of Narbonne commissioned him to write an official *vita* of Francis for use by the order. Even as the text is biographical, it nevertheless presents Francis's life as an ascending journey leading to his reception of the stigmata and final passing over into life with God. Using the language of purgation, illumination, and perfection, Bonaventure exemplifies Francis's *vita* as a journey that hierarchizes his person and disposes him for passing over into God.<sup>44</sup> The three works employ diverse subjects on which to pattern a journey to union with God. *Prima facie*, their content raises questions about the proper object for contemplation and the direction of human action in its return to God. A closer consideration of their prologues, order of human action, and presentation of union with God reflects deep coherence arising out of Bonaventure's larger metaphysics and doctrine of *reductio*.

The prologues of the *Itinerarium*, *Lignum vitae*, and *Legenda* share deep commonalities concerning the goal and direction of human life. Perhaps most importantly, all three works commend themselves as journeys moving toward a goal or terminus. The wayfarer begins in a particular place or state, and by following the guidelines of the works, he may arrive at a new and desired end.<sup>45</sup> Bonaventure presents this end as peaceful

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<sup>44</sup> The *Legenda maior* consists of fifteen total chapters. The first four chronologically outline the early stages of his biography, and the final two instruct the reader on his death and canonization. Chapters 5–13 break from the chronology and present Bonaventure's life following the threefold order of his purgation (chaps. 5–7), illumination (chaps. 8–10), and perfection (chaps. 11–13). Concerning this organization, Bonaventure writes: "To avoid confusion, I did not always weave the story together in chronological order. Rather, I strove to maintain a more thematic order, relating the same events that happened at different times, and to different themes events that happened at the same time, as seemed appropriate" (Prologue: 4).

<sup>45</sup> Several good treatments of the nature of "journey" in the *Itinerarium* are available; they include Ambrose Nguyen Van Si's "The Journey-Symbols in St. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*," *Greyfriars Review* 9 (1995): 309–30; Ewert Cousin's "Bonaventure and Dante: The Role of Christ in the Spiritual Journey," in *Itinerarium: The Idea of Journey*, ed. Leonard J. Bowman (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1983), 113–31; and Bernard McGinn's *Ascension and Introversion in the "Itinerarium Mentis in Deum"*, in *S. Bonaventura 1274–1974*, cit., III, 535–52. George Tavad's *Transiency and Permanence*, particularly chapter 12, "Transitus," 229–47, also deals with the notion of journey but not as an explicit topic or as limited to the *Itinerarium*. Studies of the *Lignum vitae* are scarce; see Richard S. Martignetti's *Saint Bonaventure's Tree of Life: Theology of the Mystical Journey* (Grottaferrata: Frati Editori di Quaracchi, 2004) as a potential source. Important studies of the *Leg-*

union with God. The end is gained reductively through (1) a reordering of the wayfarer's nature to the divine archetype and (2) a transitus through the crucified Christ. These progressive steps necessarily precede union, which Bonaventure describes as peace or rest in the heavenly homeland. He describes the steps and goal in the *Itinerarium's* prologue:

The six wings of the Seraph can rightly be taken to symbolize the six levels of illumination by which, as if by steps or stages, the soul can pass over to peace through ecstatic elevations of Christian wisdom. There is no other path but through the burning love of the Crucified, a love which so transformed Paul into Christ when he "was carried up to the third heaven" (2 Cor 12:2) that he could say: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross. I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).<sup>46</sup>

Paul's words in Galatians are the very words with which Bonaventure begins the *Lignum vitae*. He writes: "The true worshipper of God and disciple of Christ, who desires to conform to the Savior of all men crucified for him, should, above all, strive with an earnest endeavor of soul to carry about continuously both in his soul and flesh the Cross of Christ until he can truly feel in himself what the Apostle said above."<sup>47</sup> These works call the wayfarer into increasing conformity with the eternal and incarnate archetype so that final conformity with Christ crucified—cruciformity—

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*enda maior* include Cousins's "Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure: Mysticism and Theological Interpretation," in *The Other Side of God*, ed. Peter L. Berger (New York: Anchor Press, 1981), 74–103, and his "St. Bonaventure's Life of Francis and the Monastic Archetype," in *Blessed Simplicity*, ed. Ewert Cousins et al. (New York: Seabury, 1982), 135–41. More recently, Rosalind Brooke offers a helpful and contextualized treatment of Bonaventure's presentation and deployment of Francis in her *Images of Francis: Responses to Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 231–68.

<sup>46</sup> *Itinerarium*, Prologue: 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Lignum vitae*, Prologue: 1. For useful study on the role of the Cross in Bonaventure's spiritual writing, see Elizabeth Dreyer's "A Condescending God: Bonaventure's Theology of the Cross," in *The Cross in the Christian Tradition from Paul to Bonaventure*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dreyer (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), 192–210. See also Thomas A. Nairn's "'Fixed with Christ to the Cross': Dying in the Franciscan Tradition," in *Dying as a Franciscan: Approaching Our Transitus to Eternal Life, Accompanying Others on the Way to Theirs*, ed. Daria Mitchell (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2011), 15–29.

marks the perfection of human nature and the *regressus* into final union. The incarnate Word reflects the door of return in reductive symmetry with the eternal Word through whom all things went out from God.

In all the spiritual works, and especially in the *Legenda*, Francis looms as an exemplar of cruciformity, having received the stigmata as the culmination of his perfection. In the *Legenda's* prologue, Bonaventure presents Francis as the perfectly conformed and ordered individual; he writes: "Like a hierarchic man, [Francis] was lifted up in a *fiery chariot*, as will be seen quite clearly in the course of his life; therefore it can be reasonably proved that he came *in the spirit and power of Elijah*."<sup>48</sup> Francis's person, like that of Elijah who ascends to God, is hierarchized so that he is disposed for union with God by increasing similitude with the first principle. In each prologue, then, union with God stands as the terminus of the journey, and that end shapes the means by which it is reached. When the reader comes to the last chapter of each work, passing over is possible through having a certain exemplary likeness to Christ, a cruciformity that approaches similitude with Christ. Moreover, the end itself is a reductive one in which the wayfarer is drawn back into God from whom he emerged in the act of creation.

The disparate subject matter of the journeys could indeed suggest three unrelated pathways to union, yet the earlier discussion of *reductio* helps to demonstrate deep, structural integrity among the three works. Uniformity in diversity is possible because of Bonaventure's larger conception of metaphysics and corresponding doctrine of creation. In the prologue to the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure offers a glimpse into his thinking about the structure and inspiration for the work; he writes: "While I was there [on Mount La Verna] reflecting on various ways by which the soul ascends into God, there came to mind, among other things, the miracle which had occurred to blessed Francis in this very place: the vision of a winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified."<sup>49</sup> While Bonaventure importantly presents Francis's reception of the stigmata as inspiration for the structure of the *Itinerarium*, it is his reference to the "various ways" (*aliquas*) of ascent that is intriguing. Contemplative ascent must

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<sup>48</sup> *Legenda maior*, Prologue: 1. All citations for the *Legenda maior* are taken from *Bonaventure*, trans. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 51–116; references refer to internal chapters and paragraph numbers.

<sup>49</sup> *Itinerarium*, Prologue: 3.

aim at reductive union, but the subject matter itself can differ; Francis's personal journey to the reception of the stigmata, while archetypal, is one way "among other things" (*inter alia*) that could structure an ascent. Francis is one *liber* among others such that, while the *Itinerarium* takes inspiration from his experience of the stigmata, it actually uses the book of nature for its material. No explicit details from Francis's life or admonitions are included as instructions for the journey; those are found in the *Legenda maior*. The books of nature, Francis, or Scripture are acceptable subjects for contemplation and action as long as they reductively reorder the wayfarer's nature and conform her to the crucified Christ.<sup>50</sup> Bonaventure anchors the acceptability of different books in his certainty that all created and revealed knowledge emanates from the Word as metaphysical principle for all that exists. Just as Bonaventure argues in the *De reductione*, all branches of knowledge lead back to that which is reliably expressed by Christ in Scripture. Armed with a firm sense of reduction, one can see that the three journeys draw the wayfarer back to God through Christ because the subject matter conveys the eternal reasons expressed in the incarnate Word. Bonaventure's overarching doctrine of reductive metaphysics thus grounds and organizes the various ways by which the soul may move into God.

If the *mystical opuscula* measure progress by increasing conformity to Christ, then Bonaventure's doctrine of exemplarity drives the conception of progress toward union. Generally speaking, the wayfarer ought to bear in his body and soul the marks of Christ crucified. The works under consideration all outline a practical program for successful conformity: (1) the wayfarer must fundamentally orient his desire or *affectus* toward the goal of union with God; (2) this *affectus* must be healed and fortified by God's action through grace; and (3) the graced wayfarer must freely cooperate in his growing conformity through corresponding good works. These steps cohere with Bonaventure's larger conceptions of exemplarity and illumination as the reductive means by which created things are consummated in God. The steps also take seriously

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<sup>50</sup> *Lignum vitae* affirms Christ's cosmic exemplarity and source of *exitus-reditus*; Bonaventure writes: "As all things are produced through the Word eternally spoken, so all things are restored, advanced and completed through the Word united to the flesh. Therefore he is truly and properly called Jesus, because there is no other name under heaven given to men by which one can obtain salvation" (48).

the fallen state of human nature. They insist on a reordering of desire and increasing rectitude of the wayfarer's nature, which is accomplished through grace and reciprocal human action. The *Itinerarium* soberly acknowledges and outlines the chief effects of sin; Bonaventure writes:

Yet the reason [for ignorance of God as First Principle] is close at hand: for the human mind, distracted by cares, does not enter into itself through memory, clouded by sense images, it does not turn back (*redit*) to itself through intelligence; allured away by concupiscence, it does not turn back (*revertitur*) to itself through desire for inner sweetness and spiritual joy. Thus lying totally in these things of sense, it cannot reenter (*reintrare*) into itself as into the image of God.<sup>51</sup>

The fall has wrought disorder in the soul's powers of memory, intellect, and will so that sinners are irrationally drawn to lower sense objects and driven by concupiscence; in this condition, they cannot regain their image reflection of the Trinity. The spiritual works thus demand a reorientation of desire. Considering Jesus's denial by Peter, the *Lignum vitae* addresses the wayfarer: "O whoever you are, who at the word of an insistent servant, that is your flesh, by will or act have shamelessly denied Christ, who suffered for you, remember the passion of your beloved Master and go out with Peter to weep most bitterly over yourself."<sup>52</sup> Using a different medium, Bonaventure nevertheless acknowledges the same problem; sinners must reorient their wills away from sense objects (slavery to the flesh) toward God as proper object of affection. As a hierarchized man, Francis illustrates progressively perfected desire: "Realizing that while he was *in the body*, he was *exiled from the Lord*, since he was made totally insensible to earthly desires through *love of Christ*, the servant of Christ Francis strove to keep his spirit in the presence of God, *by praying without ceasing*."<sup>53</sup> Misdirected and private desires deform the proper hierarchy of the human soul as image of the Trinity, yet Francis's love of Jesus exemplifies the way forward.

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<sup>51</sup> *Itinerarium*, IV:1.

<sup>52</sup> *Lignum vitae*, 21.

<sup>53</sup> *Legenda*, X:1.



Aware of the deleterious effects of sin, Bonaventure understands that the wayfarer needs help to rise from sin. Even rightly ordered *affectus* requires exterior direction.<sup>54</sup> Grace constitutes the remedial help by which God initiates the reorientation and hierarchization of the soul. When speaking of Francis's conversion, Bonaventure asserts priority and emphasis on grace in explaining the origin of Francis's transformation in virtue; he writes: "First endowed with the gifts of divine grace, he was then enriched by the merit of unshakeable virtue."<sup>55</sup> Grace illumines the mind with greater knowledge of God as end, and it strengthens the soul with infused virtue so that the recipient not only knows but wills actions that lead to the proper end. Citing the theological virtues as the principle effects of grace, the *Itinerarium* stresses their power to conform the recipient; Bonaventure writes: "When this is achieved, our spirit is made hierarchical in order to mount upward, according to its conformity to the heavenly Jerusalem which no man enters unless it first descend into his heart through grace."<sup>56</sup> An important way in which grace informs the soul is by restoring its power to properly read sensible signs as pointing toward God through growth in virtue; in all three works, grace cultivates desire and order so that the wayfarer can read the *liber* under discussion and continue the *reductio*.<sup>57</sup>

Consistent with the act of creation and a return through exemplarity, human beings must freely cooperate in their return to God. Without free

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<sup>54</sup> Bonaventure recognizes not only the importance of desire but its "enkindling" by God through prevenient inspiration or illumination; he writes: "For no one is in any way disposed for divine contemplation that leads to mystical ecstasy unless like Daniel he is a *man of desires* (Dan. 9:23). Such desires are enkindled in us in two ways: by an outcry of prayer that makes us *call aloud in the groaning of our heart* (Ps. 37:9) and by the flash of insight by which the mind turns most directly and intently towards the rays of light" (*Itinerarium*, Prologue: 3).

<sup>55</sup> *Legenda*, Prologue: 1; see further reference to grace at II:1.

<sup>56</sup> *Itinerarium*, IV:4.

<sup>57</sup> While grace is available through a variety of instruments, Bonaventure insists that Christ's Incarnation institutes the sacraments as reliable means of healing and orientation to God. Reflecting on Christ pierced by the centurion's lance, he writes: "While blood mixed with water flowed, the price of our salvation was poured forth, which gushing from the secret fountain of the heart gave power to the sacraments of the Church to convey the life of grace and to become for those already living in Christ a draught of the fountain of living water springing up into eternal life" (*Lignum vitae*, 30).



choice, no natural exemplarity exists between the image and archetypal principle. The spiritual works affirm meritorious human action through an emphasis on desire and ascent, yet the journeys themselves convey distinctive actions that culminate in the *transitus*. The *Lignum vitae* often prescribes imitation of Jesus or other characters in the biblical narrative as constitutive of successful return.<sup>58</sup> Bonaventure presents human cooperation as an opportunity to practice increasingly radical conformity of will and action, so that the wayfarer may say with Paul, “with Christ I am nailed to the cross.” This growing similitude parallels an increasing and graced capacity to properly read and follow the signs found in the different *libri* so that, by his properly hierarchized nature, the wayfarer desires and effects a return to God in the manner by which God has created him.

Progress toward similitude further prepares the wayfarer for judgment. Bonaventure argues that Jesus will return as both “truthful witness” and “wrathful judge,” opening the book of consciences and recalling everyone’s deeds; he exhorts his readers: “There is, then, a great necessity imposed upon us to be good, since all our actions are within view of the all-seeing judge.”<sup>59</sup> The *Legenda* carries the same commendation to good works, but it instantiates it in the example of Francis. Bonaventure suggests that Francis cooperates with virtues such as austerity, humility, and poverty, thereby becoming a progressively conformed wayfarer who was “a resplendent mirror of all holiness.”<sup>60</sup> Reduction into God, then, is not merely a passive return of the wayfarer to God through the intermediate work of the Incarnation and saving action of Jesus. Rather, illumined and

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<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Jesus’s embrace of Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane; Bonaventure writes: “This meekness was given as an example to mortal men, so that when exasperated by a friend, our human weakness would no longer say: *If my enemy had reviled me, I could have borne it*, because here was a man, another self, who seemed to be a companion and friend who ate the bread of Christ” (17). *Imitatio Christi* is by no means the only action commended in the text; prayer, contrition, imitation of other characters in the narrative, praise, and thanksgiving are also frequent themes.

<sup>59</sup> *Lignum vitae*, 41. Bonaventure quotes from Boethius’s *De consolatio philosophiae*, V, *prosa* 6.

<sup>60</sup> Bonaventure writes: “In his own estimation he was nothing but a sinner, although in truth he was a resplendent mirror of all holiness. He strove to build himself up upon this virtue like an architect laying the foundations for he had learned this from Christ” (*Legenda*, VI:1). Cousins labels the presentation of Francis’s “condescension” through virtue into contrast with his “ascension” through grace as a notable “coincidence of opposites” (*Bonaventure and the Coincidence*, 193–95).

reformed by grace, the wayfarer grows in similitude to the Trinity through the natural and meritorious exercise of the free will. As the will conforms in desire and discrete acts to the incarnate Word, it reductively reflects the interior life of the Trinity expressed particularly in the eternal Word who is the wholly free and principle agent of all that is good in the economy. The mystical works thus aim at reductive conformity as the proper disposition and anticipation for the *transitus* into God, yet this rests on a metaphysics and doctrine of exemplarity shaped by *reductio*. Seeing the reductive shape of the journey, as normed by these commitments, helps the wayfarer to interpret the distinctive states of conformity and perfection in the *Itinerarium*, *Lignum vitae*, and *Legenda* so that she can achieve their ends even if she does not perfectly resemble Francis or Christ crucified.

### Conclusion

Having examined Bonaventure's use of *reductio* as a pattern for the journey of Christian life, three points inform an overall conclusion. First, Bonaventure's use of the *reductio* provides systematic integration among various points in his teachings. The common reductive arc that informs his theological method and metaphysics also sets the terms for his doctrines of exemplarity, divine illumination, grace, sacraments, and merit. It frames, for example, the purpose of divine illumination as God's reform of the image so that it may more perfectly reflect God's triune life. Similarly, it links Bonaventure's strong emphasis on the sacraments as signs and sources of remedial grace with the larger thematic of drawing all things back into God through the Word. Bonaventure's consistent emphasis on the Word's roles in creation and salvation also highlights that his doctrines of God and Christology cohere with other topics under the frame of *reductio*. Inasmuch as the immanent life of the Trinity is perfectly diffusive and reflective of its own dynamic life, so must all things created through the Word bear that same likeness. For Bonaventure, then, the classic loci of theology find important thematic unity in the movement of *reductio*, which originates in the Trinity and informs the cosmos. A corollary of this conclusion is that the atomization of Bonaventure's theology, particularly apart from the concept of *reductio*, threatens to impoverish expositions of topics like exemplarity, grace, or even contemplation.

A second conclusion recognizes that Bonaventure's use of the *re-*

*ductio* enhances a more basic pattern of *exitus-reditus* found in contemporaneous conceptions of creation and salvation. Bonaventure presents reduction into God as something more than merely an inevitable retraction of all things into God. The *reditus* is informed by a dynamic doctrine of exemplarity that sees the object returning to God as one being refined in its reflection of the Trinity. As the spiritual works suggest, *reductio* occurs through the reorientation of intellect and will through proper *affectus*, and moreover, progress depends on free cooperation. The wayfarer must read the signs and choose to grow in conformity with the incarnate Word. This conformity, parsed as “cruciformity,” is not a low-flying imitation of Jesus’s *acta* and *passa*; it is a radical configuration of soul and body to the triune God. The *reditus* implied in Bonaventure’s work thus suggests an active conforming of the person to the Trinitarian life expressed by the Word. The hierarchized soul is a similitude of the Trinity who reflects the *innascibilitas* of the Father, the creative agency and wisdom of the Son, and the perfective love of the Holy Spirit. The freedom of will ordered toward meritorious action, which is commended in the spiritual works, thus mirrors, at its foundation, the free and loving action of the divine persons in communion who together express the divine *Summum Bonum*. The *Collationes in Hexaemeron* convey this commitment in its last complete collation: “It has been explained how the soul is hierarchized in relation to the light of the Sun, in that this Sun is alive, shining, and warm. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the origin of all illuminations or irradiation by reason of excellence, influence, and pre-eminence; and in that the soul is assimilated to the Sun through conformity and by reason of the fullness of the hierarchical disposition, and because of a threefold aspect.”<sup>61</sup> Reductive perfection is not simply a completing of the work begun in creation; rather, *reditus* refracted through Bonaventure’s use of *reductio* sees human beings returned into union with and through the Trinity.

Finally, as the discussion of the *Itinerarium*, *Lignum vitae*, and *Legenda maior* suggests, the pattern of *reductio* yields essential thematic unity among Bonaventure’s writings. Works such as the *Breviloquium* and the *De reductione* explicitly acknowledge the reductive pattern of knowledge anchored in revelation through the eternal Word, and this

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<sup>61</sup> *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, XXIII:1.

commitment links what seem to be a large systematic work and a singular treatise on the arts in a common enterprise. What is more striking is that the divisions between Bonaventure's magisterial works, spiritual works, and collations lose something of their sharp distinction. While Bonaventure often addresses himself to specific questions or topics in his works, they share, in varying ways, the common hermeneutical conviction that, to understand God is to understand that all reality is being retraced into the triune God. Moreover, all knowledge is revealed by God through the Word toward that very end. These convictions begin to provide overall coherence and direction to the entire Bonaventurian corpus. The diverse content, for example, of the spiritual works can be more fully mapped onto the magisterial works; they constitute *libri* that illumine concrete ways of return, yet as they do so, they convey the theological insights of the magisterial works. The potentially confounding differences among the *mystical opuscula* are similarly relaxed when mapped on the pattern of *reductio* so that Francis's journey shares constitutive characteristics with a reading of Jesus's origin, passion and glorification. There is potential, here, for systematization of Bonaventure's works in important ways. His sermons, disputed questions, and biblical commentaries may be read for their reductive dimensions as well. With that in mind, for the student of Bonaventure, a renewed attention to *reductio* thus offers another potential tool in the retrieval and use of Bonaventure's theology. **N&V**

## Conscience “Truly So Called” and Its Counterfeit: John Henry Newman and Thomas Aquinas on What Conscience Is and Why It Matters\*

REINHARD HÜTTER  
*Duke University Divinity School*  
*Durham, NC*

*For Romanus Cessario, O.P., on the occasion of his 70th birthday*

Qui facit veritatem, venit ad lucem, ut manifestentur opera eius,  
quia in Deo facta sunt.  
—Jn 3:21 *Vulgate*

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead me Thou on!  
—John Henry Newman

Where's thy conscience now?—I'll not meddle with it; it makes a man a coward; a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; a man cannot swear, but it checks him; a man cannot lie with his neighbour's wife, but it detects him; . . . it is turned out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing; and every man that means to live well, endeavours to trust to himself and live without it.  
—William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, Act I, Scene iv

At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.  
—Justice Anthony Kennedy, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*

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## Introduction

ON DECEMBER 27, 1874, England's arguably greatest theologian of that century, John Henry Cardinal Newman, at the age of 73, published what was to become a famous *Letter*. This open *Letter* was addressed to the Duke of Norfolk, who was a fellow Catholic and a graduate of Newman's oratory school in Birmingham, and was penned in response to an intensely polemical pamphlet, *The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearing on Civil Allegiance*, by the liberal Prime Minister of England, William Gladstone. In his diatribe, Gladstone had taken the promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility at the Vatican Council in 1870 as an occasion to argue that Catholic subjects of her Majesty committed to papal infallibility could no longer "be trusted to participate loyally and thoughtfully in the nation's civic life."<sup>1</sup>

In *A Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* Newman offered a bristlingly brilliant refutation of this and other related allegations advanced by Gladstone. More importantly, however, the *Letter* offered Newman a welcome opportunity to present a condensed account of his understanding of conscience—not only the conscience of Catholics, but conscience in general, what it is and why it matters. The treatment of conscience in the *Letter* represents the mature thought of the Catholic Newman. A lifetime of an intense preoccupation as preacher, polemicist, philosopher, and theologian with the phenomenon of conscience comes to fruition in this extraordinary piece of Catholic apologetics. Were Newman ever to be declared a "Doctor of the Church," he might most appropriately receive the title "Doctor of Conscience."<sup>2</sup> And possibly the most telling epitaph justifying this title can be found in the rightly famous concluding lines of the section entitled "Conscience:"

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occasion of his seventieth birthday as an expression of deep gratitude. During a crucial period in my life, his contributions to sapiential moral theology and especially his personal witness and counsel contributed greatly to the formation of my conscience, truly so called.

<sup>1</sup> John Henry Newman, *Conscience, Consensus, and the Development of Doctrine*, ed. James Gaffney (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 432.

<sup>2</sup> "In Newman's thought, the primary factor is always conscience." J. H. Walgrave, O.P., *Newman the Theologian: The Nature of Belief and Doctrine as Exemplified in His Life and Works*, trans. A. V. Littledale (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960), 25.

If I am obliged to bring religion into after-dinner toasts . . .  
I shall drink—to the Pope, if you please—still, to Conscience  
first, and to the Pope afterwards.<sup>3</sup>

What is Newman trying to say? Isolated from the thrust of the argument of Newman's *Letter*—which in the 1888 edition fills 203 pages—the concluding statement of the section on conscience has suffered the fate of being misinterpreted in a way that is in blatant contradiction to the thrust of the argument jumping off the pages of the *Letter*. This popular misinterpretation—mistaking conscience for its counterfeit—tends to go along the lines of the following syllogism. *Major premise*: Freedom of conscience signifies the sovereign act of my autonomous will to which all external instruction and guidance are secondary, be they divine or human. *Minor premise*: Papal teaching is an instantiation of external instruction and guidance. *Ergo*: Freedom of conscience trumps papal teaching. And therefore indeed: conscience (so called) first, the pope—if at all, at best—second.

The problem with this erroneous interpretation of Newman's after-dinner toast is twofold. The syllogism on which it relies rests, first, on a false major premise, a premise built upon the counterfeit of conscience; and, second, on an underdeveloped and hence at best misleading minor premise. In order to capture the true meaning of Newman's after-dinner toast and the precise understanding of freedom of conscience entailed in it, one must gain first a sound understanding of the notion of conscience with which Newman operates and secondly a fuller appreciation of the precise role of the Pope's magisterium in relationship to conscience in its true sense.

I shall argue in this essay that Newman—supported by Aquinas—holds conscience to be essentially theonomic, and that due to its theonomic nature, conscience gives rise to positive freedom, freedom in the truth. This freedom stands in sharp contrast to the negative freedom characteristic of the counterfeit of conscience, a freedom that protects

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<sup>3</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 457. In the following, I shall also refer to an early standard edition of Newman's letter: John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, 1888; repr. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1969), 175–378; 261.

the sovereignty of self-determination from interior and exterior interference.

But before entering into theoretical considerations about conscience, I shall illustrate briefly Newman's understanding of conscience in concrete operation by attending to two hypothetical cases he entertains in the *Letter*. The obvious occasion at hand for these cases was Prime Minister Gladstone's allegation of the inherently divided allegiance of Catholics between loyalty to their nation and obedience to the pope. Before Newman considers any concrete scenario, he makes a point of central importance for the context in which the cases of conflict must be understood. In virtue of the fundamentally different functions of state and Church, he states that "the circumference of State jurisdiction and of Papal are for the most part quite apart from each other; there are just some few degrees out of the 360 in which they intersect." But what if such a conflict would occur in the few degrees in which state and papal jurisdiction did indeed intersect?<sup>4</sup>

To address this worry, Newman considers several hypothetical cases. Here is one of them:

Were I . . . a soldier or sailor in her Majesty's service, and sent to take part in a war which I could not in my conscience see to be unjust, and should the Pope suddenly bid all Catholic soldiers and sailors to retire from the service . . . taking the advice of others, as best as I could, I should not obey him.<sup>5</sup>

Consider another hypothetical case Newman offers:

Suppose, for instance, an Act was passed in Parliament, bidding Catholics to attend Protestant service every week, and the Pope distinctly told us not to do so, for it was to violate our duty to our faith—I should obey the Pope and not the Law.<sup>6</sup>

It is not very difficult to transpose this hypothetical case into our con-

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<sup>4</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 444; *Difficulties*, 240.

<sup>5</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 445; *Difficulties*, 241–42.

<sup>6</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 444; *Difficulties*, 240.



temporary context. Suppose a contemporary British, or for that matter, American government were to create laws that would require Catholics—by complying with these laws—to violate their duty to the faith and morals as taught by the Church and put themselves into the proximity of grave systemic moral evil or make themselves even cooperate with such grave moral evil? And let us assume that the pope together with the Catholic bishops of such a country had spoken out collectively and consistently against such laws? Newman's answer is clear: "I should obey the Pope and not the Law."<sup>7</sup>

What are some of the underlying assumptions hidden in Newman's two cases? First, popes are not infallible in particular political and practical judgments where a properly informed conscience might direct Newman (and others) to judge differently. However, when the pope authoritatively affirms matters of faith and morals that are held definitively by the ordinary universal episcopal magisterium, he teaches infallibly and is owed "assent of faith." And when the pope teaches on matters of faith and morals by way of his ordinary papal magisterium, he is owed a reverent obedience (*obsequium religiosum*) from all Catholics.<sup>8</sup>

Second, while the state has a legitimate claim upon the loyalty of all citizens and upon their due respect of its laws, the state has no legitimate authority in matters pertaining to the substance of faith and morals. Nor does the state have legitimate authority over matters that fall under the universal papal jurisdiction, that is, over matters that pertain to the specific organization of the life of faith, divine worship, the appointment of bishops, etc.

Third, conscience is the interior forum (*forum internum*) of moral truth, a forum where legitimate claims upon one's allegiance are distinguished from illegitimate claims upon one's allegiance, where moral truth and hence moral duty are perceived, and where consequently a more or less clear imperative is voiced toward a certain course of moral action. Each of Newman's cases presupposes, first, the existence and, secondly, the proper formation and operation of conscience. Moreover,

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<sup>7</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 444; *Difficulties*, 240.

<sup>8</sup> While Newman does not employ these technical terms in use since Vatican II (see especially *Lumen Gentium*, §25), he arguably implies already what they intend in the text referenced in footnote 91.

each case displays Newman's understanding of the freedom of conscience as positive freedom, as freedom in the truth.

But what is conscience in the first place? What, furthermore, does freedom of conscience as positive freedom in the truth precisely mean? And, finally, what is the counterfeit of conscience? In the following pages, I will answer these questions in conversation with two eminent Catholic theologians whose accounts of conscience, I shall show, complement each other: John Henry Newman and Thomas Aquinas. Since in his *Letter* Newman explicitly draws upon the *doctor communis* as an important point of reference and warrant for his own account, I shall take Newman's referral as the occasion to nuance and deepen Newman's Catholic doctrine of conscience with the help of Thomas's teaching.

### John Henry Newman<sup>9</sup>

Newman is crystal clear about the fact that any proper understanding of conscience must first and foremost articulate the theonomic nature of conscience. Conscience is not simply a human faculty, but is in its root constituted by the eternal law, the Divine Wisdom communicated to the human intellect. It is upon its theonomic nature and upon it alone that the prerogatives and the supreme authority of conscience are founded. Newman states:

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<sup>9</sup> For an accessible introduction to Newman's treatment of conscience across his oeuvre, see Charles Morerod, O.P., "Conscience according to John Henry Newman," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 11, no. 4 (2013): 1057–79, and Gerard J. Hughes, "Conscience," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, ed. Ian Ker and T. Merrigan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 189–220. For the historical and biographical context, see Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 651–93. For an informative account of the complex intellectual history of the concept of conscience from ancient to contemporary philosophy, see H. Reiner, "Gewissen," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 3: G–H, ed. Joachim Ritter, K. Gründer, and G. Gabriel (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1974), 574–92. For a comprehensive and nuanced treatment of conscience by a leading Catholic moral theologian, see Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Wie gewiss ist das Gewissen? Eine ethische Orientierung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2003). Schockenhoff offers clear and nuanced treatments of the biblical accounts of conscience, chapters on Augustine, Aquinas, Newman, and on the dignity of conscience according to Vatican II. The book culminates in a dense reflection on freedom and the truth—freedom for the sake of truth. I have learned much from Schockenhoff's study, although I do see a significantly greater compatibility and indeed complementarity between Aquinas's and Newman's accounts of conscience than he seems to do.

The Supreme Being is of a certain character, which, expressed in human language, we call ethical. He has the attributes of justice, truth, wisdom, sanctity, benevolence and mercy, as eternal characteristics in His nature, the very Law of His being, identical with Himself; and next, when He became Creator, He implanted this Law, which is Himself, in the intelligence of all His rational creatures. The Divine Law, then, is the rule of ethical truth, the standard of right and wrong, a sovereign, irreversible, absolute authority in the presence of men and Angels.<sup>10</sup>

In stark contrast to the widespread fiction of wishful projection—the voice of conscience being the indulgent voice of a transcendent affirmer of our whims and wishes, the echo of the pronouncements of our sovereign self-determination—Newman impresses on his readers the rather startling fact that “conscience . . . is a messenger from Him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by His representatives.”<sup>11</sup> Conscience, “truly so called,”<sup>12</sup> denotes the received standard of moral truth into the human intellect and is in this precise sense theonomic all the way down.

Even if one grants the theonomic nature of conscience, Newman’s stern specification might provoke objections: “The Divine Law”—which is God himself—“is a sovereign, irreversible, absolute authority in the presence of men and Angels?”<sup>13</sup> Not only does Newman seem to be utterly insensitive to the tender feelings of all those who hold moral relativism and perspectivalism to be true, but what is worse, is Newman not invoking some obsolete, dark image of the medieval mind or possibly his own personal obsession with a dictatorial, all too Old Testament-like “Über-father,” an allegedly harmful notion that, as the story goes, was finally abolished once and for all at the Second Vatican Council? Hardly so. Rather, the magisterial reception and explication of Vatican II gives us strong reasons to assume that Newman’s understanding of conscience as essentially theonomic stands very much in the line of

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<sup>10</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 447–48; *Difficulties*, 246.

<sup>11</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 449; *Difficulties*, 248.

<sup>12</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 454; *Difficulties*, 257.

<sup>13</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 447–48; *Difficulties*, 246.

theological thought affirmed by the council. For it is in the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in the context of the exposition of the teaching of Vatican II on conscience, where we find the citation of the above passage from Newman culminating in the beautiful and memorable statement: “Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.”<sup>14</sup> In short, the Catechism presents Newman as invoking nothing but the common Christian understanding of conscience. And this is indeed what Newman explicitly says in his *Letter*, where he points to the broad consensus on the theonomic nature of conscience between Catholics and most Protestant groups in nineteenth-century Great Britain:

When Anglicans, Wesleyans, the various Presbyterian sects in Scotland, and other denominations among us, speak of conscience, they mean what we mean, the voice of God in the nature and heart of man, as distinct from the voice of Revelation. They speak of a principle planted within us, before we have had any training, although training and experience are necessary for its strength, growth, and due formation. . . . They consider it, as Catholics consider it, to be the internal witness of both the existence and the law of God.<sup>15</sup>

However, even if British Protestants were able to assent to such an understanding of conscience as essentially theonomic, American mainline Protestantism now seems to accommodate the counterfeit of conscience—an accommodation perhaps not altogether surprising in a country founded on Enlightenment principles. Newman notes the counterfeit of conscience among British educated elites that became rapidly influential in the wake of the ascendancy of the natural sciences in the post-Enlightenment naturalist strands of modern thought. Newman observes, “it is fashionable on all hands now to consider [conscience] in one way or another as a creation of man.”<sup>16</sup> Today, almost 150 years later, this counterfeit of conscience has ascended to

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<sup>14</sup> CCC (1992), §1778.

<sup>15</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 448; *Difficulties*, 247–48. For Luther and Calvin on conscience, see Appendix 1.

<sup>16</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 448; *Difficulties*, 247.

the status of conventional wisdom among politicians, journalists, and the so-called person on the street. Among those still in the throngs of the modern turn to the subject, conscience, so called, is regarded as at best “a desire to be consistent with oneself,”<sup>17</sup> as Newman aptly put it, a consistency constructed between the discrete dictates of the sovereign self-determination. For those who in more recent years have drunk from the wells of a neuro-scientifically informed, neo-Darwinian sociobiology, conscience has become nothing but a noble word for “a long-sighted selfishness,”<sup>18</sup> a selfishness of a configuration of genes that determine one particular species of niche-producing organisms—*homo sapiens sapiens*—in short, a selfishness of forces beyond human control, forces “beyond good and evil.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 449; *Difficulties*, 248. For an account that differentiates well between the shallow self-consistency of sovereign self-determination and a proper human authenticity—which cannot come about without following conscience, truly so called—see Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 449; *Difficulties*, 248. For a recent popular neo-Darwinian sociobiology with ethical aspirations that is as consistent as it is comprehensive in scope, see Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 30th anniv. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay, “Guilt,’ ‘Bad Conscience,’ and the Like,” in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale; *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann; ed. with commentary by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989). In the sixteenth section of the second essay, Nietzsche displays the full import of embracing the counterfeit of conscience with complete awareness of the logical consequences: “Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction—all this turned against the possessors of such instincts: that is the origin of the ‘bad conscience’” (85). And in the seventeenth section he states openly: “This *instinct for freedom* forcibly made latent . . . this instinct for freedom pushed back and repressed, incarcerated within and finally able to discharge and vent itself only on itself: that, and that alone, is what the *bad conscience* is in its beginnings” (87). The instinct for freedom is nothing but the “will to power” (87), sovereign self-affirmation and self-determination (“to possess . . . the right to *affirm oneself*” [section 3; 60]). This is the counterfeit of conscience pursued with consistency. Since the best form of defense is the attack, it is only consequent that Nietzsche should identify the residual evidence of theonomic conscience as bad conscience and should attempt to discard it by way of a naturalist genealogy. From the perspective of the counterfeit of conscience, theonomic conscience can only be a bad conscience best dismissed by submitting it to a naturalist genealogy. No recent neo-Darwinian “new atheist” and despiser of Christianity has been able to match Nietzsche’s radical consistency “beyond good and evil.” Compared to him, the new atheists remain residually—bourgeois, beholden to beliefs about scientific enlightenment and historical progress toward an ever brighter transhuman future.

Newman already felt the early waves of this dramatic denial of the onomic conscience implanted in the human intellect throughout most of his adult lifetime:

All through my day there has been a resolute warfare, I had almost said conspiracy, against the rights of conscience. . . . We are told that conscience is but a twist in primitive and untutored man; that its dictate is an imagination; that the very notion of guiltiness, which that dictate enforces, is simply irrational, for how can there possibly be freedom of will, how can there be consequent responsibility, in that infinite eternal network of cause and effect, in which we helplessly lie? And what retribution have we to fear, when we have had no real choice to do good or evil?<sup>20</sup>

On the assumption that God does not exist and that human beings are causally determined in their acts, be it by the survival interests of their genes, or by their socioeconomic environments and family systems, or by their respective “id” or subconsciousness—or by a combination of all three factors—in other words, on the assumption that the threefold humiliation of human conscience and moral agency at the hands of Darwin, Marx, and Freud obtains, what is the point of continuing to appeal to one’s own conscience or to that of others?<sup>21</sup> It being presumably pointless, one would expect that in an increasingly secular culture the appeal to conscience would have faded away. But this is not the case, as any observer of public and political life in late modern secularist democracies is only too well aware of. Newman was uncannily prescient in anticipating what has by now become a distinctly late modern way of appealing to the counterfeit of conscience:

When men advocate the rights of conscience, they in no sense mean the rights of the Creator, nor the duty to Him, in thought and deed, of the creature; but the right of thinking, speaking, writing, and acting, according to their judgment or their hu-

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<sup>20</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 449; *Difficulties*, 249.

<sup>21</sup> For a nuanced engagement of conscience in the discussion of contemporary psychology, see Schockenhoff, *Wie gewiss ist das Gewissen?*, 142–51.

mour, without any thought of God at all. . . . Conscience has rights because it has duties; but in this age, with a large portion of the public, it is the very right and freedom of conscience to dispense with conscience, to ignore a Lawgiver and Judge, to be independent of unseen obligations. It becomes a licence to take up any or no religion, to take up this or that and let it go again. . . . It is the right of self-will.<sup>22</sup>

Unmoored from its theonomic anchorage, the word “conscience” comes to mean its counterfeit, the word now denoting nothing but the decisions posited as acts of sovereign self-determination. Such sovereign self-determination refers first and foremost to what is now regarded as one’s property (which according to Locke is the principal object over which to exercise freedom of indifference), namely one’s body and all the life choices that pertain to oneself as sovereign owner of this property: gender identity; sexual activity; choice of kind and number of intimate partners; conceived children in the womb; number and genetic characteristics of children; and finally, the choice of the time and conditions of the end of one’s life.<sup>23</sup> The only delimitation of

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<sup>22</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 450; *Difficulties*, 250. The ideological breeding ground of the negative freedom of sovereign self-determination is a misguided liberalism, falsely conceived as neutralism. In a striking engagement of David A. J. Richards, *Tolerance and the Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), the philosopher Ronald Beiner advances a scathing indictment of Richards’ strategy of legitimizing sovereign self-determination by appealing to the freedom of *conscience*: “The spuriousness of this recurrent appeal to the sacredness of conscience is very clearly displayed in the discussion of pornography. How can this possibly be a matter of conscience? What is at issue here, surely, is the sacredness of consumer preferences. The individual’s sovereign prerogative to purchase magazines like *Penthouse* and *Hustler* has little to do with free speech (let alone rights of conscience); the only liberty at stake is that of unhindered consumption. . . . Or again consider the following passage: ‘The right to drug use, if it is a right, is a right associated with the control of consciousness and thus with the right of conscience itself’ (Roberts, 281). By this contorted reasoning, the decision to snort cocaine constitutes an act of conscience” (Ronald Beiner, *Philosophy in a Time of Lost Spirit* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997], 29-30). Beiner is putting his finger here on the inner consistency of the counterfeit of conscience as it continues to unfold the full consequences of sovereign self-determination.

<sup>23</sup> On the erroneous modern idea of self-proprietorship and its philosophical roots in the thought of Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke, see Bernd Wannewetsch, “Owning our Bodies? The Politics of Self-Possession and the Body of Christ (Hobbes, Locke and Paul),” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26 (2013): 50–65.

this freedom of indifference is the liberal principle of harm: all choices are permissible as long as they are at least indifferent to the freedom of indifference of everyone else.<sup>24</sup> No one gave a clearer definition of this negative freedom than Newman's contemporary, John Stuart Mill, when he opined that "that the only freedom which deserves the name" consists in "pursuing our own good in our own way."<sup>25</sup> Consider Allan Bloom's striking characterization of the concrete forms this negative freedom of sovereign self-determination has taken from the 1970s on when increasing numbers of the educated professional elites in Europe and the United States embraced and deeply interiorized it:

They can be anything they want to be, but they have no particular reason to be anything in particular. Not only are they free to decide their place, but they are also free to decide whether they will believe in God or be atheists, or leave their options open by being agnostic; whether they will be straight or gay, or, again, keep their options open; whether they will marry and whether they will stay married; whether they will have children—and so on endlessly. There is no necessity, no morality, no social pressure, no sacrifice to be made that militates going in or turning away from any of these directions, and there are desires pointing toward each, with mutually contradictory arguments to buttress them.<sup>26</sup>

As it has become increasingly clear in more recent years, Bloom's all too accurate description only captures a particular moment of a deeper

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<sup>24</sup> The Achilles heel of this principle, of course, is the scope of "everyone else." The useless, the unwanted, the unexpectedly self-imposing, the unproductive, and the inconveniently needy might not fall under the scope of "everyone else." Without a robust metaphysical concept of human nature, the beginning of human life, the human soul, and the corresponding understanding of the dignity of the human person, secularist liberal democratic régimes stand in danger of reducing the liberal principle of harm to a community of the self-elected with everyone else becoming discardable—abortable, euthanizable, or institutionalizable.

<sup>25</sup> John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty [1859]," in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. Jonathan Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 17.

<sup>26</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 87.



fall. For the modern “self”—a precondition for sovereign self-determination—presently undergoes its postmodern disintegration or “fluidification.” In light of allegedly ground-breaking insights in neurobiology, a journalistic evolutionary scientism with a missionary impulse urges people in the Western Hemisphere to embrace a life “after the self”—to resign themselves to the life of an advanced primate, a hominid, equipped with consciousness and desires, but devoid of conscience, truly so called.<sup>27</sup> By internalizing the false premises of this subscientific and aphiloosophical biologism, to employ Robert Spaemann’s striking statement, “the human being becomes an anthropomorphism to itself.”<sup>28</sup> Enlightened by the deliveries of scientism, humans are induced to think they know—scientifically—they are but primates, determined by their instincts and desires, while in their everyday life they must nevertheless continue to pretend to be persons, holding others accountable for their actions and being held accountable for their own actions. The result is a profound estrangement from our own immediate and irreducably moral experience of ourselves and others as acting persons.

In light of the dramatic transignification of conscience during Newman’s own lifetime, it is of special significance that he does not deem it necessary to advance some philosophical demonstration that

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<sup>27</sup> For two popularizing accounts of this reductive materialist scientism, see Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton, 2006), and Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Viking, 2006). Consider the construal of “memes” as units of imitation that have a distinct survival value: “Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. . . . When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle of the meme’s propagation in just the way that a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of a host cell. . . . [T]he meme for, say, ‘belief in life after death’ is actually realized physically, millions of times over, a structure in the nervous systems of individual men the world over” (Dawkins, *Selfish Gene*, 192). The “meme” serves as a functionalist replacement of complex human thought, insight, belief, and most fundamentally, of the intuition of first principles and of intentionality. Without the intuition of first principles and intentionality, however, human agency collapses into behavior, a properly amoral, descriptive category of biology that reductive scientism now propagates as the true causal account of what appears to the scientifically unenlightened as moral truth and moral agency, a presumptive account that should henceforth inform the self-understanding of human beings.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Spaemann, “Ende der Modernität?,” in *Philosophische Essays*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1994), 240: “So wird der Mensch selbst sich zum Anthropomorphismus.”

would prove the existence of a theonomic conscience. For those who have faith, divine revelation and the Church's consistent teaching about conscience authoritatively establish in one stroke the existence and theonomic nature of conscience. Moreover, Newman would assume that those who have faith would also experience the theonomic reality of conscience in a perspicuity that a philosophical demonstration could hardly improve upon. For those without faith and for those who hold a notion of conscience warped by erroneous opinions, Newman seems to assume that the inescapable experience of the interior forum would eventually produce the kind of evidence of the theonomic conscience that no philosophical demonstration could hope to achieve. Theonomic conscience, in Newman's eyes, is an aboriginal datum of the human mind conveying the first principles of moral truth, principles similar to the principle of noncontraction. As the principle of noncontradiction cannot be demonstrated but serves as the basis for proving other truths, in a similar way the first principles of the theonomic conscience cannot be demonstrated by a proof. Rather, their self-evidence serves as the basis for proving other truths (for Newman, the existence of God).<sup>29</sup>

So faced with the counterfeit of conscience, Newman simply trusts that the ontological truth of theonomic conscience, its objective reality, and its eventual operation will again and again break through the layers of self-deception and thereby establish the only persuasive evidence of its existence. And therefore, in the very presence of the counterfeit of conscience, Newman continues to use "the word 'conscience' in the high sense . . . as a dutiful obedience to what claims to be a divine voice,

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<sup>29</sup> See "The Proof of the Existence of God from Conscience," in Walgrave, *Newman the Theologian*, Appendix E, 358–63. Consider also the famous passage from the *Apologia pro vita sua*, where Newman states: "Starting then with the being of a God, (which, as I have said, is as certain to me as the certainty of my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into logical shape I find a difficulty in doing so in mood and figure to my satisfaction), I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth, of which my whole being is so full; and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself. . . . This is, to me, one of those great difficulties of this absolute primary truth, to which I referred just now. Were it not for this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an atheist, or a pantheist, or a polytheist when I looked into the world" (Walgrave, *Newman the Theologian*, 23).

speaking within us; and that this is the view properly to be taken of it, I shall not attempt to prove here, but I shall assume it as a first principle.”<sup>30</sup>

Drawing in the *Letter* upon the rich and nuanced tradition of Catholic teaching on conscience, Newman understands conscience to have two distinct functions. There is first and foremost what he calls the echo of the divine voice within us, this echo being nothing but the presence of the first principles of moral truth in the intellect. And there is secondly the practical dictate about what here and now is to be done as good or avoided as evil. Conscience “bears immediately on conduct, on something to be done or not done.”<sup>31</sup> It is interestingly at this very point that Newman turns to Thomas Aquinas and draws upon his doctrine of conscience.

### Thomas Aquinas<sup>32</sup>

First Newman points to the deep congruence between Augustine and Thomas on the theonomic nature of conscience: “‘The eternal law,’ says St. Augustine, ‘is the Divine Reason or Will of God, commanding the observance, forbidding the disturbance, of the natural order of things.’”<sup>33</sup> But how are the eternal law and conscience connected? In order to answer this question, Newman turns from Augustine to Thomas and interprets the latter thus:

The natural law, says St. Thomas, “is an impression of the Divine Light in us, a participation of the eternal law in the rational creature.” . . . This law, as apprehended in the minds of

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<sup>30</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 453; *Difficulties*, 255.

<sup>31</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 453; *Difficulties*, 256.

<sup>32</sup> For Thomas Aquinas’s understanding of *synderesis*, see Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R., “Aquinas on the Content of Synderesis,” *Studia Moralia* 29 (1991): 61–83; Vernon J. Bourke, “The Background of Aquinas’s Synderesis Principle,” in *Graceful Reason: Essays in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Presented to Joseph Owens*, C.Ss.R., ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983), 345–60; Michael Bertram Crowe, “Synderesis and the Notion of Law in Saint Thomas,” in *L’homme et son destin d’après les penseurs du moyen âge*, Actes du Premier Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale, 1958 (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1960), 601–9; and Odon D. Lottin, “Syndérèse et conscience aux xiie et xiiiè siècles,” vol. 2, pt. 1: *Problèmes de morale* (Louvain: Abbaye de Mont César, 1948), 101–349.

<sup>33</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 448; *Difficulties*, 246–47.

individual [human beings], is called “conscience”; and though it may suffer refraction in passing into the intellectual medium of each, it is not therefore so affected as to lose its character of being the Divine Law, but still has, as such, the prerogative of commanding obedience.<sup>34</sup>

Newman draws on a crucial distinction at the very center of Thomas’s doctrine of conscience, a distinction between an ontological level of an innate first principle and first precept—Thomas calls this *synderesis*—and an operative level, the intuitive bearing of the first principle and first precept upon a particular case, a judgment of practical reason that Thomas calls *conscientia*, the “knowing together” of the first principle and precept with a concrete case, prospectively or retrospectively, in a specific interior judgment.

In order to name the ontological level of conscience, Thomas uses a technical term provided by the tradition and employed by the theologians of his day: *synderesis*. In his treatment of *synderesis*, Thomas draws upon, clarifies, and advances the thought of his principal teacher, the Dominican Albert the Great and of his elder theological contemporary and colleague at the University of Paris, the Franciscan Bonaventure.<sup>35</sup> He also integrates the patristic tradition, especially Jerome and Augustine, and the classical Greek traditions, especially those of Aristotle and the Stoics. The Dominican Servais Pinckaers, doyen of post-Vatican II sapiential moral theology, helpfully observes, how Thomas

went to the trouble of explaining St. Jerome’s comparison [of *synderesis* with the “spark of conscience”] and made the distinc-

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<sup>34</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 448; *Difficulties*, 247.

<sup>35</sup> For the biblical, patristic, and medieval background of the *synderesis* principle, see Bourke, “Background of Aquinas’s Synderesis Principle”; for the arguments that St. Thomas adduces for its existence (first principles cannot be proven in a strict sense), see Crowe, “Synderesis and the Notion of Law in Saint Thomas”; and for a lucid summary of the ways Thomas draws upon Albert and Bonaventure and also differs from them, see Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 100–105. The only comprehensive monograph on the function of *synderesis* in the moral theology of Thomas Aquinas remains the important study by Oskar Renz, *Die Synteresis nach dem Hl. Thomas von Aquin* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1911).

tion between the spark, the purest part of fire, which shoots out above the flame and the fire itself which is mixed with alien matter that alters its purity. The spark is *synderesis*, the pure light of truth; the fire is conscience, which can err accidentally by attaching itself to a particular object that is inferior to reason. *Synderesis* is, strictly speaking, the spark of conscience, the origin of the light that illuminates it.<sup>36</sup>

In a nutshell, Thomas understands *synderesis* as “a natural *habitus* of first principles of action, which are the universal principles of the natural law.”<sup>37</sup> *Synderesis* names practical reason “perfected by a completely determined *habitus*.”<sup>38</sup> As Pinckaers aptly put it, *synderesis*

offers a solid base for the recognition of the universal and permanent character of moral laws coming from within us in the form of a light that illuminates our intellect. The strength of moral law derived from this light does not come to [human beings] from a merely exterior will; it has its root in [our] intellect and is at the origin of [our] freedom.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Servais Pinckaers, O.P., “Conscience, Truth, and Prudence,” in *Crisis of Conscience: Philosophers and Theologians Analyze Our Growing Inability to Discern Right from Wrong*, ed. John M. Haas (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 79–92, 88. Cf. *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 2, ad 3; English translation: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, vol. II: Questions X–XX, trans. James V. McGlynn, S.J. (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1994), 325. In his commentary on Ezekiel (PL 25, 22), in the context of Ezekiel’s vision of the four creatures in human form (Ezek 1:4–12), Jerome makes reference to the term συντήρησις as the Greek equivalent of the Latin “scintilla conscientiae,” the spark of conscience. John Mahoney rightly points out that this word is not the result of a copyist’s error for συνειδησις (con-scientia), as was wrongly held in the latter part of the twentieth century, but rather reflects the use of the verb συντηρέω in late antique Greek. See John Mahoney, S.J., *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 187n41, 187n42.

<sup>37</sup> *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 1, resp.; *Truth* II, 304. See also his *In II Sent.* d. 24, q. 2, a. 3, and *Summa theologiae* I, q. 79, a. 12. (All citations from the *Summa theologiae* [ST] are taken from the translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province [New York: Benziger Bros., 1948; reprint Christian Classics, 1981]. Alterations are indicated by brackets. Translations from other works of Thomas Aquinas, if not indicated otherwise, are mine.) For a discussion of then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger’s proposal to replace *synderesis* with *anamnesis*, see Appendix 2.

<sup>38</sup> *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 2, ad 5; *Truth* II, 310.

<sup>39</sup> Pinckaers, “Conscience, Truth, and Prudence,” 88.

Being at the very root of the intellect, the natural determination of practical reason consists in “a primordial perception of the good proper to [the human being].”<sup>40</sup> It is, however, important not to misunderstand this fundamental point. The content of *synderesis* is not provided by way of divine illumination or some innate apprehension. Rather, the intellect in its theoretical and in its practical aspect intuits self-evident principles (*lumen habituale*) antecedent to rational deliberation, but consequent to learning the terms of these principles through basic sense experience.<sup>41</sup>

Let us now consider the operative level of conscience.<sup>42</sup> *Con-scientia*, “knowing together,” names, first, the actualization of the natural *habitus* of the first principles of moral truth (*ST I*, q. 79, a. 13, resp.)<sup>43</sup> in the form of a concrete judgment, and second, the application of this knowledge to action, a kind of dictate or command of reason (*ST I-II*, q. 19, a. 5, resp.). This is the aspect of conscience that Newman understands to be a particular dictate bearing immediately on what is to be done. Thomas calls conscience “the practical judgment or dictate of reason, by which we judge what *hic et nunc* is to be done as being good, or to be avoided as evil.”<sup>44</sup> The late Thomist philosopher Ralph McInerny put it thus: “Conscience . . . is a particular judgment as to what is to be done in the light of a common principle. The term means the *act* of application, but *conscience* can also mean the judgment made, as when someone tells us what his

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<sup>40</sup> Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 384.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas explains this matter succinctly in the context of discussing the question whether any *habitus* is natural, that is, innate: “The understanding of first principles is called a natural habit. For it is owing to the very nature of the intellectual soul that [a human being], having once grasped what is a whole and what is a part, would at once perceive that every whole is larger than its part: and in like manner with regard to other such principles. Yet what is a whole, and what is a part—this he cannot know except through the intelligible species which he has received from phantasms: and for this reason, the Philosopher at the end of the *Posterior Analytics* shows that knowledge of principles comes to us from the senses” (*ST I-II*, q. 51, a. 1, resp.).

<sup>42</sup> The Greek term for this actualization is *συνείδησις*, and its Latin literal translation is *con-scientia*. By the time the Apostle Paul wrote his letters, both terms were common in popular everyday usage of Greek and Latin. Paul uses *συνείδησις* frequently (Rom 2:15; 1 Cor 8:7, 10, 12; 10:28–29; 2 Cor 1:12–13; 1 Tm 1:19; Ti 1:15).

<sup>43</sup> See also *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 1, and *In II Sent.* d. 24, q. 2, a. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 453; *Difficulties*, 256.

conscience tells him.”<sup>45</sup> Thomas spells out the dynamic of this judgment of conscience in instructive detail:

Conscience is said to witness, to bind, or incite, and also to accuse, torment, or rebuke. And all these follow the application of knowledge or science to what we do: which application is made in three ways. One way in so far as we recognize that we have done or not done something; *Your conscience knows that you have often spoken evil of others* (Eccles. vii, 23), and according to this, conscience is said to witness. In another way, so far as through the conscience we judge that something should be done or not done; and in this sense, conscience is said to incite or to bind. In the third way so far as by conscience we judge that something done is well done or ill done, and in this sense conscience is said to excuse, accuse, or torment. Now, it is clear that all these things follow the actual application of knowledge to what we do. Wherefore, properly speaking, conscience denominates an act. (*ST I*, q. 79, a. 13, resp.)

Thomas’s account of the ways the judgment of conscience occurs is not only remarkably comprehensive but also empirically accurate. The judgment of *conscientia* may occur prospectively, antecedent to the execution of a specific exterior act. But it also may occur retrospectively, consequent to the execution or the omission of this specific exterior act. The judgment of conscience for the most part quite evidently bears witness, exhorts, commands, forbids, or permits prospectively and retrospectively evaluates either positively or negatively.

In unison with Thomas, Newman does regard the natural *habitus* of *synderesis* as universal, incorruptible, and infallible, yet the concrete exercise of *conscientia* as considerably vulnerable to personal defects (ignorance, imprudence, or habituation in vice) and to collective sociopolitical corruption over longer historical periods. Hence, as already discussed earlier, Newman can forego any attempt at proving the ex-

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<sup>45</sup> Ralph McInerny, “Conscience and the Object of the Moral Act,” in *Crisis of Conscience: Philosophers and Theologians Analyze Our Growing Inability to Discern Right from Wrong*, ed. John M. Haas (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 93–110, 97.

istence of conscience to its detractors. While those who embrace the sovereign rule of self-will can deny, suppress, and flee from the interior forum, they can never escape the eventual interior manifestation of theonomic conscience.<sup>46</sup>

Three aspects of Thomas's doctrine of conscience are of crucial importance in order to understand its contrary, the counterfeit of conscience: first, the innate *habitus* of *synderesis*; second, the important relationship between conscience and the virtue of prudence; and finally third, the complex phenomenon of the erroneous conscience.

### *Synderesis*

*Synderesis* is the natural *habitus* of the intellect that contains the first principle ("good is that which all things seek after") and the first precept of practical reason ("good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided"; *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 4, resp.).<sup>47</sup> Thomas understands the natural law fundamentally as the rational creature's participation in the eternal law, which "is nothing else than the type of Divine Wisdom, as directing all actions and movements" (*ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 1, resp.).<sup>48</sup> Rational creatures are "partakers of a share of providence, by being both provident for [themselves] and for others" (*ST* I-II, q. 92, a. 2, resp.). The essence of this specific participation in the eternal law *qua* rational creature occurs by way of the natural inclination of practical reason to the proper act and end of the rational creature: "On the part of practical reason, [the human being] has a natural participation of the eternal law, according to certain general principles" (*ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 3, ad 1). In his concluding summary of his response to the question whether there is a natural law in us (*ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 2), Thomas indicates quite clearly the theonomic character of *synderesis*

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<sup>46</sup> For Immanuel Kant's instructive but problematic account of the interior forum, see Appendix 3.

<sup>47</sup> I am bracketing a discussion of the various proposals advanced of how the first precept relates to the first principle. Some make a simple distinction, others derive the precept from the principle, and others again identify the precept and the principle. For the relevant literature, see Billy, "Aquinas on the Content of *Synderesis*," 65n.11.

<sup>48</sup> For an instructive treatment of this crucial aspect of Thomas's sapiential moral theology, see John Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions: St. Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), esp. 199–230.



that appears here as “light of natural reason” (*lumen rationis naturalis*) yielding the first principle and the first precept of the natural law:

The Psalmist after saying (Ps 4:6): *Offer up the sacrifice of justice*, as though someone asked what the works of justice are, adds: *Many say, Who showeth us good things? In answer to which question he says: The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us*: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light (*impressio divini luminis in nobis*). It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature’s participation of the eternal law. (*ST I-II*, q. 91, a. 2, resp.)

Yet the eternal law indicates nothing else than an encompassing teleology for the whole of creation. God is the first cause and the final end of the universe, and the Divine Wisdom directs all acts and movements to the common good of the universe, which is God. In order for the human being to be able to participate *qua rational being* in the eternal law, it does not suffice to be equipped with the apprehensive and appetitive faculties animals display. Voluntary agency, rather, presupposes not only the perception of an end or good but rather also its character (*ratio finis*) and the agent’s relationship to it. This more perfect kind of cognition allows the rational being to move by way of deliberation to the end or not to move to it. Furthermore, genuine human participation in the eternal law requires the mutual influence of intellect and will such that both faculties include one another in their acts: “The intellect understands that the will wills and the will wills the intellect to understand. In the same way good is contained in truth, inasmuch as it is an understood truth, and truth in good, inasmuch as it is a desired good.”<sup>49</sup> The desire to know truth is a specific good (knowledge perfects the intellect) and only the good that

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<sup>49</sup> *ST I*, q. 82, a. 4, ad 1; see also *ST I*, q. 16, a. 4, ad 1; *ST I-II*, q. 9, a. 1, resp. Truth is the specific good of the intellect toward which the will moves the intellect as an efficient cause; and the intellect moves the will as formal cause by providing the formality or character of good. Improperly speaking, by thus providing the understood good, the intellect moves the will *per modum finis*, but, properly speaking, what is perceived by the intellect under the character of good (*bonum apprehensum*) moves the will as a final cause.

is understood as good attracts the will.<sup>50</sup> Hence, owing to the profound interaction of intellect and will in practical reason, there must be a first principle and a first precept of *synderesis*: in respect to what is proper to the intellect, *synderesis* has the character of first principle, the formality of the understood good (*bonum apprehensum*), and in respect to what is proper to the will (desiring the understood good), *synderesis* has the character of first precept:

*Good* is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an end under the aspect of good. Consequently, the first principle in practical reason is founded on the notion of good, i.e. that *good is that which all things seek after*. Hence this is the first precept of law, that *good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided*. (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, resp.)

Interpreting Thomas, Servais Pinckaers helpfully elucidates this first precept: “It does not primarily signify an obligation to do the good. Rather, it expresses the attraction of the good. . . . It is this urgency of the truth within the good, within the very attraction of the good, that is at the heart of the intimate awareness of duty and obligation.”<sup>51</sup> The first precept of the natural law is therefore not to be confused with Kant’s categorical imperative expressing a purely formal duty of practical reason. The first precept, rather, expresses the inherent attraction of the good as understood good. The natural *habitus* of first principle and first precept enable the rational creature not only to move to some perceived good but to realize the *ratio finis*, the character of the good. Because good is the perfection that all created being desires (ST I, q. 5, a. 1) and to which all created being moves as its final end (ST I, q. 5, a. 4), *synderesis* enables the rational creature to realize the teleology of the good *qua rational*

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<sup>50</sup> “The will moves the intellect as to the exercise of its act; since even the true itself which is the perfection of the intellect, is included in the universal good, as a particular good. But as to the determination of the act, which the act derives from the object, the intellect moves the will; since the good itself is apprehended under a special aspect as contained in the universal true” (ST I-II, q. 9, a. 1, ad 3).

<sup>51</sup> Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *Morality: The Catholic View*, trans. Michael Sherwin, O.P. (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001), 100.

creature by participating through the natural law in the eternal law. In his excellent book *Perfecting Human Actions*, John Rziha rightly points out how genuine human freedom arises precisely from the participation of the rational creature in the eternal law:

For Thomas, freedom does not come from a blind movement of the will or sense appetites but comes from the will and sense appetites being determined by human reason to intend and choose acts in accord with the ultimate end of humanity. . . . Hence, freedom is bound up in rationality, which derives its light and intellectual forms from the eternal law. . . . [A]uthentic human freedom is first and foremost caused by the eternal law and only caused by the human through the soul's participation in the eternal law.<sup>52</sup>

It is for this reason that conscience truly so called is indispensable for achieving the perfection of human freedom, that is, positive freedom, freedom in the truth.

On the supposition of the fundamental teleological ordering of the universe as reflected in the innate *habitus* of *synderesis*, the so-called naturalistic fallacy—the allegedly illicit naturalistic or metaphysical transition from “is” to “ought,” the fallacy invented by David Hume and the term coined by G. E. Moore—is a mute concern.<sup>53</sup> As creatures of the extant teleologically ordered universe, human beings—as all other beings—are teleologically constituted by way of fundamental natural inclinations (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, resp.) and as rational creatures

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<sup>52</sup> Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 265.

<sup>53</sup> One can, of course, argue that *synderesis* does not exist. But the burden of the proof rests with the one who advances such an argument. For the overwhelming empirical evidence in human history speaks for the existence of *synderesis*. For a modern discussion of the problem raised by Hume expressly in his anonymously published 1739/40 *Treatise of Human Nature Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (III, I, 1) and coined as “naturalistic fallacy” by G. E. Moore in his 1903 *Principia Ethica* (chap. 2), see *The Is-Ought Question*, ed. William Donald Hudson (London: Macmillan, 1969), and for a substantive treatment of this problematic and an in-depth analysis of Aquinas's philosophical justification for the transition from “is” to “ought,” see Piotr Lichacz, “Did St. Thomas Aquinas Justify the Transition from ‘Is’ to ‘Ought?’,” STD dissertation, University of Fribourg (Switzerland), 2008.

they are endowed with *synderesis*, “an habitual light” (*lumen habituale*),<sup>54</sup> in virtue of which they understand the formality or character of good so that as soon as something is apprehended in some respect as good, their rational appetite, the will, is attracted by it. Hence, *synderesis* is not only a formal but a teleological principle interior to practical reason itself. As a tendency to its proper end or good, the “ought” is embedded in the “is,” the substantial form, of every being, and therefore also in those beings that realize their perfection through the exercise of practical reason.

There is one further implication given with the interior teleological constitution of practical reason. Because *synderesis* is a habitual light, it prevents the dictates of conscience from ever turning into some imposed heteronomy. For the dictates of conscience truly so called are nothing but the concretization by way of judgment of those principles and precepts that are constitutive of the teleological ordering of practical reason itself. For this very reason, a teleological ethics centered on *synderesis* as well as the natural inclinations remains untouched by the dichotomy between heteronomy and autonomy that haunts most modern moral philosophy.<sup>55</sup> Because the human being is a creature of a very unique kind, a rational being created in the image of God, the innate first principles of understanding and acting are a proprium of human nature. Turning away from *synderesis* and with it from the teleological order of reality and embracing instead the negative freedom of sovereign self-determination, the counterfeit of conscience is condemned to a never-ending vigilance against the constant threat of a hostile “takeover” by what it can only perceive as someone else’s self-will, be it some human “other” or the Divine “Other.” Sovereignty of self-will takes care of the first threat and atheism takes care of the second threat—and voilà, there are the two characteristic features of modern nihilism’s will-to-power.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 3; *Truth II*, 312.

<sup>55</sup> See J. B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). *Synderesis* is nothing but a participated theonomy that transcends the paralyzing opposition of heteronomy and autonomy in which the late modern counterfeit of conscience is fatefully caught. See Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §41.

<sup>56</sup> For an instructive study of the emergence of modern nihilism from its root in late

### Conscience and Prudence

In order to gain a deeper understanding of conscience truly so called and its counterfeit we must consider briefly how conscience relates to the principal cardinal virtue, prudence, which Thomas defines as “right practical reason.” For Thomas, conscience and prudence are not identical but profoundly related.<sup>57</sup> Pinckaers emphasizes the difference between conscience and prudence when he observes that “conscience . . . although it judges the moral quality of our behavior, is not a virtue; it is the application of *synderesis* in the appraisal of acts we have carried out or will carry out.”<sup>58</sup> Yet while different from each other, conscience and prudence are nevertheless profoundly related. In his analysis of their relationship according to Thomas, McInerny cuts to the core of the matter:

To have cognitive knowledge of what I ought to do here and now is not a function of, is not dependent upon, being related to the good known as good. A bad [person] can have a correct conscience. The correctness of conscience does not of itself guarantee that action and choice will be in accord with it.<sup>59</sup>

The morally weak person, the incontinent person “knows what he ought to do, his conscience is all right, but his knowledge of the good is not complemented by an effective appetitive disposition to good as good. That is why in the crunch, in choosing (which is a meld of mind and appetite), he goes wrong.”<sup>60</sup> In short, the antecedent judgment of *conscientia* remains testificatory and mandatory, and its consequent judgment evaluatory (accusatory or excusatory). It is not, in and of itself, efficacious in choosing and doing the good. Among the three acts of the virtue of prudence—to

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medieval voluntarism, via its flowering in early modern sovereign self-determination to its late modern fruition in and celebration of the will-to-power, see Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>57</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 6, ad 3: “*Synderesis* moves prudence, just as the understanding of principles moves science” (“*synderesis* movet prudentiam sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam”).

<sup>58</sup> Pinckaers, “Conscience, Truth, and Prudence,” 87ff, 89.

<sup>59</sup> Ralph McInerny, “Prudence and Conscience,” *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 291–305, 303.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

take counsel (*consiliari*), to judge (*iudicare*), and to command (*praecipere*)—*con-scientia* comprises the second act when this judgment is right and certain, that is, when it is indeed properly formed by the acquired or infused *habitus* of prudence (*ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 8). But what remains indispensable for efficaciously choosing and doing the good, are the two other acts of the virtue of prudence, counsel,<sup>61</sup> and command, in concert with the remaining cardinal virtues justice, fortitude, and temperance. Rightly formed conscience convicts the adulterer of the act of adultery, but cannot on its own prevent an act of adultery; nor can conscience truly so called prevent on its own the adulterer's habituation in this vice, let alone free the habitual adulterer from the vice. *Con-scientia* lacks the power of execution.<sup>62</sup> Judgments of *con-scientia* are, nevertheless, absolutely indispensable for moral goodness and, indeed, holiness of life (1 Jn 3:3). But without being carried forward by the four cardinal virtues under the primacy of prudence, and more importantly, in light of the supernatural end of the human life, by the infused moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, into the realization of morally good acts, and more importantly into

<sup>61</sup> In *ST* II-II, q. 53, a. 3, resp., Thomas lays out the contours of the ideal act of taking counsel, which comprises five steps: “Memory [*memoria*] of the past, intelligence [*intelligentia*] of the present, shrewdness [*solertia*] in considering the future outcome, reasoning [*ratiocinatio*] which compares one thing with another, docility [*docilitas*] in accepting the opinions of others. He that takes counsel descends by these steps in due order.” That these five steps are not solitary events in the agent's mind but, on the contrary, reflect primarily distinct aspects of the dynamic of social interaction of deliberation becomes clear when one considers Thomas's important statement in *ST* I-II, q. 14, a. 3, resp: “Counsel properly implies a conference held between several; the very word (*consilium*) denotes this, for it means a sitting together (*considium*), from the fact that many sit together in order to confer with one another.” I am indebted to Raymond F. Hain IV for having learned to think about counsel as a primarily social activity. Cf. the section “Is Consilium a Social Activity?” in his instructive dissertation “Practical Virtues: Instrumental Practical Reason and the Virtues,” PhD dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2009, 177–82.

<sup>62</sup> Command (*imperium*) is an act of the intellect moved by the will (*ST* I-II, q. 17, a. 1). When *imperium* is an act integral to the virtue of prudence (instead of being the result of precipitation or thoughtlessness), Thomas calls it *praecipium*, command as informed by right judgment. Indeed, Thomas regards the act of command (*praecipere*) as the principal act of prudence. Practical reason is directed to action. Therefore, after counsel or deliberation and judgment, the third act of prudence is “to command [*praecipere*] which act consists in applying to action the things counselled and judged. And since this act approaches nearer to the end of practical reason, it follows that it is the chief act of the practical reason, and consequently of prudence” (*ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 8, resp.).

the realization of meritorious acts informed by the theological virtue of charity, the antecedent judgments of *con-scientia* remain powerless. What carries them through into right action is the virtue of prudence in unity with the other cardinal virtues and what perfects them is “the sympathy and connaturality for Divine things” that “is the result of charity, which unites us to God.”<sup>63</sup> Bereft of the virtues, moral and theological, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such judgments are at the very best true judgments of a morally incontinent, or worse, of a vicious person with a properly formed and therefore bad conscience made up of nothing but accusatory consequent judgments.<sup>64</sup>

At its very best, that is, when it is right and certain, the antecedent judgment of *con-scientia* is an integral component of the virtue of prudence. Once the *habitus* of prudence has been diminished or completely lost due to contrary acts of imprudence (*ST II-II*, q. 53) and the act of counsel prevented by precipitation (*ST II-II*, q. 53, a. 3) or by thoughtlessness (*ST II-II*, q. 53, a. 4), the flight from the *synderistic* indicator of

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<sup>63</sup> “Huiusmodi autem compassio sive connaturalitas ad res divinas fit per caritatem, quae quidem unit nos Deo” (*ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 2, resp.). Thomas makes this statement in the context of considering the gift of wisdom, a gift that has its cause in the will, but its essence in the intellect, “a gift of the Holy Spirit to judge aright about [Divine things] on account of connaturality with them” (ibid.). *Nota bene*: The judgment of wisdom is the supernatural analogue of the judgment of *con-scientia*. The judgment of *con-scientia* applies the principles of *synderesis*; the judgment of wisdom applies via connaturality what pertains to the eternal law: “Wisdom denotes a certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law” (ibid.).

<sup>64</sup> The relationship between conscience and prudence bestows an important lesson. While *synderesis* and *con-scientia* are indispensable, the exercise of the virtue of prudence, acquired as well as infused, is of a surpassingly greater significance for the moral life and especially for the *viator* on the pilgrimage to the supernatural final end, the communion with the blessed Trinity in the beatific vision. (Of equally great importance are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in our context especially the gift of counsel; *ST II-II*, q. 52). Hence it is to be expected that in Thomist moral theology the acquired and the infused virtues together with the gifts of the Holy Spirit take center stage, while *synderesis/con-scientia* hold a subordinate, though indispensable position. When post-Tridentine Catholic moral theology, especially from the eighteenth century on, shifted the emphasis from grace, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the beatitudes to conscience and law, many of the best insights of Thomist sapiential moral theology fell by the wayside. For an instructive analysis of the problem, see Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian Ethics*, 254–79, and for a lucid analysis of the precise role of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the Christian moral life, see Steven A. Long, “The Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Their Indispensability for the Christian Moral Life: Grace as *Motus*,” *Nova et Vetera* (English) 11, no. 2 (2013): 357–73.

moral truth and from the interior forum prepares the indulgence in the counterfeit of conscience. Regarding its own decisions as intrinsically infallible expressions of a sovereign self-determination, the counterfeit foregoes counsel, the interior as well as exterior source leading to a rightly formed judgment of *con-scientia*. The decisions the counterfeit posits, create the semblance of a true and therefore good conscience precisely because the counterfeit's decisions are held as infallible, as quasi-certain. The sovereign self-determination guarantees consistency with oneself, which is to replace the *synderistic* truth indicator. Eschewing the *forum internum* and embracing the attitude of sovereign self-determination, the counterfeit of conscience now blocks access to the synderistic root of right judgment.

### The Erroneous Conscience

This phenomenon, the counterfeit of conscience producing a simulacrum of the true and therefore good conscience, raises, third, the complex issue of the erroneous conscience. First, a brief word on Thomas's distinct approach. Because Thomas is engaged in an objective analysis of the principles and judgments of conscience in respect to truth and goodness, he distinguishes the objective stance of the science of *sacra doctrina* that is in possession of the first principles and the correct inferences of more remote principles, from the subjective stance of the moral agent. An integral component of *sacra doctrina* is sapiential moral theology. It is only from the objective perspective of sapiential moral theology that the distinction between a conscience that is subjectively good (a judgment based on a good intention) but objectively erroneous, can be meaningfully introduced and defended. The objective perspective in its perfection is identical with the divine knowledge itself. Only through a participation in this divine knowledge, the eternal law, by way of the natural law, reason's participation in the eternal law, *as affirmed and perfected by the revealed principles of the divine law*, is the objective perspective accessible in an imperfect but completely reliable form to sapiential moral theology and by way of instruction to the faithful. The objective perspective is, to a certain degree, also accessible to philosophical wisdom that is able to infer correctly secondary principles and precepts from the first principle



and precept of *synderesis*.

Thomas stresses that the antecedent judgment of *con-scientia*, the application of the universal principles of *synderesis* to a particular case, is not infallible. When properly informed by prudence, that is, when conformed to right intention according to the principles and precepts of *synderesis* and when subjectively certain, the judgment of *con-scientia* is practically true and right. But the agent might suffer from ignorance and hence is objectively burdened by an erroneous conscience. Hence the characteristic deficiency of an erroneous conscience is ignorance, which can be voluntary or involuntary, vincible or invincible (*ST I-II*, q. 76).

Since the dictate of conscience binds and must be obeyed, a dictate issuing from an objectively erroneous conscience must nevertheless subjectively be obeyed. If the objective perspective were completely available this side of the beatific vision, then the only relevant perspective would be the agent's perspective. And from the agent's perspective the only way to sin would be to act against one's conscience, to act from a consciously bad intention. This was, of course, famously Peter Abelard's position to which Thomas is implicitly responding.<sup>65</sup> Consider how Thomas distinguishes between the objective and the subjective perspective:

Conscience is said to bind in so far as one sins if he does not follow his conscience, but not in the sense that he acts correctly if he does follow it. . . . Conscience is not said to bind in the sense that what one does according to such a conscience will be good, but in the sense that in not following it he will sin. . . . A correct

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<sup>65</sup> The thesis to which Thomas responds here can be found in Abelard's *Ethica seu liber dictus scito te ipsum*: "Peccatum non est nisi contra conscientiam" (*PL* 178, col. 653C). In a remarkable act of anticipation of essentially modern moves, Abelard elevates subjective conscience to the highest norm of morality and thereby contributes to the eventual invention of the counterfeit of conscience. This is not a matter of purely antiquarian interest. For Abelard's approach to conscience found a sophisticated modern advocate in the voice of Karl Rahner, who penned an influential essay published originally in *Orientierung* 48 (1983): 246B–250A, under the title "Vom irrenden Gewissen." See Appendix 4 for further discussion of Rahner's construal of conscience. For a lucid treatment of this difficult issue and an incisive interrogation of Rahner's construal, see Théo G. Belmans, O. Praem., "Le paradoxe de la conscience erronée d'Abélard à Karl Rahner," *Revue Thomiste* 90 (1990): 570–86.

conscience and a false conscience bind in different ways. The correct conscience binds absolutely and for an intrinsic reason; the false binds in a qualified way and for an extrinsic reason.<sup>66</sup>

The erroneous conscience does indeed bind, not because it is correct, but because the judgment of *conscientia* is all a person can go by—at the moment. Nevertheless, the erroneous conscience can be identified eventually as such because it depends upon the logical priority of the correct conscience, which applies the principles of *synderesis* rightly. From the agent's perspective the way to find out whether one has acted from an erroneous conscience or not occurs in light of instruction, counsel, or self-examination by way of a consequent judgment of *conscientia*, either in form of a moral self-critique that elicits regret and remorse in the case of a formerly erroneous conscience or in form of a simple retrospective affirmation that one's true and therefore good conscience has indeed also been right. Precisely because of the innate *habitus* of *synderesis*, the principle and therefore the concrete possibility of self-correction always obtains. For this reason it is the case that while the erroneous conscience indeed binds, it does not automatically excuse. Thomas explains:

If . . . reason or conscience should err voluntarily, either directly or because of negligence, being in error about something one is held to know, then such error does not prevent the will which is in accord with erring reason or conscience from being evil. (*ST* I-II, q. 19, a. 6, resp.) Similarly, supposing error of reason or conscience which proceeds from a non-excusing ignorance, evil in the will necessarily follows. However, such a man is not perplexed, because he can correct his error, since his ignorance is both vincible and voluntary. (*ST* I-II, q. 19, a. 6, ad 3)

Culpable erroneous conscience is caused either by negligence (see *ST* II-II, q. 54; lack of due solicitude), which makes it indirectly voluntary,

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<sup>66</sup> *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 4, resp.; *Truth* II, 331–32; see also *ST* I-II, q. 19, a. 5, resp. Thomas holds the correct conscience to bind absolutely and for an intrinsic reason because a judgment of *conscientia* that is practically true is necessarily also right.

or by willful ignorance (see *ST I-II*, q. 76), which makes it directly voluntary. In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, the young Thomas offers a pithy summary of this complex matter: To follow one's erring conscience means to be unable to avoid sinning, but to act against one's conscience means simply to sin.<sup>67</sup> The person who acts against the antecedent judgment of conscience always sins, because the only way the *synderistic* truth indicator is applied is by way of a judgment of antecedent conscience. To turn intentionally against such a judgment is always culpable because it means that one cuts oneself off from the very possibility of following moral truth. To follow one's erring conscience means to do what seems subjectively right but what is objectively wrong. McNerny aptly summarizes:

An erroneous conscience is an instance of ignorance, of not knowing the correct assessment of a proposed course of action. If the ignorance in which one acts is voluntary, then it does not excuse. . . . It may be indirectly voluntary if it is a matter of negligence, of one not putting his mind to know what he is held to know.<sup>68</sup>

Hence, in order to achieve moral rectitude, it does not suffice simply to follow subjectively one's conscience. Rather, moral rectitude requires striving to have a right conscience, which entails study, seeking counsel, docility to proper authority, and the regular examination of conscience (that is, permitting, seeking, and encouraging the consequent judgments of *con-scientia*). In light of the supernatural final end (*ST I-II*, q. 1, a. 8; q. 3, a. 8), these prerequisites and their goal, moral rectitude, while indispensable, are however radically insufficient. The faithful in a state of grace will rely heavily on the infused virtue of prudence, especially on εὐβουλία (*ST II-II*, q. 51, aa. 1 and 2) and on the infused gift of counsel (*ST II-II*, q. 52) that will allow them to immerse themselves more deeply into the Church's teaching on faith and morals and to be directed as though counselled by God. Thomas reminds his readers: "That a [person] be counselled by God as to what he ought to do in matters necessary for salvation is common to all holy persons" (*ST II-II*, q. 52, a. 1, ad 2).

<sup>67</sup> *In II Sent.* d. 39, q. 3, a. 3. Cf. also his later *Quodl.* III, q. 12, a. 2, ad 2.

<sup>68</sup> McNerny, "Conscience and the Object," 99.

### Invincible Ignorance

Finally, a brief word is apposite on the borderline case of a conscience affected by invincible ignorance. Vatican II's pastoral constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, states that "conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity."<sup>69</sup> This is, of course, right: even a conscience that errs due to invincible ignorance carries the dignity of conscience. But in order not to commit a serious misunderstanding, the following is crucial to keep in mind: *Gaudium et Spes* emphasizes explicitly that the very obedience to the law written by God into the heart is the dignity of the human person: "Man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man" (§ 16). Drawing upon this principle in his encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul II concludes: "It is always from the truth that the dignity of conscience derives" (§63). Hence when erroneous due to invincible ignorance, the dignity of conscience derives from its infallible theonomic root, from the first principle and precept of *synderesis* and ultimately from the divine origin of the infallible and incorruptible habitual light that makes possible the judgments of *conscientia*. Quite obviously, the dignity of conscience cannot be grounded in the judgments of *conscientia* themselves, whether correct or erroneous.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, §16: "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. (Cf. *Rom.* 2:15-16.) Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. (Cf. Pius XII, Radio address on the correct formation of a Christian conscience in the young, March 23, 1952: AAS [1952], p. 271.) In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbor. (Cf. *Matt.* 22:37-40; *Gal.* 5:14.) In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals from social relationships. Hence the more right conscience holds sway, the more persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and strive to be guided by the objective norms of morality. Conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity. The same cannot be said for a man who cares but little for truth and goodness, or for a conscience which by degrees grows practically sightless as a result of habitual sin" (available at Vatican website: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)).

<sup>70</sup> This dignity is absent from the counterfeit of conscience to which *Gaudium et Spes* obliquely refers at the very end of the above cited section (note 69) of §16: "The same

Less obviously but of even greater importance, the dignity of conscience does not derive from some alleged transcendental experience of freedom and responsibility that would presumably surpass in significance, ontologically antecede, and possibly even replace *synderesis*.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, invincible ignorance cannot simply be a state of ongoing moral existence but rather denotes an extraordinary temporary phenomenon (though one that can last for a considerable amount of time) arising from a unique constellation of subjective obstacles none of which, however, are in principle insurmountable. In other words, invincible ignorance can never be a proper attribute of theonomic conscience *per se*; it can only be an accidental attribute denoting a contingent deficiency that one might call circumstantial ignorance or perplexity (*perplexitas*).<sup>72</sup> The state of moral perplexity—seeing sin on both sides, on the side of commission and on the side of omission—can never be unconditional. It rather always pertains to the unavoidability of sin under

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*cannot be said for a man who cares but little for truth and goodness, or for a conscience which by degrees grows practically sightless as a result of habitual sin*" (my emphasis).

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 4 for a brief discussion of Karl Rahner's influential construal of such a position.

<sup>72</sup> Invincible ignorance in its maximum state occurs, according to Thomas, only in those who, due to profound mental or psychological impediments are unaccountable for their doings: "Ignorantia iuris non excusat a peccato, nisi forte sit ignorantia invincibilis sicut est in furiosis et amentibus; quae omnino excusat" (*Quodl.* III, q. 12, a. 2, ad 2). McNerny rightly concludes that "an act performed in invincible ignorance—an ignorance for which one can in no way be held accountable—would fail to qualify as a human act" (McNerny, "Conscience and the Object," 100). McNerny's point is not evaluative (as if a person "acting" in such a way would offer a "sub-human" performance). Rather, his point is conceptual. A genuinely human act is essentially intelligible and voluntary and therefore always entails minimal accountability. Absolute ignorance would entail the absence of all intelligibility in which case such a doing would fail as a candidate of human act. Thomas puts the matter tersely in *ST* I-II, q. 1, a. 1, resp.: "Those acts alone are properly called human [*actiones humanae*] which are of his own deliberate willing [*ex voluntate deliberata*]. Others that may be attributed to him may be called 'acts of man' [*hominis actiones*], but not 'human acts' [*actiones humanae*], since they are not his precisely as a human being [*non sint hominis in quantum est homo*]" (trans. Thomas Gilby, O.P.). On the intelligible act as the most basic unit of human action, see the instructive essay by Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Intelligibility of Action," in *Rationality, Relativism, and Human Sciences*, ed. J. Margolis, M. Krausz, and R. M. Burian (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1986), 63–80.

certain conditions; it denotes “an instance of ignorance, of not knowing the correct assessment of a proposed course of action.”<sup>73</sup>

### The Erroneous Conscience and the Counterfeit of Conscience

What is to be learned from the erroneous conscience and how does it differ from the counterfeit of conscience? First, from the objective perspective afforded by *sacra doctrina* and its entailed moral science, the reality of an erroneous conscience presupposes an objective moral order and reliable knowledge of it. For a consistent moral subjectivism and the concomitant rule of self-will, on the contrary, an erroneous conscience is an utterly meaningless notion. By positing its own dictates of self-will, the subjectivist counterfeit of conscience is, by definition, infallible and therefore quasi-certain. Because it is the law of its own dictates, there is nothing in light of which the counterfeit of conscience can possibly err.<sup>74</sup> One of the most astute recent descriptions of the subjectivist nature of the counterfeit of conscience was penned by Pope John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor*:

The individual conscience is accorded the status of a supreme tribunal of moral judgment which hands down categorical and infallible decisions about good and evil. To the affirmation that one has a duty to follow one’s conscience is unduly added the affirmation that one’s moral judgment is true merely by the fact that it has its origin in the conscience. But in this way the inescapable claims of truth disappear, yielding their place to a criterion of sincerity, authenticity and “being at peace with oneself” so much so that some have come to adopt a radically subjectivist conception of moral judgment. (§32)

The use of the language of the “primacy of conscience” by ethicists and

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<sup>73</sup> McNerny, “Conscience and the Object,” 99. For a discussion that is as learned as it is lucid on conditional perplexity, see Richard Schenk, O.P., “*Perplexus supposito quodam*: Notizen zu einem vergessenen Schlüsselbegriff thomanischer Gewissenslehre,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 57 (1990): 62–95.

<sup>74</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s subjective idealism offers probably the most consistent but also most problematic account of the inherently infallible conscience. See Appendix 5 for a brief discussion.

moral theologians in recent years is a strong indication that the point of reference under discussion might not be conscience truly so called—which would call for the primacy of the “rule of ethical truth”<sup>75</sup> implemented by the virtue of prudence—but might rather be the counterfeit of conscience, sovereign self-determination authenticated by emotive self-affirmation.

Second, from the agent’s perspective, the very possibility of an erroneous conscience entails an antecedent and a consequent personal duty. The antecedent duty is to avoid ignorance and imprudence. Formulated positively, the antecedent duty is always to seek counsel, to have one’s conscience formed by those one regards as wiser and better informed than oneself, and first and foremost, to avail oneself of the instruction by and guidance of those whose specific vocation is to offer to theonomic conscience the instruction of the natural and the revealed law. The consequent duty is to avoid negligence and indifference by way of a regular examination of conscience, a sincere review of past judgments, and repentance of acts done due to an erroneous conscience.

This means, third, that for the Catholic faithful the prime tutor of conscience must be the Church’s own moral instruction undertaken by those appointed to teach authoritatively about faith and morals, the universal ordinary magisterium of the bishops in communion with the pope in regard to their respective dioceses and in regard to the Church universal the ordinary magisterium of the pope.

Fourth, in light of Thomas’s doctrine of conscience, the counterfeit of conscience is objectively a result of willful ignorance or at least of negligence and thoughtlessness. In the worst case, the counterfeit is an intentional, self-conscious flight from conscience, truly so called: by positing decisions of the self-will, a person acts in direct opposition to the judgments of a correct conscience. Does this mean that the counterfeit of conscience is able to extinguish *synderesis*? Thomas addresses this question explicitly in *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 3. He denies that *synderesis* can be extinguished in its root, *qua* innate *habitus*, “for this light belongs to the nature of the soul, since by reason of this the soul is intellectual.”<sup>76</sup> But in regard to actualizing the *habitus*, *synderesis* can be interfered with com-

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<sup>75</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 447; *Difficulties*, 246.

<sup>76</sup> *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 3, resp.; *Truth II*, 312.

pletely and it can, indeed, be deflected toward the contrary of *synderesis*. The former “happens in those who do not have the use of free choice or of reason because of an impediment due to an injury to the bodily organs from which our reason needs help.”<sup>77</sup> Only the latter pertains to the counterfeit of conscience:

The act of *synderesis* is deflected toward the contrary of *synderesis*. It is impossible for the universal judgment of *synderesis* to be destroyed in this way, but in a particular activity it is destroyed whenever one sins in choice. For the force of concupiscence, or of another passion, so absorbs reason that in choice the universal judgment of *synderesis* is not applied to the particular act.<sup>78</sup>

It is here that Thomas points to what we might call the dark secret of the counterfeit of conscience. What looks to the person fleeing theonomic conscience like the sovereignly posited decisions of self-determination is indeed the product of a profound self-deception. The flight from theonomic conscience and thereby from the “habitual light” of *synderesis* that informs reason actually makes the moral agent subject to the power of the passions and the variegated desires of the will to which they give rise. The postmodern experience of the self as a mere conscious bundle of passions and desires meets with Thomas’s harmatological analysis. Because *synderesis* cannot be destroyed, but only fled from or suppressed, the counterfeit of conscience remains an inherently unstable construal of self-deception that must be willfully maintained, directly or—more frequently—indirectly. For all the decisions the counterfeit sovereignly posits remain exposed to the “habitual light” that the first principle and the first precept of *synderesis* shed on the agent’s reason. The counterfeit is therefore inherently unable to gain the peace that is characteristic of a conscience, truly so called, that is both subjectively true and therefore good and objectively correct.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 3, resp.; *Truth II*, 312. One of the most famous relevant cases that illustrate Thomas’s point is that of Phineas Gage. During a work accident, this nineteenth-century workman had a tamping iron driven through his head. Gage survived the accident, but his personality was altered for the worse.

<sup>78</sup> *De veritate*, q. 16, a. 3, resp.; *Truth II*, 312.

<sup>79</sup> But even for a conscience, truly so called, such a peace remains a fragile reality un-



**Thomas Aquinas and John Henry Newman:  
Comparing Apples and Oranges?  
Or Complementary Accounts of Conscience?**

It will by now have become clear that according to the argument of this essay Newman's and Thomas's accounts of conscience complement each other in such a way that Newman indeed had good reasons to turn in his *Letter to the doctor communis*. It also seems quite obvious that Newman's reasons for drawing upon Thomas were of a substantive theological and conceptual nature. They did not reflect, as some might suppose, a merely tactical display of ecclesiastical *obsequium* to a papal initiative of Catholic philosophical renewal, retrospectively called "Neo-Scholasticism." Newman's *Letter* appeared five years before Pope Leo XIII promulgated his famous 1879 encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris* in which he called all Catholic teachers of philosophy and theology to return to the sound philosophical principles of Thomas Aquinas. But was Newman's turn to Thomas a defensible move? Have we not learned in recent years that the two are supposedly representing incompatible philosophical approaches to the theological task?

There are two differences between Newman and Thomas that must briefly be addressed, the first is a seeming difference, the second a surmountable difference. First, the seeming difference of incompatible approaches: throughout his long life as preacher and writer, Newman advanced an astute phenomenological (*avant la lettre*) account of conscience from the experiential perspective of one whose own conscience was exceedingly acute, well formed, and undergirded by the Christian faith. In short, Newman analyzed conscience primarily from the agent's first person perspective. Thomas undertook his formal analysis of the principles and operation of conscience from the third-person-perspective characteristic of the inquiry into causes and principles. In his excellent *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Robert Sokolowski has recently averred that phenomenology complements Thomist thought. While Newman was no phenomenologist in the proper sense of the term, his proto-phenomenological approach to conscience and Thomas's account

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less it is one of the fruits of the Spirit (*ST* I-II, q. 70), the peace that comes from following the motions of the Holy Spirit made possible by the Spirit's gifts, especially the gifts of wisdom and counsel (*ST* II-II, q. 45 and q. 52).

of conscience as developed in the framework of a sapiential moral theology do not contradict but complement each other. Hence, in the *Letter* where Newman pursued an objective exposition and defense of the Catholic doctrine of conscience, it was for substantive reasons he turned to Thomas's doctrine.

Second, the surmountable difference consists in the potential tension if not conflict that obtains regarding the precise conceptualization of the theonomic root of conscience. Is it a direct interior divine address or illumination—and in some passages Newman seems to understand it in that way—or is it an innate *habitus* of the first principle and precept of practical reason as Thomas teaches? This tension can be resolved if one takes Newman's characterization in the *Letter* ("conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ"<sup>80</sup>) first and foremost as a *theological* identification of the root of conscience and his characterization from the *Grammar of Assent* ("the echo of a voice"<sup>81</sup>) as a phenomenological description of the mode in which this root of conscience is present in human reason. Not only does the metaphor of the "echo" reflect more accurately the empirical evidence of conscience's theonomic root, it also comports well with the notion of *synderesis* as an innate *habitus*. An echo suggests indirectness. In order to understand clearly what an echo conveys, one must strain one's hearing and intentionally realize the "voice" in one's mind in form of a judgment in order to understand how it pertains to what is to be done here and now. Analogically, in Thomas's terms, the natural *habitus* of *synderesis* is partially an act in so far as it is a distinct determination of a potency. But only when the *habitus* is fully reduced to the particular judgment as to what is to be done here and now, is *conscientia* realized. The "echo" and *synderesis* refer to the self-same reality—the rational creature's participation of the eternal law. And for Thomas as well as for Newman this participation pertains first and foremost to the intellect. Law—eternal, natural, revealed—is for neither of them heteronomous because it informs reason, which is the rule and measure of human acts. Newman turns to Thomas precisely in order to affirm this fun-

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<sup>80</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 449; *Difficulties*, 248–49.

<sup>81</sup> *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, introduction by Nicholas Lash (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 99.

damental point: God “implanted this Law, which is Himself, in the intelligence of all His rational creatures.”<sup>82</sup>

Last but not least, Thomas and Newman share a philosophical point of reference—Aristotle, to be precise, his analysis of the virtue of prudence, *phronēsis*, in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>83</sup> While Thomas as well as Newman correlate conscience with the virtue of prudence, the way each of them relates various aspects of the operation of conscience to prudence reflects their different but complementary approaches. Pursuing the objective approach of sapiential moral theology, Thomas stresses the function of the first principles of practical reason in human action: “*Synderesis* is said to be the law of our mind [*lex intellectus nostri*],<sup>84</sup> because it is a [*habitus*] containing the precepts of the natural law, which are the first principles of human actions” (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2). In the practical order, the first principle, *synderesis*, appoints the end to moral virtues to which they consequently tend. The virtue of prudence disposes the means to the end, and is itself moved to the end by *synderesis* as a final cause.<sup>85</sup> Consistent with the comprehensive theological view of sapiential moral theology, the principal cardinal virtue, prudence, and the practical order to which it relates are embedded in an encompassing teleological order established by the eternal law. As stated above, *synderesis* is the root of the rational creature’s participation in this encompassing teleological order. As an innate *habitus*, *synderesis* appoints the end and prudence, moved by *synderesis*, regulates the means to reach the end. In

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<sup>82</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 447; *Difficulties*, 246. For Thomas, see *ST* I-II, q. 90, aa. 1–4.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas as well as Newman had a deep familiarity with the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Thomas, of course, wrote an extensive commentary on it, and Newman taught Aristotle’s ethics at Oriel College, Oxford, where he was a fellow from 1822 to 1845. The version Newman used for his teaching was *Aristotelis Ethicorum Nicomacheorum libri decem*, 4th ed., ed. G. Williamson (1818). Newman’s copy of this edition is kept in the archives at the Birmingham Oratory.

<sup>84</sup> This is an oblique reference to John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa*, iv, 22, to which Thomas makes an explicit reference in *ST* I, q. 79, a. 12, resp.

<sup>85</sup> “Natural reason known by the name of *synderesis* appoints the end to moral virtues. . . . The end concerns the moral virtues, not as though they appointed the end, but because they tend to the end which is appointed by natural reason. In this they are helped by prudence, which prepares the way for them, by disposing the means. . . . Yet *synderesis* moves prudence, just as the understanding of principles moves science” (*ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 6, ad 1 and ad 3).

this way Thomas integrates Aristotle's profound inquiry into *phronēsis* in the much wider and elevated horizon of sapiential moral theology without diminishing the integrity of Aristotle's acute analysis. Consider Thomas's way of appealing to a section of book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in his "on the contrary" of the question whether prudence appoints the end to the moral virtues:

The philosopher says (*Ethics* VI, ch. 12) that "moral virtue ensures the rectitude of the intention of the end, while prudence ensures the rectitude of the means." Therefore it does not belong to prudence to appoint the end to moral virtues, but only to regulate the means. (*ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 6, sc)

What Thomas does not say here explicitly but rather implies are two things: first, that *synderesis* makes possible in the first place the rectitude of the intention of the end. Precisely because *synderesis* is a natural *habitus* and not an innate illumination of the intellect with certain ideas and because the intellect provides the will with the formality or character of goodness (*bonum apprehensum*), the first principle and the first precept pertain primordially to the intellect as well as to the will. Second, he implies that this *habitus* must be actualized in the judgment of *conscientia* in order to enable prudence to regulate and command the means to that end.

From the experiential and phenomenological approach of the agent's perspective, Newman, on the other hand, emphasizes a faculty that in relation to religion he calls "moral sense." It has "truth for its direct object." Newman understands it to be one specific aspect of the faculty that Aristotle calls *noûs*.<sup>86</sup> For Aristotle, *noûs* (in Latin *intellectus*) comprises

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<sup>86</sup> Cardinal Newman, *Stray Essays on Controversial Points, Various Illustrated* (privately printed, 1890), 97–98. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, trans. H. Rackham, chaps. 10–11 (1143a35–1143b5): "Intelligence [noûs] apprehends the ultimates in both aspects—since ultimates as well as primary definitions are grasped by Intelligence [noûs] and not reached by reasoning: in demonstrations, Intelligence [noûs] apprehends the immutable and primary definitions; in practical inferences, it apprehends the ultimate and the contingent fact, and the minor premise, since these are the first principles from which the end is inferred, as general rules are based on particular cases; hence we must have perception of particulars, and this immediate perception is Intelligence (*noûs*). This is why it is thought that these qual-

the basic capacity of the immediate perception of particular cases as well as the fully fledged virtue of the intellect that by process of induction apprehends undemonstrable first principles.<sup>87</sup> In order to account for the *de facto* operation of the judgment of conscience, Newman's exclusive concern is the former aspect of *noûs*, the immediate perception of the particular and the relevant minor premise of the practical syllogism. Lest his quite specific line of argumentation be burdened with unnecessary theoretical baggage, Newman brackets the second aspect of *noûs*. This intuitive element of prudence, the immediate apprehension of the contingent particular together with the relevant minor premise of the practical syllogism,<sup>88</sup> is indispensable for the judgment of *con-scientia*. In order to apply the first principle and precept of *synderesis* at all, one must have some immediate apprehension of the contingent particular act in order to apply the principle and the precept meaningfully at all.

For the concrete judgment of *con-scientia*, both aspects of *noûs* are absolutely indispensable, but only in the context of consideration, counsel, and the examination of one's conscience do the secondary precepts of *synderesis* become explicit in the agent's perspective. And precisely in order to avoid ignorance of "secondary and more detailed precepts" (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 6, resp.), the formation of conscience is necessary, that is, the expansion of the pool of secondary, more detailed precepts that are held by the innate *habitus* of *synderesis*. This *habitus* can be expanded

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ities are a natural gift, and that a man is considerate, understanding and intelligent by nature, though no one is a wise man by nature." For Thomas's discussion of the relevant passages of the *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, see his *Sent. Eth.* VI, lec. 9 (Marietti nr. 1247–49). (Commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P. [South Bend, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1993], 393–94).

<sup>87</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, chap. 6 (1141a5–8). For Thomas's discussion of the relevant passages of the *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, see his *Sent. Eth.* VI, lec. V (Marietti nr. 1175–83) and VII (Marietti nr. 1214–16) (*Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, 373–75, 384–85).

<sup>88</sup> Just in order to clarify what I mean by "particular" and "minor premise," I simplify and update Aristotle's example of a practical syllogism from his *De motu animalium* VII (701a17–20). Major premise: I need covering (covering satisfies a need). Minor premise: A raincoat is a covering. The conclusion of the practical syllogism is an action: I have to buy a raincoat. The practical syllogism is triggered by the "particular," the raincoat I perceive and immediately recognize as such while hurrying by a shop window as rain is beginning to pour down vehemently.

and strengthened by an increasing number of specifications of the first precept that we acquire by way of instruction, counsel, and reflection.

### Conscience and the Magisterium

The proper operation of conscience requires regular attention to two essentially vincible imperfections and their due repair: ignorance and thoughtlessness (*inconsideratio*). We avoid or repair ignorance by way of the ongoing formation of conscience and thoughtlessness by way of the regular examination of conscience. Yet formation and examination require concrete social contexts of accountability, distinct practices of formation and examination, and last but not least a proper authority equipped to teach and guide the examination of conscience; in short, magisterial competency and authority. Bereft of these three conditions, in the present context, the formation of conscience stands in great danger of turning into an unintended acculturation into the counterfeit of conscience and the examination of conscience turning into a therapeutic exercise in self-exculpation and self-affirmation.

To many a contemporary Catholic, in Europe as well as in North America, any strong notion of magisterial competency, let alone authority, and especially infallibility, in matters of faith and morals, is very hard, if not impossible to swallow.<sup>89</sup> For such a notion seems to contradict the very dignity and freedom of conscience. Newman is keenly aware of the danger for Catholics living under the dominant condition of modern subjectivity to capitulate to the counterfeit of conscience. This danger of capitulating to or willingly embracing the counterfeit of conscience only increases when Catholics find themselves in a democratic régime where the “nation” regards itself as “church” and where “democracy” becomes a hegemonic program of immanent salvation advanced by an ideology of sovereign secularism, a program where the optimum of progress coincides with the maximization of “democracy” culminating in a secularist global “democratization.” In such a political constellation, the counterfeit of conscience advances all too quickly into a publicly accepted prejudice, supported and advanced by the government and legally cod-

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<sup>89</sup> For an astute treatment of this urgent topic, see Kevin E. O’Reilly, O.P., “The Church as the Defender of Conscience in Our Age,” *Nova et Vetera* (English) 12, no. 1 (2014): 193–215.

ified and enforced by courts of law. Eventually, the willing embrace of the collective prejudice by each and every citizen will be regarded as an indispensable entailment of loyal citizenship and as the proper expression of the national identity. When Catholics instead insist on following the judgments of a well-formed theonomic conscience, the political and ideological acolytes of such a secularist democratic régime will predictably conclude—to put it in Gladstone’s words—that such Catholics can no longer “be trusted to participate loyally and thoughtfully in the nation’s civic life.”<sup>90</sup>

Consider how alarming and indeed extravagant must sound to the acolytes of such a secularist democratic régime—not to mention to Catholics thoroughly acculturated in the seductive material comforts and consolations these usually affluent societies afford—what Newman has to say about the manner in which a well-formed conscience (truly so called) must regard papal instruction, even in those matters to which the infallibility of the pope’s extraordinary magisterium does not pertain but that rather fall under the pope’s ordinary magisterium:

When [conscience truly so called] has the right of opposing the supreme, though not infallible Authority of the Pope, it must be something more than that miserable counterfeit which, as I have said above, now goes by the name. If in a particular case it is to be taken as a sacred and sovereign monitor, its dictate, in order to prevail against the voice of the Pope, must follow upon serious thought, prayer, and all available means of arriving at a right judgment on the matter in question. And further, obedience to the Pope is what is called “in possession”; that is, the *onus probandi* of establishing a case against him lies, as in all cases of exception, on the side of conscience. Unless a man is able to say to himself, as in the Presence of God, that he must not, and dare not, act upon the Papal injunction, he is bound to obey it, and would commit a great sin in disobeying it. *Primā facie* it is his bounden duty, even from a sentiment of loyalty, to believe the Pope right and to act accordingly. . . . He must vanquish that mean, ungenerous, selfish, vulgar spirit of his nature,

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<sup>90</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 432.

which, at the very first rumour of a command, places itself in opposition to the Superior who gives it, asks itself whether he is not exceeding his right, and rejoices, in a moral and practical matter, to commence with skepticism.<sup>91</sup>

What then—according to Newman now rightly understood—is the proper relationship between theonomic conscience and the magisterium of the Catholic Church?

It is by now sufficiently obvious that Newman holds that there are two very different vicars of the one Christ who is the eternal Word of God through whom the world was created, who became incarnate, who was “handed over to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification” (Rom 4:25).

As to the first vicar of Christ: the Word of God issues the spark of conscience, *synderesis*, the origin of the light that illumines reason by providing the natural *habitus* of the first principles of moral truth. Thomas rather tersely identifies the office of *synderesis* as “inciting to good and murmuring at evil” (*ST I*, q. 79, a. 12, resp.). Newman is pointing to no other reality at all when with characteristic rhetorical force he states: “Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ, a prophet in its informations, a monarch in its peremptoriness, a priest in its blessings and anathemas.”<sup>92</sup> As already discussed above, Newman offers here an explicit theological identification of the theonomic root of conscience, indeed a quite explicit Christological allusion to the threefold office of Christ as prophet, king, and priest. But *nota bene*: this theological identification is not to be confused with the phenomenological description of the mode in which this theonomic root of conscience is present in human reason.

The second vicar of Christ is, obviously, the historical vicar, the pope. Either directly through his ordinary magisterium or indirectly through the universal magisterium of the bishops in union with him, the pope informs, educates, instructs, and sharpens conscience. Newman rightly emphasizes an obvious, but often forgotten truth. The pope’s instruction presupposes the reality of conscience—without the reality of con-

<sup>91</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 454–55; *Difficulties*, 257–58.

<sup>92</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 449; *Difficulties*, 248–49.



science, the pope's instruction could not be properly received. Newman drives home the point:

Did the Pope speak against Conscience in the true sense of the word, he would commit a suicidal act. He would be cutting the ground from under his feet. His very mission is to proclaim the moral law, and to protect and strengthen that "Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." On the law of conscience and its sacredness are founded both his authority in theory and his power in fact. . . . [I]t is by the *universal sense of right and wrong*, the consciousness of transgression, the pangs of guilt, and the dread of retribution, as *first principles* deeply lodged in the hearts of men, it is thus and only thus, that [the Pope] has gained his footing in the world and achieved his success.<sup>93</sup>

At the same time, conscience needs the pope's protection from being muted or repressed by its counterfeit, the sovereign rule of self-will. Newman states:

It is [the Pope's] claim to come from the Divine Lawgiver, in order to elicit, protect, and enforce those truths which the Lawgiver has sown in our very nature, it is this and this only that is the explanation of his length of life more than antediluvian. The championship of the Moral Law and of conscience is [the Pope's] *raison d'être*. The fact of his mission is the answer to the complaints of those who feel the insufficiency of the natural light; and the insufficiency of that light is the justification of his mission.<sup>94</sup>

Newman is keenly aware that while *synderesis* will eventually always break through with its own interior evidence, this echo of the divine voice can nevertheless be all too easily ignored, muted, or distorted such that the judgments of conscience become erroneous:

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<sup>93</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 451–52 (my emphasis); *Difficulties*, 252–53.

<sup>94</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 452; *Difficulties*, 253.

The sense of right and wrong . . . is so delicate, so fitful, so easily puzzled, obscured, perverted, so subtle in its argumentative methods, so impressible by education, so biassed by pride and passion, so unsteady in its course that, in the struggle for existence amid the various exercises and triumphs of the human intellect, this sense is at once the highest of all teachers, yet the least luminous; and the Church, the Pope, the Hierarchy are, in the Divine purpose, the supply of an urgent demand.<sup>95</sup>

Newman's view is consonant with Thomas's teaching. If the secondary precepts of the natural law are "blotted out from the human heart," the sense of right and wrong can be seriously obscured or perverted. In *ST I-II*, q. 94, a. 6, Thomas explicitly addresses the question of whether the law of nature can be abolished from the heart of man. His response is unequivocal:

There belong to the natural law, first, certain most general precepts, that are known to all; and secondly, certain secondary and more detailed precepts, which are, as it were, conclusions following closely from first principles. As to those general principles, the natural law, in the abstract, can nowise be blotted out from men's hearts. But it is blotted out in the case of a particular action, in so far as reason is hindered from applying the general principle to a particular point of practice, on account of concupiscence or some other passion, as stated above [*ST I-II*, q. 77, a. 2]—But as to the other, i.e., the secondary precepts, the natural law can be blotted out from the human heart, either by evil persuasions, just as in speculative matters errors occur in respect of necessary conclusions; or by vicious customs and corrupt habits, as among some men, theft, and even unnatural vices, as the Apostle states (Rom 1), were not esteemed sinful. (*ST I-II*, q. 94, a. 6, resp.)

The Church's mission through the universal magisterium of the bishops and especially through the ordinary magisterium of the pope is nothing

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<sup>95</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 452; *Difficulties*, 253–54.

but to support and strengthen the divine spark of conscience, *synderesis*, by reaffirming explicitly the first principles of moral action, and to form the conscience by making explicit the precepts of the natural law—the general as well as the more detailed principles—and by confirming and extending them through the catechesis of the divine law.<sup>96</sup>

And so it is indeed the case, as McNerny states, that “St. Thomas would . . . agree with the order of precedence in Newman’s toasts: first to conscience, then to the pope, since this means, God first, then the pope.”<sup>97</sup> For Newman’s sequence presupposes the theonomic constitution of conscience to obtain and not, as all too many have wrongly assumed, its very counterfeit, the sovereign rule of self-will. Consider once more Newman’s formulation, but remember that for Newman the notion of “religion” is virtually identical with the notion of “theonomy,” for religion is all about the knowledge of and the obedience to the holy will of God: “If I am obliged to bring religion into after-dinner toasts . . . I shall drink—to the Pope, if you please,—still, to Conscience first, and to the Pope afterwards.”<sup>98</sup>

In his encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope John Paul II explicitly affirms the sequence of conscience and magisterium as argued by Newman:

The authority of the Church, when she pronounces on moral

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<sup>96</sup> Regarding the Church’s competence to interpret and apply the natural law, and thereby to instruct the theonomic conscience not only of Catholics but of all persons of good will, Pope Pius XII stated unambiguously: “The power of the Church is not bound by the limits of ‘matters strictly religious,’ as they say, but the whole matter of the natural law, its foundation, its interpretation, its application, so far as their moral aspects extend, are within the Church’s power. For the keeping of the natural law, by God’s appointment, has reference to the road by which man has to approach his supernatural end. But, on this road, the Church is man’s guide and guardian in what concerns his supreme end” (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 46 [1954]: 671–72; trans. J. R. Lech, “Teaching Authority of the Church,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 13 [1967]: 964).

<sup>97</sup> McNerny, “Conscience and the Object,” 106.

<sup>98</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 457; *Difficulties*, 261. For Newman’s understanding of “religion,” consider his poignant statement in the second of his famous University Sermons, “The Influence of Natural and Revealed Religion Respectively”: “What is Religion but the system of relations existing between us and a Supreme Power, claiming our habitual obedience” (John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford between A.D. 1826 and 1843*, introduction by Mary Katherine Tillman [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997], 19).

questions, in no way undermines the freedom of conscience of Christians. This is so not only because freedom of conscience is never freedom “from” the truth but always and only freedom “in” the truth, but also because the Magisterium does not bring to the Christian conscience truths which are extraneous to it; rather, it brings to light the truths which it ought already to possess, developing them from the starting point of the primordial act of faith. The Church puts herself always and only at the *service of conscience*, helping it to avoid being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine proposed by human deceit (cf. *Eph* 4:14), and helping it not to swerve from the truth about the good of man, but rather, especially in more difficult questions, to attain the truth with certainty and to abide in it. (§64)

Because conscience truly so called is theonomic in nature, the freedom of conscience can only be a freedom in the truth. Rather than being a negative freedom bent on safeguarding sovereign self-determination, the freedom in the truth is positive freedom that—enlightened by the spark of *synderesis*—is realized in seeking the due moral good. The formation of conscience by way of the magisterium serves and facilitates the realization of positive freedom.

**Freedom of Conscience as Freedom in the Truth:  
How Is It Achieved and How Is It Sustained  
under the Public Rule of Its Counterfeit?**

The natural *habitus* of *synderesis* is an active potency, innate and determined, that requires activation by way of practical reason’s concrete judgment (*con-scientia*) and operative realization by way of prudence’s order (*praeceptum*). The positive freedom characteristic of theonomic conscience always seeks its ongoing formation by way of counsel and instruction. Characteristic of theonomic conscience is the interior forum that gives rise to the inner dialogue of the human being with him- or herself, an inner dialogue that is open—and indeed ordered—to the interior dialogue between the human person and God—who is not only the author of the law but also the Triune one in whose image the hu-

man being is created and who is the final end of the human being.<sup>99</sup> As Pinckaers observes, conscience truly so called

makes judgments in the presence of God by listening to his sovereign voice . . . [and] lets itself be judged by God and guided by his law through a fruitful, open, and intelligent obedience. One sign that helps us distinguish true from false is certainly that true conscience always presents a challenge, like the steep and narrow way of the Gospel that stands in stark contrast to the broad and easy way that leads to eternal sorrow. At the same time, true conscience gives those who follow it a peace and joy that no external thing can trouble, while false conscience without fail provokes doubt and division, compromise and confusion.<sup>100</sup>

The counterfeit of conscience is indeed nothing but one particularly subtle and powerful instantiation of a false conscience—it is a false conscience in the very the state of self-justification as good conscience. As Pinckaers rightly points out, a false conscience has distinctive characteristics, and so does the counterfeit of conscience. Wherever an appeal to the freedom of conscience functions as a conversation stopper and very often as an emotionally charged last resort that brings any inquiry into the grounds for judgments made and actions done to an immediate halt, there is a strong indication that we are dealing with the counterfeit of conscience. This simulacrum camouflages the dictates of the sovereign self-determination that has no other reasons to offer than its own *de facto* positing of a decision: theonomic conscience engenders judgments; the counterfeit of conscience posits decisions.<sup>101</sup> The counterfeit of conscience betrays itself in its eagerness of appealing rhetorically to the primacy of conscience precisely in order to protect the sovereignty

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<sup>99</sup> “The importance of this interior *dialogue of man with himself* can never be adequately appreciated. But it is also a *dialogue of man with God*, the author of the law, the primordial image and final end of man” (Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, §58).

<sup>100</sup> Pinckaers, *Morality*, 57.

<sup>101</sup> Decisionism in modern moral and legal philosophy rests on the assumption that neither God nor law (in the sense of natural law participating in the eternal law) exists. Differently put, there seems to obtain a direct correlation in philosophical ethics between the theoretical dismissal of theonomic conscience and the ascendancy of decisionism.

of one's self-determination from the challenges of the interior dialogue and from the probings of exterior moral interrogation.<sup>102</sup>

The inner dialogue occurring in the interior forum of the human being is, however, a proprium of mature personhood. Anamnestic witness, prospective exhortation, and retrospective evaluation (accusatory or excusatory) are essential aspects of this inner dialogue. This dialogue can indeed be repressed or avoided thanks to the stratagems of the self-will but only at the cost of diminishing one's own personhood and of foregoing the positive freedom that is realized when the theonomic conscience is properly formed and heeded.<sup>103</sup>

What if the negative freedom of the counterfeit of conscience becomes dominant in a culture—by way of force, law, custom, or prejudice? The sovereign rule of self-will and the concomitant appeal to the coun-

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<sup>102</sup>The very flight from theonomic conscience is therefore perfectly compatible with the surprisingly frequent rhetorical appeal in the public life of secularist democratic régimes to conscience, that is, of course, to the counterfeit of conscience.

<sup>103</sup>Thoughtlessness, distraction, negligence, indifference, or subjection to strong passions (fear, lust, hatred) might be proximate causes for avoiding the interior forum and thus muting the inner dialogue. Such consistent muting of the interior dialogue amounts to a culpable self-debasement, a rejection of the *synderistic* root of one's human dignity. In her haunting book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Hannah Arendt encounters this phenomenon in Eichmann and calls it "thoughtlessness." (*Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, rev. and enlarged ed. [New York: Penguin, 1977, 287–88]). Thomas identifies thoughtlessness (*inconsideratio*) as a special sin included in the vice of imprudence (*ST* II-II, q. 53, a. 4). For Aquinas as well as Arendt, thoughtlessness does not name a psychological or epistemological defect, but rather a profound moral problem. The counterfeit of conscience is so pernicious because by muting the inner dialogue it engenders thoughtlessness. In contemporary secularist democratic régimes, there is a dangerous self-congratulatory complacency abroad caused by the erroneous conviction that such thoughtlessness has disappeared together with the totalitarian régimes of the last century. One can make, however, a reasonable case that, on the contrary, since then such thoughtlessness has become more widespread. Such a case can be, at least indirectly, supported by Neil Postman's far from outdated book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin, 1985). Life on the Internet, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Netflix hardly encourages attending to the interior forum and the inner dialogue. With few exceptions, a life immersed in superficiality and distraction in cyberspace inculcates routines and habits that are the ideal breeding ground for thoughtlessness. The exercise of theonomic conscience, on the contrary, requires mindfulness, empathy, and moments of interior and exterior silence necessary for recollection, which is a prerequisite for the examination of conscience, truly so called.

terfeit of conscience might even become concentrated in a dominant political party or symbolically represented in a political leader. To those who grew up in the second half of the twentieth century, Nazism and Communism have taught an important lesson: deny the reality of theonomic conscience, discourage, ridicule, and even attempt to suppress its proper and rightful exercise, and the outcome is a system of moral and political barbarity. *Nota bene*: democratic régimes are not per se immune to this danger. If democratic régimes embrace as publicly normative a materialist or naturalist secularism and a concomitant moral and legal decisionism and are bent on imposing this ideology upon the body politic, such secularist democratic régimes are prone to produce their own subtle and refined versions of barbarity—versions albeit devoid of the cynical cruelty typical of totalitarian regimes. Already in 1991, in his encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II expressed a warning that has become only more urgent: “Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. . . . As history demonstrates, a democracy without values turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.”<sup>104</sup> Remove normatively the supposition of the theonomic conscience, as is characteristic for ideological secularism, and the inherent dignity of the human person from birth to natural death becomes unintelligible and the reliable and objective perception of the “standard of ethical truth”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Centesimus Annus*, §46. Because of its striking relevance, it is worth recounting the passage from *Centesimus Annus* in full: “Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the ‘subjectivity’ of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility. Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and sceptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideals and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism” (Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, §46).

<sup>105</sup> Newman, *Conscience*, 447; *Difficulties*, 246.

inconceivable. Pope John Paul II articulated this looming consequence with great clarity in his 1995 encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae*:

When freedom, out of a desire to emancipate itself from all forms of tradition and authority, shuts out even the most obvious evidence of an objective and universal truth, which is the foundation of personal and social life, then the person ends up by no longer taking as the sole and indisputable point of reference for his own choices the truth about good and evil, but only his subjective and changeable opinion or, indeed his selfish interest or whim. (§19)

This flight from theonomic conscience does not remain without dire political consequences, consequences that become increasingly tangible in the political and social life of Western secularist democratic régimes. Pope John Paul II clearly names the causes for the subtle but pervasive disease and misery characteristic of the day-to-day life in contemporary affluent secular societies in the Western Hemisphere:

This view of freedom leads to a serious distortion of life in society. If the promotion of the self is understood in terms of absolute autonomy, people inevitably reach the point of rejecting one another. Everyone else is considered an enemy from whom one has to defend oneself. Thus society becomes a mass of individuals placed side by side, but without any mutual bonds. Each one wishes to assert himself independently of the other and in fact intends to make his own interests prevail. Still, in the face of other people's analogous interests, some kind of compromise must be found, if one wants a society in which the maximum possible freedom is guaranteed to each individual. In this way, any reference to common values and to a truth absolutely binding to everyone is lost, and social life ventures on to the shifting sands of complete relativism. At that point, everything is negotiable, everything is open to bargaining: even the first of the fundamental rights, the right to life (§20).

Not so very long ago it was, of course, quite obvious to every person with a well-formed theonomic conscience that the government of a



body politic, in which the laws of the state have a constitutional and de facto correlation to the “rule of ethical truth” as reflected in the natural law, cannot be expected legally to exempt individual appeals to conscience that serve as warrants for breaking the law.<sup>106</sup> A murderer is to be punished by law whether he or she appeals for the crime to conscience or not. But that same person with a well-formed theonomic conscience might now ask: What if the laws of an explicitly and consistently secularist democratic régime become—suddenly or incrementally—unmoored from the natural law and the “rule of ethical truth” and come to encode nothing but the arbitrary will of varying political majorities and their particular predilections—predilections that blatantly contradict the moral law and bear witness to a flight from theonomic conscience and to the identification of the common good with the contingent interests of whatever constitutes a statistical majority in opinion polls? Again, in *Evangelium Vitae* Pope John Paul II foresaw the political consequences entailed in the flight from theonomic conscience, consequences that since then have become quite tangible in the dominant political reality of the Western Hemisphere:

When the sense of God is lost, there is also a tendency to lose the sense of man, of his dignity and his life; in turn, the systematic violation of the moral law, especially in the serious matter of respect for human life and its dignity, produces a kind of progressive darkening of the capacity to discern God’s living and saving presence. (§21)

Is it completely unthinkable that the United Nations might eventually give in to the political pressure of strictly secularist democratic

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<sup>106</sup>G. W. F. Hegel puts this matter with great clarity, and alongside offers his own way of distinguishing clearly between conscience truly so called and its counterfeit. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), 91 (§137): “What is right and obligatory is the absolutely rational element in the will’s volitions and therefore it is not in essence the particular property of an individual, and its form is not that of feeling or any other private (i.e. sensuous) type of knowing, but essentially that of universals determined by thought, i.e. the form of laws and principles. Conscience is therefore subject to the judgement of its truth or falsity, and when it appeals only to itself for a decision, it is directly at variance with what it wishes to be, namely the rule for a mode of conduct which is rational, absolutely valid, and universal. For this reason, the state cannot give recognition to conscience in its private form as subjective knowing.”

régimes and attempt to impose upon the Catholic Church laws unmoored from the natural law and in contradiction to the revealed law and make canon law comply with such laws?

It seems that if a secularist democratic régime—unmoored from the natural law and the moral order—should impose laws in the service of the counterfeit of conscience that compel individuals and institutions to cooperate with grave systemic moral evil, such laws will unmask the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religious exercise, so-called, as nothing but an arbitrary function of the régime's institutionalized collective subjectivity severed from the "rule of ethical truth"<sup>107</sup> and policed by the régime's legal machinery.

In such a situation it might be unavoidable and indeed timely to reconsider in all seriousness a position of Thomas Aquinas—summarized by legal theorists with the pithy phrase *lex iniusta non est lex*—that takes on a new and surprising relevance in our day. I shall only point to the two interconnected instances in Thomas's teaching on human law where he formulates this position in rather uncompromising terms. First, in *ST* I-II, q. 95, a. 2, Thomas raises the question whether every human law is derived from the natural law and answers in the affirmative: human law is derived from the natural law either as a conclusion from principles or as a determination of certain generalities. Then Thomas concludes that "if in any point human law departs from natural law, it is no longer a law but a perversion of the law" (*ST* I-II, q. 95, a. 2, resp.; my translation). For in such a case it ceases to be an ordinance of reason ordained to the common good. Subsequently, in *ST* I-II, q. 96, a. 4, Thomas addresses the question whether human law binds a person necessarily in the forum of conscience (*in foro conscientiae*). In the *sed contra*, Thomas quotes the Vulgate rendition of 1 Peter 2:19 that in translation reads "It is worthy of thanks if, because of his conscience, someone endures sorrows, suffering wrongfully." In his response Thomas states that

laws may be unjust in two ways: first, by being contrary to human good . . . —either in respect of the end, as when an authority imposes on his subjects burdensome laws, conducive,

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<sup>107</sup>Newman, *Conscience*, 447; *Difficulties*, 246.

not to the common good, but rather to his own cupidity and vainglory—or in respect of the author, as when a man makes a law that goes beyond the power committed to him—or in respect of the form, as when burdens are imposed unequally on the community, although with a view to the common good. The like are acts of violence rather than laws; because, as Augustine says (*De Lib. Arb.* I.5), *a law that is not just, seems to be no law at all*. Wherefore such laws do not bind in conscience, except perhaps in order to avoid scandal or disturbance, for which cause a man should even yield his right, according to Mt 5:40,41: *If a man . . . take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him; and whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two*. Secondly, laws may be unjust through being opposed to the Divine good: such are the laws of tyrants inducing to idolatry, or to anything else contrary to the Divine law: and laws of this kind must nowise be observed, because, as stated in Acts 5:29, *we ought to obey God rather than men*.<sup>108</sup>

Laws promulgated by secularist democratic régimes in service of the counterfeit of conscience may fall under Thomas's first rubric being contrary to the human good (especially pertaining to the authority of the lawgivers extending beyond the power committed to them) and under the second rubric, being contrary to the divine law. Remember, the divine law, according to Thomas, comprises the revealed aspects of the eternal law that include in the Decalogue a revealed summary of the natural law principles in their proximate conclusions (*ST* I-II, q. 100, a. 3, resp.) and that serve as the indispensable guide to the supernatural final end of the human person (*ST* I-II, q. 91, aa. 4 and 5; qq. 98–108). Most pertinent to the present discussion is one of Thomas's arguments for the need of the divine law:

Because, on account of the uncertainty of human judgment, especially on contingent and particular matters, different people form different judgments on human acts; whence also different and contrary laws result. In order, therefore, that man may

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<sup>108</sup>*ST* I-II, q. 96, a. 4, resp. For a brief discussion of the important principle *lex iniusta non est lex*, see Appendix 6.

know without doubt what he ought to do and what he ought to avoid, it was necessary for man to be directed in his proper acts by a law given by God, for it is certain that such a law cannot err. (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 4, resp.)

A conscience that is illumined by divine faith<sup>109</sup> and rightly formed will always be docile to the divine law as interpreted by the ordinary magisterium and follow the fundamental principle enunciated in Acts 5:29: “We must obey God rather than men” (RSV). For a fitting illustration it is apposite to close the circle and return to one of Newman’s hypothetical cases from the beginning: “Suppose, for instance, an Act was passed in Parliament, bidding Catholics to attend Protestant service every week, and the Pope distinctly told us not to do so, for it was to violate our duty to our faith—I should obey the Pope and not the Law.”<sup>110</sup>

The full import of the contemporary analogical case seems to be by now obvious. Suppose a contemporary secularist democratic régime in the Western Hemisphere were to promulgate laws that would require Catholics—by complying with these laws—to violate their duty to the faith and morals as taught by the Catholic Church and put themselves into the proximity of grave systemic moral evil or make themselves even cooperate with such grave moral evil. And let us assume that the pope together with the Catholic bishops of such a country had spoken out in unison against such laws. Newman’s answer to this unfortunately less than hypothetical case is clear: “I should obey the Pope and not the Law.”<sup>111</sup>

Laws promulgated by secularist democratic régimes that are unmoored from the natural law and the moral order do not have the power to extinguish the spark of *synderesis*; nor do they have the power to suppress the judgments of a properly formed theonomic conscience. But such laws do indeed have the power to inflict grave damage on the

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<sup>109</sup>“Faith, which through assent unites [the human being] to divine knowledge, has God as its principal object, and anything else as a consequent addition” (*De veritate*, q. 14, a. 8, resp.). When in divine faith God engages the human intellect and thus becomes its “object,” God engages the intellect as first truth, who reveals himself in the Person of the Word—Scripture and Tradition constituting “one single deposit of the Word of God,” as *Dei Verbum* 10 teaches.

<sup>110</sup>Newman, *Conscience*, 444; *Difficulties*, 240.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*

body politic—unmooring it ever more thoroughly from the “rule of ethical truth.”<sup>112</sup>

In the face of the sovereign secularism zealously promoted by not a few democratic régimes in the Western Hemisphere today, the Catholic Church’s perennial proximate political vocation as the teacher of conscience becomes ever more urgent—and simultaneously ever more difficult. Through instruction in and public witness to the divine law and through public argumentation based on the precepts of the natural law, she forms conscience and thereby begins to remove the dullness of practical reason consequent upon sin.<sup>113</sup>

In whatever political community the negative freedom of the counterfeit of conscience has become dominant in the past and will again become dominant in the future—by way of force, law, custom, or prejudice—the Church has suffered and will suffer again milder or graver forms of discrimination and even persecution. At the same time, as it happened in the past, the positive freedom of theonomic conscience in the truth—the splendor of the dignity of the human being, created in God’s image—will be defended by acts of witness that in their heroic extreme are traditionally called—martyrdom.<sup>114</sup>

### Appendix 1

John Calvin’s teaching on conscience as the internal witness of both the existence of God and the law of God is very clear, a teaching echoed by Newman’s early pre-1845 reflections on conscience that were most likely influenced by the Calvinist strand of his early evangelical phase. In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin regards conscience as an interior awareness of a divine judgment that engenders (1) the sense of divinity and (2) the distinction between good and evil. According to Cal-

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<sup>112</sup>Newman, *Conscience*, 447; *Difficulties*, 246.

<sup>113</sup>This sentence I borrowed from my “Democracy after Christendom—Sovereign Secularism, Genuine Liberalism, and the Natural Love of God,” in *Dust Bound for Heaven: Explorations in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), chap. 4, 124.

<sup>114</sup>Pope John Paul II states the matter as clearly as one can wish in *Veritatis Splendor* §92: “Martyrdom, accepted as an affirmation of the inviolability of the moral order, bears splendid witness both to the holiness of God’s law and to the inviolability of the personal dignity of man, created in God’s image and likeness.”

vin (and pace Karl Barth's questionable interpretation of Calvin on this matter), every human has a knowledge of the natural law and also the capacity and responsibility to judge whether human laws correspond to the natural law. (See *Inst.* II. ii. 13; 16; 22; 24. For this reading of Calvin, I rely on the extensive treatment of conscience in Günter Gloede's classic study, *Theologia naturalis bei Calvin* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1935], 103–331, and therefore take sides in what seems to be an interminable controversy. For an instructive summary of this intense intra-Calvinist controversy stretching over the twentieth century about the proper interpretation of Calvin's understanding of conscience and the natural law, see William Klempa, "John Calvin on Natural Law," in *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. Timothy George [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990]: 72–95.) On the Lutheran side of things, matters were a bit more complicated. After initially adopting the concepts of *synderesis* and *conscientia* in the scholastic sense (for example in his 1513–15 *Dictata* on the Psalms and in his 1515–16 *Romans lectures*), in the period of 1517–19, Martin Luther discarded *synderesis* completely from his conception of conscience. For during that period and from then on, *conscientia* came to indicate exclusively the human soteriological relationship to God: *conscientia mala* captures the state of estrangement from God under the condition of sin, *conscientia fidelis* describes the new restored relationship of being reconciled with God *sola fide*. Reinterpreted in such a radical way, conscience lost its function as the indicator of the rule of moral truth. It turned into a virtually exclusive soteriological indicator of the human's primordial relationship to God, either convicted by the law (which God gave to humanity not to be followed but rather solely in order to unmask humanity's sinfulness and drive humanity to the Christ) or justified by faith alone. (See *The Disputation against Scholastic Theology*, WA 1, 372, 34ff; *Large Catechism*, part III, 5th petition; *Lectures on Galatians* 1531, WA 40/1, 73–74.) Melanchthon saw this exclusively theological understanding of conscience as a problem and reintroduced the concept of *synderesis* into the notion of conscience as the relationship to God determined by justifying faith (or the lack thereof). (See his 1540 *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*.) Under the salutary influence of Melanchthon, the Lutheran scholastic theologian Georg Calixt (1586–1656) finally returned to the Thomistic distinction of *synderesis* and *conscientia* (*Epitome theologiae*

*moralis* [1634]). The anti-Melanchthonian Gnesio-Lutherans and the Lutherans of the early twentieth-century Luther Renaissance (a return to the young “existentialist” Luther combined with elements of early dialectical theology) continued to insist on an exclusively theological understanding of conscience—with the predictable consequence of modern Lutheran ethics (with only few notable exceptions) vacillating between, on the one side, the positivism of the “orders of preservation” of human existence under the condition of sin and, on the other side, the antinomianism of an “agape-consequentialism.”

## Appendix 2

If one gets clear on Thomas’s understanding of *synderesis* as a natural *habitus*, there is no need in the contemporary consideration of conscience to replace the admittedly *prima facie* unfamiliar technical term of *synderesis* with the by now equally unfamiliar concept of *anamnesis*, as then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger proposed in a very instructive essay on conscience. (Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *On Conscience* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007], 11–41; here 30–36.) While I regard the overall thrust of this important essay as crucial and of ongoing relevance, I fail to be persuaded by the proposal of replacing *synderesis* with *anamnesis*. I think this matter may be discussed in all due respect to then-Cardinal Ratzinger and now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. Since *anamnesis* is the suggested replacement term of *synderesis*, then-Cardinal Ratzinger seems to understand *anamnesis* to pertain to the ontological level of conscience. On the ontological level, *anamnesis* can only be an innate *habitus* (and hence identical with *synderesis*) or an innate act (*actus*).

Let us consider first the option of understanding *anamnesis* as an innate *actus*. This *actus* would need to be conceived as continuous, as an ongoing interior illumination of the human agent with the first principle and the first precept. Consequently, *anamnesis* would not stand in need of any further reduction to act and would therefore make the interior judgment of *conscientia* superfluous. The virtue of prudence (with its two acts of counsel and command) would suffice to account for the proper realization of the continuous innate *actus* of *anamnesis* in the fitting specific exterior act. According to this construal, there might be

either an imprudent realization the interior illumination of *anamnesis* affords in the exterior act or worse a vicious rejection of the interior illumination by the will (presupposing a strong dichotomy between intellect and will). However, on the supposition that *anamnesis* is an innate *actus* on the ontological level, there could never be an erring conscience, that is, a conscience that is subjectively good but objectively wrong. Because illumination and error are mutually exclusive, the will becomes the fulcrum of “decision” (n.b. decision and not judgment) either to follow the light that *anamnesis* constantly sheds into the intellect or to turn against it. For these reasons the option of understanding *anamnesis* as an innate *actus* seems unsustainable. Indeed, then-Cardinal Ratzinger does not seem to support this first option either in its full implications. Hence the second option, construing *anamnesis* as an innate *habitus*, seems to be preferable.

Let us therefore turn to a brief consideration of this option. As already mentioned above, its central advantage is that it allows a conceptual account of the erroneous conscience. For in order to maintain the concept of the erring conscience one must uphold, on the one hand, the distinction between (1) the *habitus* of the first principle and the first precept and (2) the interior actualization of a concrete judgment (*conscientia*) and, on the other hand, the distinction between (3) the interior act of judgment and (4) the exercise of the virtue of prudence, which always has its term in an exterior act. Consequently, in order to avoid the problem of the impossibility to conceptualize the erroneous conscience, one would have to construe *anamnesis* not as *actus*, as illumination, but as *habitus*. But in this case *anamnesis* becomes conceptually indistinguishable from *synderesis*. The only remaining question then would be which word would be preferable for pragmatic, prudential, or pedagogical reasons to signify the innate *habitus* of the first principle and precept of practical reason. If one is committed to maintaining the distinction between a natural *habitus* on the ontological level of conscience (*synderesis*) and its reduction to act (*conscientia*), as then-Cardinal Ratzinger himself seems to suggest (37), the introduction of the concept of *anamnesis* might in the end only complicate the fundamental distinction between the *habitus* and its actualization. In light of the potential misunderstanding of *anamnesis* as an innate *actus*, it seems preferable to stay with the initially unfamiliar, but received technical term *synderesis*.



The proposal to adopt *anamnesis* instead seems to open the way to misunderstandings that could undercut the possibility to account conceptually for the erroneous conscience.

### Appendix 3

Immanuel Kant, arguably under the ongoing influence of his early Pietist upbringing, offers a striking account of the interior forum:

Consciousness of an *internal court* in man (“before which his thoughts accuse or excuse one another”) is *conscience*. Every human being has a conscience and finds himself observed, threatened, and, in general, kept in awe (respect coupled with fear) by an internal judge; and this authority watching over the law in him is not something that he himself (voluntarily) *makes*, but something incorporated in his being. It follows him like his shadow when he plans to escape. He can indeed stun himself or put himself to sleep by pleasures and distractions, but he cannot help coming to himself or waking up from time to time; and when he does, he hears at once its fearful voice. He can at most, in extreme depravity, bring himself to *heed* it no longer, but he still cannot help hearing it. (*The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregory [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 189).

But Kant passes over *synderesis* and consequently ends up with a dangerously unmoored interior forum. He is aware of this problem, of the necessity of a “doubled self” that if not resolved would lead to the collapse of the interior forum and consequently to the infallible decision of the counterfeit of conscience. Hence Kant postulates:

For all duties a human being’s conscience will, accordingly, have to think of *someone other* than himself (i.e., other than the human being as such) as the judge of his actions, if conscience is not to be in contradiction with itself. This other may be an actual person or a merely ideal person that reason creates for itself. (*Metaphysics of Morals*, 189)

Rather unsurprisingly, there are some necessary qualities that must be postulated about such an ideal person. And consequently,

since such a moral being must also have all power (in heaven and on earth) in order to give effect to his laws (as is necessarily required for the office of judge), and since such an omnipotent moral being is called *God*, conscience must be thought of as the subjective principle of being accountable to God for all one's deeds. In fact the latter concept is always contained (even if only in an obscure way) in the moral self-awareness of conscience. (*Metaphysics of Morals*, 190)

Kant's *phenomenological* description of theonomic conscience is of surprising accuracy and echoes the traditional Christian accounts that can be found in the preceding century in the Catholic Suárez and in the Lutheran Calixt. However, in his *theoretical* account of conscience, Kant replaces *synderesis* with the God-postulate, a move fully consistent with his destruction of the deity of rationalist ontotheology in his *Critique of Pure Reason* and the return of the shadow of the self-same deity as a postulate of practical reason in his *Critique of Practical Reason*. It would however, not take long after Kant until Nietzsche would regard the deity of the postulate as a willful pretense of the self, an intentional construal that camouflages the fact that the "doubled self" is a fiction created by those who flee the theonomic conscience.

#### Appendix 4

Relatively late in his life, Karl Rahner, published a brief, but programmatic, and therefore influential essay on conscience. The article appeared originally under the title "Vom irrenden Gewissen," *Orientierung* 48 (1983) 246B–250A, and was reprinted one year later under the title "Vom Gewissen: Gedanken über Freiheit und Würde menschlicher Entscheidung," in volume 16 of Karl Rahner's *Schriften zur Theologie* (Zurich: Benziger, 1984), 11–25, a volume edited by Paul Imhof, S.J. Only seven years later did the essay appear in English. (N.b. While very readable, the English translation flattens a delicate three-dimensional and conceptually sophisticated text into a two-dimensional user-friend-

ly English. It abandons much of the precise terminology Rahner uses in the German and seems to be driven by an all too transparent agenda of ever so slightly simplifying and thereby radicalizing Rahner's quite nuanced position. See "Conscience: Freedom and the Dignity of Human Decision," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 22, *Humane Society and the Church of Tomorrow*, trans. Joseph Donceel, S.J. [New York: Crossroad, 1991], 3–13.). For Thomas as well as Newman, conscience signifies the primordial constitution of the human soul in the truth (ontologically as well as epistemologically) by way of the interior presence of the first principles of theoretical as well as practical truth. Truth thus gives rise to freedom, which in turn roots in the truth. In the center of Rahner's construal, on the contrary, stands the transcendental constitution of the human subject as an essentially free spirit oriented to God. Conscience signifies the subject's transcendental experience of freedom and responsibility in relation to God. Consequently, according to Rahner, theonomy is realized by way of autonomy. Conscience is fundamentally the self-awareness of transcendental subjectivity arising from the experience of being handed over to oneself, the experience of a primordial freedom and responsibility that *qua* creatureliness is essentially, though unthematically, oriented to the theonomic truth. According to this construal of transcendentalism, it is not the truth that sets free and thus constitutes freedom. Rather, it is the freedom of a primordial subjectivity of conscience that makes possible the reception of a truth to which the human spirit is oriented. The fundamental problem with this construal is that the first and constitutive moment of the human spirit is the freedom of self-possession and not the innate habitual presence of the theonomic first principle and first precept of moral truth. Rahner's conceptual prioritization of the subject's transcendental experience of freedom inverts the relationship between truth and freedom and thus creates a condition in which his construal in an ever so slightly radicalized form becomes a justification for the counterfeit of conscience. *Gaudium et Spes* does not support and *Veritatis Splendor* rejects Rahner's move to root the dignity of conscience in the transcendental experience of freedom and responsibility. His concept of transcendental subjectivity makes impossible the presence of the innate *habitus* of *synderesis*, since the latter would always antecede the self-possession of freedom, would be the truth that sets free, that, in other words, gives rise to freedom in

the truth. Absent *synderesis*, the dignity of conscience must indeed rest in the very constitution of the transcendental subject and the decisions that correspond to the transcendental experience of freedom and responsibility. The step from transcendental freedom to the counterfeit of conscience is minimal. For transcendental freedom is either somehow still aware of its creatureliness and hence its fundamental (even if unthematic) responsibility to the Creator—or transcendental freedom becomes “creative” and the dignity of the decisions it produces carry the dignity of being creatures of the self-will. For Rahner, very clearly, conscience is the unconditional call to oneself (being inescapably delivered up to oneself) and as such into radical responsibility (implicitly, at least, always in relation to God). But however one may try to salvage the matter, every decision made by such a subject is ultimately “creative,” that is, the subject’s own “creation” (of course, in radical responsibility to God). Not acting according to one’s conscience seems, according to Rahner’s construal, to be the one unforgivable sin—here Abelard echoes—because this way I would supposedly abdicate from the dignity of the transcendental freedom of personhood. But acting according to conscience, thus conceived, does not mean making judgments based on *synderesis*, but rather means making decisions that are essentially “creative,” arising from the abyss of my transcendental freedom. In radical responsibility, I offer these decisions up to God, but they are *my* decisions nevertheless. If different by intention, there seems to be a rather striking *de facto* identity between this construal of conscience as transcendental subjectivity and any philosophically sophisticated construal of the counterfeit of conscience. Without the supposition of *synderesis* and the phenomenon of the erroneous conscience (which Rahner puts radically into question), “autonomy” and “creativity” become, if not *de iure*, nevertheless *de facto* identical with “self-determination” and “sovereignty.”

### Appendix 5

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), the *spiritus rector* of subjective idealism in the Germany of the 1790s, regarded the criterion for the correctness of our convictions to be purely interior to the subjective consciousness. Fichte calls this criterion conscience. In his *System of Ethics* (1798), he states emphatically:

The present deduction has once and for all cancelled and destroyed the evasion of an *erroneous conscience* still present in most systems of ethics. Conscience never errs and is unable to err; for it is the immediate consciousness of our pure, primordial I, which no other consciousness transcends and which cannot be interrogated and corrected by another consciousness; which in and of itself is the judge of all our convictions and which does not acknowledge any higher judge over itself. It [the immediate consciousness of our pure, primordial I] decides as the ultimate authority and cannot be appealed (my translation).

Es ist durch die soeben gegebene Deduction auf immer aufgehoben und vernichtet die nach den meisten Moralsystemen noch stattfindende Ausflucht eines *irrenden Gewissens*. Das Gewissen irrt nie und kann nicht irren; denn es ist das unmittelbare Bewusstseyn unseres reinen ursprünglichen Ich, über welches kein anderes Bewusstseyn hinausgeht; das nach keinem anderen Bewusstseyn geprüft und berichtigt werden kann; das selbst Richter aller Ueberzeugungen ist, aber keinen höheren Richter über sich anerkennt. Es entscheidet in der letzten Instanz und ist inappellabel. (Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *System der Sittenlehre* [1798], *Werke IV* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971], 173–74)

In Fichte's construal we can observe a radical instantiation of the counterfeit of conscience, the "conscience" of the sovereign self-determination as conceived by a consistent subjective idealism. If the primordial I were God as absolutely different from the created, finite I, a form of *synderesis* (identical with the eternal law) would obtain. However, the primordial I being the root and origin of my transcendental subjectivity manifesting itself immediately through my consciousness, *synderesis* and *conscientia* coincide in the infallible decision the Fichtean conscience posits. The Fichtean conscience cannot be erroneous, because the rule of ethical truth coincides with the immediate consciousness of the primordial I. The interior forum—precondition for the interior dialogue—collapses into the monologuous "creative" positing of decisions by the ultimate authority, the immediate consciousness of the

primordial I, which is identical with the standard of moral truth. The pure primordial I, in its concrete existence, is finite, but in its essential activity is infinite—an infinite longing of the will that is the very root of the primordial I. This longing is the source of the striving that is the essence of freedom, realized in the positing of the decisions of the radically autonomous, self-creating I. In Fichte's construal we can observe a radical instantiation of the counterfeit of conscience, the "conscience" of the sovereign self-determination as conceived by a consistent subjective idealism.

### Appendix 6

Norman Kretzmann offers an instructive analysis of the complex issue condensed in the principle *lex iniusta non est lex*. ("LEX INIUSTA NON EST LEX: Laws on Trial in Aquinas' 'Court of Conscience,'" *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 33 [1988]: 99–122). The only authority Thomas quotes (and in a subtle way generalizes) in order to back his position is Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* I, 5 (ML 32, 1227). Kretzmann points out that there are, however, earlier important representatives of Thomas's position: Plato, *Laws* IV (715B; 712E–713A) and *Statesman* (293D–E); Aristotle, *Politics* III, 6 (1282/b12–13) and IV, 4 (1292a31–34); and Cicero, *De legibus* II, v, 11. As Kretzmann rightly observes, Thomas has in mind a "conscientious conscientious objection" based on a properly formed conscience, which for a Catholic will always entail a genuine docility to the guidance that the ordinary magisterium provides. There is indeed the danger that the counterfeit of conscience takes the moral high ground in form of a counterfeit moral revivalism that in the name of a higher subjectivist morality takes exception to specific or all laws. Allan Bloom describes this danger aptly:

Conscience, a faculty thoroughly discredited in modern political and moral thought and particularly despised by Marx, made a great comeback, as the all purpose ungrounded ground of moral determination, sufficient at its slightest rumbling to discredit all other obligations or loyalties. (*Closing of the American Mind*, 326)

To put this particular phenomenon of a quasi “charismatic moral decisionism” to the side, a body politic in which theonomic conscience is respected has always the option to acknowledge legally certain forms of conscientious objection, normally based on the principle of the freedom of religious practice. However, in recent years secularist democratic régimes in the Western Hemisphere have tended to ignore the principle of the freedom of religious practice in favor of privileging the full legal protection of the subjectivist counterfeit of conscience and its sovereign self-affirmation. **N&V**





## The Beauty of the Cross in Augustine's Aesthetics\*

DAVID LYLE JEFFREY

*Baylor University*

*Waco, TX*

WHILE AUGUSTINE has been generally regarded as the foundational figure for hermeneutics and biblical exegesis in the West, his name is not so often associated with aesthetics. This is perhaps understandable, given his famous self-deprecatory remark in his *Confessions* that while he had once written a book entitled *Of Beauty and Proportion*—"in two or three volumes, I think," he says rather laconically—it was somehow lost. There is not the slightest hint of lament in this remark, and given that it forms part of Augustine's acknowledgment of his preconversion preoccupation with inferior subjects out of dubious motives,<sup>1</sup> the lost work on aesthetics can seem to be something that in his own mind he lumped together with his adolescent pranks and other misdirected pursuits of the old life.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The questions which he had attempted to pursue in the lost books, first among them the nature of the beautiful and its compelling "allure," as he calls it, are,

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<sup>1</sup> *Confessions* 4, esp. 4.13.20 through 16.31. I have used here the translation of J. G. Pilkington, corrected on occasion by the translation of F. J. Sheed, recently reedited by Michael P. Foley, *Augustine's Confessions* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2006).

following his conversion, reframed in a larger intellectual context; far from being dismissed as spiritually or philosophically unworthy, they are revalorized and made central to the meaning of his new life. In brief, the basic questions of the lost *De pulchro et apto* remain at the center of Augustine's work as a Christian theologian and philosopher. Any reflection on his aesthetics must accordingly take into account the theological and metaphysical matrix in which his aesthetic ideas, as we have them, are formulated.

Two extrinsic contexts, one ancient, the other modern, have intervened to obscure the continuing pertinence for Augustine of his early questions about the nature of corporeal beauty and its seductive allure. The oldest of these draws heavily upon the language of Neoplatonism, to which Augustine was certainly indebted, but by which he has been sometimes characterized too narrowly as a metaphysical realist or even a dualist.<sup>2</sup> More recently, the paradigmatic post-Kantian disposition in aesthetics, namely to reject metaphysics altogether, has found much of Augustine's biblical and theological language, as well as his argument, to be mere piety, a kind of mysticism. I want to suggest that each of these approaches prevents a just appreciation, and to argue (1) that Augustine is not such a strict Neoplatonist as some believe, and (2) that his metaphysical teleology is not abstracted from physical reality and bodily experience. Considered canonically, Augustine's aesthetic ideas reveal themselves to be fundamentally more Hebraic than Hellenic—which is to say, much more biblical—historically grounded and tangibly mediated than some of his apparently Neoplatonic language might on the surface seem to indicate. Thus, while metaphysical realities are obviously crucial to Augustine's overall theory of beauty, his mature ideas about the beautiful, and indeed of the nature of its allure (he uses the sensual word *allicit*, from *allicere*, “to entice”) depend absolutely upon sensible appreciation and corporeal experience. In however paradoxical a fashion, his ideas about the beauty of the Cross form the crux of his general theological aesthetics.

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<sup>2</sup> Augustine's fellow North African Albert Camus wrote a master's thesis with this emphasis (1939, University of Algiers); the major study by K. Svoboda, *L'Esthétique de saint Augustin et ses sources* (Brno: A. Píša, 1933), known to Camus, is the most important study taking this view.

### The Beautiful as an Object of Love

To return to the *Confessions* (ca. 397–401 AD), as he reflects further on the questions that prompted his lost work, we immediately encounter a word that might seem indecorous in a Neoplatonic context and a type of category mistake in a post-Kantian aesthetic: that word is love (*amor*):

I loved these lower beauties . . . and I said to my friends, “Do we love anything but the beautiful? What, then, is the beautiful? And what is beauty? What is it then that allures and unites us to the things we love, for unless there were a grace and a beauty in them, they could by no means attract us to themselves.” And I marked and perceived that in bodies themselves there was a beauty, from their forming a kind of whole, and another from mutual fittingness, one part of the body with its whole, or a shoe with a foot, and so on (*Confessions* 4.13.20, trans. Pilkington).

Augustine's strong early connection of both *pulchro et apto* with desire in the lost book is not at all lost in his subsequent Christian reflections on beauty.

A Neoplatonic rhetorical ambience in his subsequent discussions of beauty is nonetheless apparent. As Carol Harrison has observed in her landmark study, Augustine's familiarity with Plotinus in particular provided him with both a useful paradigm and a vocabulary.<sup>3</sup> Yet Plotinus's *Peri tou Kalou* (*Ennead* 1.6), I would suggest, is as important as a foil to Augustine's own thinking as it was as a prompt.<sup>4</sup> For Plotinus, Supreme Beauty is part of the transcendent order to which all earthly beauty is at best a pale simulacrum; he claims that only the soul can come to know it, and then only by rising above sense-bound experience. Harrison speculates that after the hard and dualistic materialism of the Manicheans had lost its appeal for Augustine, the transcendental

<sup>3</sup> Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), achieves much better balance and is still the best general study. See also her “An Essay in Saint Augustine's Aesthetics,” *Federación Agustiniana Española, Estudio Agustiniano* (1990): 205–15.

<sup>4</sup> Plotinus, *The Enneads*, 5 vols., ed. Stephen Mackenna (London: Medici Society, 1917–30; reprint, New York: Pantheon, 1965). For Plotinus, the One (or Good) is beyond Being; for Augustine, “God”—another name for Being—is highest.

idealism of Plotinus must have seemed a refreshing antidote, and she thinks that preference for the soul in his soul-body dialectic in the early Christian works is clearly indebted to Plotinus.<sup>5</sup>

Any such indebtedness, however, involves a less mystical notion of soul progress in Augustine than one finds in Plotinus. This is evident as early as the *De ordine* (ca. 386 AD), a work of Augustine's Cassiciacum period, in which he stresses that the soul is ordered toward its higher potential through a rigorous intellectual training in the disciplines of the liberal arts. Reason is developed through experience, in which governance by number is seen to provide the order, harmony and form we observe and confirm in the created world.<sup>6</sup> One of Augustine's most favored biblical texts supporting the thesis of *De ordine* is Wisdom 11:21, "Thou hast ordered all things in measure, wisdom, and number."<sup>7</sup> This recurrent text, referring as it does for Augustine to the physical Creation, offers an important clue to his emphatic parallel, emphasized so strongly in the *De ordine*, of divine authority with reason (2.9.26–27; cf. 2.4.12 through 2.5.14). In the *De ordine* Plotinus is never mentioned, nor is Plato; Aristotle is cited, however, and lineaments of Aristotle's thought are visible at a number of points (e.g., 2.11.31; cf. 2.5.16). There is an aspect, then, of Augustine's use of the notion of ascent in learning that sees "corporeal things as definite steps" en route to an apprehension of incorporeal or intelligible realities, but in Augustine one should not pass too swiftly

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<sup>5</sup> Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation*, 4–6, 12–15; she notes that Augustine's interest in created beauty becomes much more pronounced in the course of his theological writings. I wish to correct that contextually warranted view by showing how much it already figures in his early writings.

<sup>6</sup> *De ordine*, 1.8.24, trans. Silvano Barrasso as *St. Augustine: On Order* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2007), 31. For a discussion of Augustine's classification of the arts, which differs slightly from later orderings of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, see Danuta R. Shanzer, "Augustine's Disciplines: *Silent diutius Musae Varronis?*," in *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions*, ed. Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 69–75.

<sup>7</sup> *Wisdom* 11:20–21 is one of Augustine's most frequently cited biblical texts in this connection, though the aura of Pythagoreanism contextualizes it. Cf. the discussion by Henri-Irénée Marrou in *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Brossard, 1958), 262–75, and the contextualized ripostes to I. Hadot, *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* (Paris, 1984) by Shanzer as well as the articles following, by William Klingshirn and Philip Burton, also in Pollmann and Vessey, *Augustine and the Disciplines*, 113–64.

over these “steps.”<sup>8</sup> As he puts it in his *De musica* (ca. 397 AD), the things of mortal beauty are beautiful in their own kind and order, and by an overarching order they are joined together in a harmonious unity that he describes as a “poem of the universe.”<sup>9</sup> It is possible for Augustine to find beauty even in a cockfight; in its own way, he insists, it too is an evidence of the pervasiveness of *apto*, order:

We could see their intent heads stretched forward, hackles raised, mighty thrusts of beak and spur, uncanny dodgings. There was nothing amiss in every motion of those irrational beasts. There was clearly another Reason controlling everything from on high, down to the universal law of victor and vanquished. The first crowed in triumph and puffed its feathers in a clear sign of superiority. The other had ended up with a featherless neck, voiceless, and crippled. I don't know how, but everything was a hymn to the beauty and harmony of nature. (*De ordine* 1.8.25)

What to some tastes might be a more fitting example of ugliness and disorder, Augustine here describes as a “hymn to the harmony and beauty of nature,” apparently in all seriousness. Later, in *De libero arbitrio* (ca. 395 AD), he will return to this point in a more formal, theological vein, praising the divine wisdom that “speaks to us in the beauty of every created thing.”<sup>10</sup> His characteristically frank appreciation for physical beauty in a wide range of objects and phenomena portends later reflections on the way in which, for him, the beauty and harmony of mortal life necessarily entails a frisson of opposition and contraries.

It is clear thus that contemplation of beauty in the natural order is, like Augustine's view of the exercise of reason by training in the liberal arts, certainly an *anagogicus*; it offers an upward leading way or ascent

<sup>8</sup> Cf. his *Retractions* 1.6; Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation*, 25.

<sup>9</sup> *De musica* 6.10.28; Robert C. Taliaferro, trans., *Fathers of the Church*, vol. 4 (New York: Cima, 1947).

<sup>10</sup> *De libero arbitrio* 2.16; Anna S. Benjamin and L. H. Hackstaff, trans., *On Free Choice of the Will: Saint Augustine* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

of the soul toward a fuller vision of intelligible beauty.<sup>11</sup> He has a variety of ways of troping out this notion of ascent, but as in this passage, the motif of an educational journey predominates among them:

For those, therefore, who are ascending upwards the first action may be called, for the sake of instruction, quickening; the second, sensation; the third, art; the fourth, virtue; the fifth, tranquility; the sixth, entry; the seventh, contemplation. They may also be thus named: of the body, through the body, about the body, the soul towards itself, the soul in itself, towards God, with God. And again thus: beauty from another thing, beauty through another thing, beauty about another thing, beauty towards the beautiful, beauty in the beautiful, beauty towards Beauty, beauty in Beauty.<sup>12</sup>

That mortal beauty is a means to transcendent Beauty makes his point; beauty of the soul does not cancel out beauty in the body, but necessarily begins in and depends upon it. This is a point he makes firmly against Mani and the Manicheans (ca. 390s AD).<sup>13</sup> The soul is “a great

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Saint Bonaventure’s *De reductione artium ad theologiam* (Retracing the Arts to Theology), written nine centuries later. Sister Emma Thérèse Healy, ed. and trans., *Works of Saint Bonaventure*, ed. Philotheus Boehner et al. (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1955).

<sup>12</sup> *De quant. Animae*, ee. 70–76; cf. 35.79; cf. Svoboda, *L’Esthétique de saint Augustine*, 60–61.

<sup>13</sup> Sermon “On God’s Providence” (Dolbeau, 29), 4, in *The Works of Saint Augustine*, series III, vol. 1,1 ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (New York: New City Press, 1997), 57. In Sermon 243.8, Augustine exclaims, “If such a great corporeal beauty (*tanta corporis pulchritudine*) is manifest in our flesh even now, how much greater will it be there.” In such remarks we hear echoes of Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:9, “Eye hath not seen or ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him” (quoting, in turn, Is 64:4, 65:17). To Mani he says, “let us praise God because he has given such a great good even to this beauty, though it is the least. Yet let us not cling to it as lovers of it, but let us pass beyond it as lovers of God, in order that, situated above it, we may judge concerning it and may not be entangled in it and judged with it. And let us hasten to the good that is not spread out in space, and does not pass in time, and from which all natures in places and times receive beauty and form. In order to see that good, let us cleanse our heart by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, *Blessed are the clean of heart because they shall see God* (Mt 5:8).” Answer to the “Letter of Mani,” known as “The Foundation” (*Contra epistulam Manichaei quam vocant Fundamenti*) 42.48.

force of a non-bodily nature” but its works we nevertheless see as they are embodied, and by them, as with the works of the Creator God, we are frequently “amazed”:

Look round at the order imposed on things, at the beauty of cultivated fields, of thickets uprooted, of fruit trees planted and grafted, all the things we see and love in the countryside; look at the very order of the state, at the noble piles of buildings, at the variety of arts and crafts, at the number of languages, at the depths of memory, at the ripeness of eloquence. All these things are works of the soul. How many and how great are the works of the soul, all of which you can see, and you can't see the soul itself!<sup>14</sup>

It becomes apparent to Augustine that a keener awareness of the work of the artist, including most notably the Divine Artist, makes us want to know the artist. This is to him only natural:

Should one look at the works and not look for the craftsman? You look at the earth bearing fruit, you look at the sea full of its animals, you look at the air full of flying creatures, you look at the sky bright with stars; you recognize the changes of the seasons, you consider the four parts of the year, how the leaves fall from the trees and come back again, how their seeds are given their numbers, and each thing has its measurements, its weights, how all things are being administered in their own ranks and order, the sky up above with total peace, the earth down below having its own proper beauty, the beauty *sui generis* of things giving way to and succeeding each other. Gazing on all these things you behold them now all given life by created spirit, and you don't go looking for the craftsman of such a great work?<sup>15</sup>

This passage comes from a sermon whose purpose was explicitly Christian apologetics, and the language here is far more indebted to biblical passages Augustine quotes frequently than it is to Plotinus. Seminal

<sup>14</sup> Sermon 360B.9; *ibid.*, 371.

<sup>15</sup> Sermon 198.31; *ibid.*, 202.

biblical texts in his address to the beauty of creation include Wisdom 11:20–21, alluded to here, and Psalm 19, a poem that provides much of the framework for Augustine’s method and is likewise to be found quoted everywhere in his writings. This biblical grounding is the element most often overlooked, I think, when Augustine’s “Neoplatonism” is emphasized too strongly, as it certainly is in Karol Svoboda’s *L’Esthétique de saint Augustin et ses sources*,<sup>16</sup> a work that has had a significant influence in characterizing Augustine’s aesthetics in western scholarship generally. James O’Donnell has more recently examined the role of Neoplatonism in Augustine’s writings and concluded more accurately, “It is not that he discovered that the Plotinian method did not work; he discovered that it did work, and that it was not enough.”<sup>17</sup>

### Created Beauty

The distinction between use and enjoyment of something for its own sake is basic to the argument of Augustine in *On Christian Doctrine*,<sup>18</sup> his book on hermeneutics and what we should now call “literary theory.”<sup>19</sup> Here Augustine is elaborating a method for reading the text of Scripture in such a way that readers will not be distracted by aesthetic preoccupation with matters of style and language (however important these are) from a deeper intellectual purpose in reading, namely to come to an understanding of the divine authorial intention. That is to say, we are asked to refer from the beauty of the art object back to the intellectual being who created it. For Augustine, attention must be devoted to matters of composition as a means we use en route to our enjoyment of a primary encounter with meaning in the text. He allows that some elements we may both “enjoy *and* use” (1.3), but his concern is that the

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<sup>16</sup> See note 2.

<sup>17</sup> James J. O’Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions. Commentary in Three Volumes* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958). David Bentley Hart reflects Augustine when he says that “the idea of the beautiful—which somehow requires the sensual to fulfill its ‘ideal’ nature—can never really be separated from the beauty that lies near at hand,” in *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 20.

<sup>18</sup> *De doctrina Christiana* 1.3–5, D. W. Robertson, Jr., trans., *Saint Augustine: On Christian Doctrine* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958).

<sup>19</sup> See David Lyle Jeffrey, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), chaps. 1 and 3, for an extended discussion.



goal of our intellectual journey not be frustrated or detained through arrested development, such as too narrow a preoccupation with style or method, or indeed any other species of idolatry of the sign. He does not deny to literary language its beauty; indeed, he will go on to say that its various beauties are indispensable, the means of drawing us on in our quest for meaning, and hence to be considered most carefully. His point is cautionary, simply that we should guard lest

the beauty of the country through which we pass, and the very pleasure of the motion, charm our hearts, and turning these things which we ought to use into objects of enjoyment, we become unwilling to hasten to the end of our journey; and becoming engrossed in a factitious delight, our thoughts are diverted from that home whose delights would make us truly happy.<sup>20</sup>

The rind or outer husk of an edible fruit is what attracts us to it, and therefore is a critical element of our knowledge. Yet it is not the ultimate good we seek; that is the kernel or meat within.<sup>21</sup> Analogously, when we are said to “enjoy” the company of a noble intellect or virtuous person, says Augustine, we should not “stop short upon the road, and place our hope of happiness in man or angel” (1.33.36), but rather recognize that “when [we] have joy of a man in God, it is God rather than man that [we] enjoy” (1.33.37). For Augustine, so far from denigrating the person in question, this recognition gives to that person the full measure of his value as a creature made in the image of God. In all of these examples, the issue is right reference, and Augustine’s classic defense of Greek and Roman pagan poetry in the education of Christians depends upon it. But here too we see that the paradigm he draws upon is biblical, even as he is acknowledging the value of Neoplatonism:

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<sup>20</sup> *De doctrina* 1.4 in the American edition of J. F. Shaw, trans., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st ser., vol. 2, *St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine* (1887; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004). For an account of the almost thirty-year hiatus in his writing of this book, see David Lyle Jeffrey, “Self-Examination and the Examination of Texts: Augustine’s Confessions and On Christian Doctrine,” in *Houses of the Interpreter: Reading Scripture, Reading Culture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 39–53.

<sup>21</sup> *De doctrina* 3.7.11; cf. 3.5.9; see the discussion by H. I. Marrou, *S. Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), 413.

Moreover, if those who are called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, have said aught that is true and in harmony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it. For the Egyptians had not only the idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel hated and fled from, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver, and garments, which the same people when going out of Egypt appropriated to themselves, designing them for a better use, not doing this on their own authority, but by the command of God.<sup>22</sup>

Right reference for meaning is in this context essentially a matter of discernment between rightly ordered affection and idolatry of the mere sign, in which, for Augustine as for most readers of the Bible in his day, we are instructed by the Scriptures narratively: for example, it may occur to the reader of Exodus that the gold with which Aaron fashioned the golden calf idol may well have had the same source as that which was later, more properly, to be appropriated by the artists Bezalel, Aholiab, and the “wise-hearted women” to adorn with art the tabernacle for God’s presence in the sanctuary.<sup>23</sup> The issue is fittingness. This passage is but one of many biblical archetypes on which Augustine drew for his distinction between use and enjoyment. To distinguish is not to denigrate; Augustine shows that what is frequently at issue in such narratives is an argument for the reader’s acquisition of rightly ordered love; such love, he will say repeatedly, does not disparage the body or any beautiful thing in the world, since they are expressions of a universal language of love emanating from the “Maker of all things, visible and invisible” (Nicene Creed). In this context his pervasive praise for the beauties of nature (Creation) is poetic, and itself beautiful. It may be too much to say, as does Hans Urs von Balthasar, that such praise of nature constitutes effectively a contradiction of all Platonism, but it certainly qualifies it.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Shaw, *St. Augustine’s City of God*, 2.40.60.

<sup>23</sup> See David Lyle Jeffrey, “Bible Translation and the Future of Spiritual Interpretation,” *Modern Theology* 28, no. 4 (2012), 692; see also Jeffrey, *People of the Book*, 52–59.

<sup>24</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, 7 vols., ed. Joseph Fessio, S.J., and John Riches, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), 2.123. Cf. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation*, 130–31.

Creation itself, rightly viewed, is for Augustine the beauty that awakens us to Beauty. Reciprocally, Beauty lets us in turn appreciate mortal beauty in a fuller way. His rhetoric seldom soars as high as when he turns his prose to this subject:

Ask the loveliness of the earth, ask the loveliness of the sea, ask the loveliness of the wide airy spaces, ask the loveliness of the sky, ask the order of the stars, ask the sun making the day light with its beams, ask the moon tempering the darkness of the night that follows, ask the living things which move in the waters, which tarry on the land, which fly in the air; ask the souls that are hidden, the bodies that are perceptive; the visible things which must be governed, the invisible things which govern—ask all these things, and they will all answer thee, Lo, see we are lovely. Their loveliness is their confession. And these lovely but mutable things, who has made them, save Beauty immutable?<sup>25</sup>

Finally, in the Incarnation Christ made manifest God's own immutable Beauty in visible form; thus for Augustine the incarnate God is "beautiful in heaven; beautiful on earth; beautiful in the womb; beautiful in his parents' hands," and even "beautiful on the Cross."<sup>26</sup> Here immutable Beauty itself has come to have a corporeal form that draws us to the beauty of Creation's meaning; this is a principle that was to be realized abundantly in the plastic and graphic arts over the next millennium and beyond, especially in regard to the restoration of Creation (or re-creation) effected in the Atonement. Thus, for Augustine and the artists who follow in this train, it is entirely fitting to speak of the Cross, of the Crucifixion, as beautiful:

"He had no form or comeliness that we should look at Him."  
The deformity of Christ forms you. For if He had not wished to

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<sup>25</sup> Sermon 241.2.2, trans. Erich Przywara, *An Augustine Synthesis* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1939), 116.

<sup>26</sup> *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 44.3; cf. 45.7. A. Cleveland Cox, trans., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st ser., vol. 8 (1888; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 146, 148. See here Richard Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts from the Catacombs to the Eve of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 9–12, 31–33.

be deformed you would not have received back the form that you lost. Therefore, He hung deformed upon the cross, but His deformity was our beauty.<sup>27</sup>

### Transcendent Beauty

To a degree that can be obscure to our contemporaries, to refer to the Cross as beautiful in the fourth century was to put considerable strain on the aesthetic idea of proportion or “fittingness.” While Christians were from the outset identified as the *crucis religiosi*, it was not a compliment; the association of salvation with the ignoblest of executions was still, as Paul put it, “a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles” (1 Cor 1:23).<sup>28</sup> To gesticulate on the forehead with the sign of Cross seems to have become customary in the second century, at least according to Tertullian. It seems likely that there was an implied biblical warrant, with repeated self-crossing an indication of penitence and grief for the consequences of sin (perhaps recollecting the Tau on the foreheads of “those who sigh” in Ezek 9:4–6) and a declaration of a willingness to take up one’s cross (Lk 9:23), if necessary unto martyrdom.<sup>29</sup> Alex Stock has argued that Paul’s reference to the Cross as “stigma” and “stigmata” (Gal 6:17) is analogous to the branding of slaves, and yet also parallel to the commandment in Deuteronomy 11:18 to bind Torah “as a sign on your hand and frontlets between your eyes” (cf. Dt 6:8).<sup>30</sup> But visual appearances of the Cross in Christian art come later, and appear then slowly, even secretly. We do not find the Cross in fresco art of the catacombs, for example, but where we might expect it other symbols such as an anchor, lamb, shepherd, even the cryptogram *ichthys*. Indirect references to Christ’s death such as the staurogram, a compression of the *tau* and *rho* in the Greek word *stauros*, may have appeared as a proto-ligature, as a species of *nomina sacra* in Papyri Bodmer P45, P66, and P75. As Larry Hurtado has noted, the two-letter compendium to those prepared to look for it, might suggest the figure of a man on a cross.<sup>31</sup> Since these manuscripts considerably predate Constan-

<sup>27</sup> Sermon 27.6, cited in Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation*, 234.

<sup>28</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticus adversus genes pro Christianus*, PL 1:365–66.

<sup>29</sup> Viladesau, *Beauty of the Cross*, 42–43.

<sup>30</sup> Alex Stock, *Poetische Dogmatik: Christologie: Figuren* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001), 318–19.

<sup>31</sup> Larry Hurtado, “The Staurogram in Early Christian Manuscripts: The Earliest Visual

tine's famous *labarum*, his cross in the sky vision on the Milvian bridge and its triumphalist motto, *in hoc signo vincis* (in 312 AD), for Hurtado the use of the staurogram suggests a proleptic art image such as will appear in more typical contexts only much later, in the middle to late fourth century. Given the dating, the question naturally arises: was it Constantine who made the sign of the Cross publicly acceptable?

In the first part of his reign, Constantine continued to crucify convicted slaves. Eusebius tells us that later on he gave it up, in honor of the Passion.<sup>32</sup> It is sometimes noted that a medallion with the bust of Constantine, wearing a helmet with a tiny, nearly invisible Christogram, was minted around 315 AD, but this is not really a representation of the Cross.<sup>33</sup> About thirty-five years later a Roman sarcophagus was carved with a cross, in relief, on which the Christogram is superposed through the imposition of a laurel wreath; with the head of Sol on the right and Luna on the left, we have a clear imitation of earlier depictions of the emperors here attached to the "triumphant cross" (see Figure 1).<sup>34</sup> This example is unique, but clearly Constantinian. Elsewhere, however, the use of the Cross continues to be minimalist, even when a subject might seem to warrant it. In the Mausoleum of Santa Costanza in Rome, a church built by Constantine as a mausoleum for his daughter in 354 AD, there is an apse mosaic of the *traditio legis* in which the representation of Christ who is passing on the Law to Peter (*Dominus legem dat*) is identified in part by a tiny unadorned "x" floating above his head, asymmetrically.<sup>35</sup> All of these signs remain cryptographic; none gives us the crucifixion of Jesus with verisimilitude.

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Reference to the Crucified Jesus?," in *New Testament Manuscripts*, ed. Thomas Kraus (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 207–26.

<sup>32</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae* 1.8.

<sup>33</sup> Johannes G. Deckers, "Constantine the Great and Early Christian Art," in *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*, ed. Jeffrey Spier (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 89; cf. Josef Engemann, *Deutung und Bedeutung frühchristlicher Bildwerke* (Darmstadt: WBG; 1. Auflage, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 105–6.

<sup>35</sup> Deckers, "Constantine the Great and Early Christian Art," 95; Fabrizio Bisconti, "Variazioni sul tema della Traditio legis: Vecchie e nuove acquisizioni," *Vetera christianorum* 40 (2003): 251–70. It is a curiosity worthy of further reflection that Augustine's vocabulary for divine beauty, while drawn from his exegesis, is synthetic, more theological than philologically or semantically driven. He does not know Hebrew, yet seems to have sensed, despite the filter of the LXX, what the *Vetus Latina* could not alone give him. The Hebrew Scriptures use terms for beauty such as *yafeh* (beau-

Figure 1



There are small but important exceptions. Somewhere around the beginning of the third century, perhaps in Syria, someone carved an amulet out of jasper, probably for a pagan magician, which depicts Jesus hanging naked on the Cross, surrounded by magical names.<sup>36</sup> It

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e.g., Is 28:5; 44:13) more or less equally to refer to feminine beauty, artistic beauty, Hebrew term for beauty, *mareh*, occurs in Isaiah 53:2, a passage crucial to Augustine in our context. The Septuagint translates *yafeh* with *doxa* in passages in which the term may signify “glory” or “radiance” as well as beauty (e.g., Ps 29:2; 96:6–8), but *kalos*, *kallon* in places where aesthetic or feminine beauty would seem to be signified (e.g., Ezek 27:2,4,11), as well as for “splendor” or “magnificence” (e.g., Ezek 28:12, 17; 31:8). In Isaiah 44, which refers to the realistic beauty of comeliness in a statue, Hebrew *tip ara* is rendered with *kale*, and so also is *mareh* (Is 53:2) with *kalos*. When we come to the Vetus Latina renderings, where there were several versions possibly available, we can be less than certain, but if the Vulgate can be assumed to replicate the norms of usage in regard to these terms, it is interesting to note that with regard to those passages of Scripture that are crucial to Augustine’s view of the Beauty of the Cross, the Latin texts themselves do not provide his vocabulary. Whereas in the Vg for Isaiah 53:2 we have *neque décor*, for the doubled *yafeh* and *kalei* of Psalm 45:2 we have *speciosa forma*. Augustine will occasionally use the latter phrase, but in discussing the Psalm 45 and Isaiah 53 texts he prefers above all *pulcher*, *pulchram*, and *pulchritude*, terms that in the Vulgate are most frequently found in the Song of Songs referring to the beauty of the Bride and Bridegroom. Yet this is the term preferred where Augustine is building up from those counterpoised passages his cruciform aesthetics. *Pulcher*, however, comports better with the dominant Hebrew terms—a result, perhaps, of Augustine’s often uncanny contextual discernment.

<sup>36</sup> Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, 228.

is not inconceivable that such a magical amulet, however such things were discouraged by the bishops, may have given rise to a more orthodox gem stone carving of Jesus crucified with all twelve disciples gathered round the Cross. In this later miniature, likely Syrian and of the mid-fourth century, above Jesus's head appears the acrostic *ich-thys*.<sup>37</sup> Like other medallions of the sort, it was probably used as a signet ring. But full scenes of the Passion, such as the four carved ivory reliefs known as the Maskell ivories, do not appear until after the first quarter of the fifth century. These, like the gemstone signets, are all personal objects; so too would have been the plain iron cross worn by St. Macrina (d. 379), discovered by her brother St. Gregory of Nyssa at her death.<sup>38</sup> None may be associated with public worship. Processional crosses begin to appear in the fifth to sixth centuries but then as stauroms, not crucifixes.<sup>39</sup>

What Augustine calls the "beautiful cross," the adorned, exalted cross such as we find in the mosaic apses of prominent churches in Rome, appears first around 400 AD. A splendid example is the figure of Christ enthroned, surrounded by the apostles in the Heavenly City, in the apse of Santa Pudenziana (ca. 400; see Figure 2).<sup>40</sup> Here a beautiful jeweled cross hovers over the head of Christ on his throne. It is striking, and not duplicated before the resplendent "beautiful crosses" of churches in Ravenna more than a century later, such as in the apse of Sant' Appolinaire in Classe (about 549), whereas in Santa Pudenziana, the Cross is already meant to be both beautiful and a focus of worship (see Figure 3).<sup>41</sup> In Santa Pudenziana the images of the four evangelical beasts suggest both the divine presence in Ezekiel's vision and the sign in the sky of the returning Christ from Revelation. In Sant' Appolinaire, the gem-studded golden cross has a head of Christ where the beams cross, and the scene is of the Transfiguration, with

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 229; cf. the helpful notes by Felicity Harley.

<sup>38</sup> Charles G. Hebermann et al., eds., *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 vols. (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1908), 4.524b.

<sup>39</sup> Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, 233–36, provides examples in iron from the fifth and early sixth centuries.

<sup>40</sup> Anne-Orange Poilpré, *Maiestas Domini: Une image de l'Eglise en occident Ve-IX siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 2006); Fabrizio Bisconti, ed., *Termini di iconografia paleocristiana* (Rome: Vatican City, 2000); cf. Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, 113.

<sup>41</sup> Herbert L. Kessler, "Bright Gardens of Paradise," in Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, 129.



the Cross representing the transfigured Lord. In San Vitale, angels hover over the Abraham *akedah* mosaic with a beautiful medallion cross, and the Cross nimbus behind the enthroned Christ in S. Apollinaire Nuovo follows the pantocrator mosaics of Hagia Sophia and S. Maria Maggiore; all are mid-fifth century or later, and the matchless Vatican Cross, a reliquary cross of Justin II, is sixth century (see Figure 4). In the richly illustrated Rabbula Gospels (586 AD), the crucifixion of Jesus is depicted with verisimilitude—the earliest known such depiction in painting.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 2**

<sup>42</sup> Written in Syriac translation (the Peshitta); the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension illuminations may have been lifted from a Greek gospel (Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, 276, following Massimo Bernabò et al.).





Figure 3



### Figure 4

Thus, somewhere between about 350 and 425 AD, depiction of the Cross went from being a code, a staurogram, a secret sign for believers, to being a subject fit for the finest focal artwork of great sanctuaries. What were the causes of this remarkable change?

One of the causes may simply be the public image of Christianity after the triumph of Constantine. Augustine seems indirectly to acknowledge this when he says of Christ in *Sermon 87*: “You see, he has come forth from hidden obscurity to being a celebrity. Christ is known now, Christ is preached everywhere. . . . He was once someone laughable” (Serm. 87.9).<sup>43</sup> Our bishop elsewhere seems to take a more nuanced view of the public reason given for Constantine’s ban on public crucifixion:

Then, there was nothing more unbearable in the flesh; now, there is nothing more glorious on the forehead. What did he who gave such honor to his punishment save for his faithful? Indeed, now among the punishments of the convicted it is no longer in use by the Romans; for where the cross of the Lord has been honored, it has been thought that a guilty man would also be honored if he were crucified (*Tractatus in Ioannem* 36.5; ca. 409 AD).

On Augustine’s view, the Cross had already gained more honorable than dishonorable associations in the public square. What once had necessarily to be hidden had now, in a variety of ways, entered mainstream culture; it could not be hidden anymore.

Yet there are deeper reasons—theological and aesthetic—why Augustine clearly wants to revise residually negative social views of the Cross. For Christians, he will argue, it is no longer a symbol of shameful death, nor even just a permissible sign of the *religiosi crucis*; it is the very signature of Divine Beauty. He asks his fellow Christians to see the Cross not just through the eyes of faith, but in particular through the eyes of love—the eyes of the Church as Bride of Christ. What this per-

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<sup>43</sup> John E. Rotelle, ed., *The Works of Saint Augustine: Sermons on the New Testament*, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1991), 3.412. All sermon quotations are from this translation unless otherwise noted.

spective creates initially is irony and paradox where the crucifixion is concerned, but such paradox as is interpretable by love, beginning with the love of the Bride. Thus, though the beauty of the Bride has been degraded by sin, "it is made beautiful (*pulchra*) by him" (*Serm.* 138.6); she then develops correspondingly a powerful spiritual love for the Bridegroom. In the thrall of this love she loves Christ "crowned with thorns, ugly and without dignity" (Is 53:2). "What is it that she loves?" Augustine asks; "is it a fine figure of a man above the sons of men?" The reference here to Psalm 45 juxtaposes the two biblical texts in such a way as to create contradiction for the unbeliever yet a beautiful paradox or mystery for the Bride. "That bridegroom," he says, "became ugly for the sake of his ugly bride, in order to make her beautiful" (*pulchram*; *Serm.* 95.4). Speaking elsewhere of these two texts (Is 53 and Ps 45), Augustine calls them "two flutes, playing, as it were, differing tunes, but one Spirit blows into both . . . [so] they are not discordant" (*Tractatus in Epistoli Ioannem* 9.2; ca. 429 AD). The unbeliever hears only cacophony. Now we see where Augustine is going with his biblical trope. Just as there can be no meaningful concept of Truth without the possibility of falsification, that is, of giving the lie to a claim, so too there can be no concept of the Beautiful without a contrary, the Ugly. On the Cross, two poles, as John Donne would later say, "meet" in a startling frisson. So Augustine: "For the sake of your faith Christ became deformed, yet Christ remains fair—fair in form above the sons of men." How so? Or, as Augustine says in a similar passage (*Serm.* 44.2), "Where does all this beauty come from?" His answer:

Christ's deformity is what gives form (*forma, formosa*) to you. If He had been unwilling to be deformed, you would never have gotten back the form you lost. So He hung on the cross, deformed; but his deformity was our beauty (*sed deformitas illius pulchritudo nostra erat*). (*Serm.* 27.6; cf. *Serm.* 44.4)

In this way, "a foul sight, the sight of a man crucified . . . produced beauty. What beauty? that of the Resurrection" (*Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, 346).<sup>44</sup> Hence, for the Bride, who longs to see the Bridegroom's

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<sup>44</sup> The question is well put by Viladesau, *Beauty of the Cross*, 9.

face, “Woe to that love of thine, if thou canst conceive anything more beautiful than Him, from who is all Beauty” (*sup. Ps 44:16*). Transcendent Beauty is the source and grounding of that beauty seen in her crucified beloved by the Bride. “He loved us first who is always beautiful,” Augustine says elsewhere, and “by loving [him] we in turn are made beautiful (*Tractatus in Epistolam Ioannis 9.9*).<sup>45</sup>

There is thus another paradox in Augustine’s idea of beauty in the Cross, namely that transcendent Beauty reveals itself only to those who have “eyes to see” in the sense that the prophets mean it. In this much, for Augustine, we might almost say that “beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.” Speaking of those who crucified Christ, he notes that “they had not eyes whereby Christ could seem beautiful. To what sort of eyes did Christ seem beautiful? To such as Christ himself sought” (*sup. Ps 128:8*). To see his beauty, he adds, our “eyes must be cleansed.” Beauty in the Cross is possible to believers because “he healed our eyes” (*Tractatus in Ioannem 2.16.2*). What counts as beautiful is not a matter of random subjectivity, therefore, but is, in the manner the prophets understood, determined by a precondition of the heart.

As Hans Urs von Balthasar puts it, it is in this “converted” sense that Augustine can speak of the beauty of the Cross, and argue that Christ crucified “is the basis and standard of everything that is beautiful and all ideas of the beautiful . . . We have to learn from [him] what beauty is.”<sup>46</sup> When Augustine reads Psalm 45, “out of Zion is the semblance of his beauty,” he sees transcendent Beauty informing terrestrial beauty, yet for him, of course, this transcendent beauty actually inhabited the world (*sup. Ps 45:4*). Christ never abandoned, even in his disfigurement on the Cross, “that beauty which is in the form of God” (*sup. Ps 104:5*); transcendent Beauty shines through the “form of one who hung upon the cross,” he says, and it transfigures that form with glory. Since “God is always beautiful, never deformed, never changeable” (*Tractatus in Epistolam Ioannis, 9.9*), our beauty, and our perception of beauty, will be clarified to the degree our love recognizes his beauty.

This is the sense of “aesthetic” in Augustine that leads Michael Hanby

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<sup>45</sup> Translation by John W.W. Rettig, *St. Augustine: Tractates on the Gospel of John* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 257.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Valadesau, *Beauty of the Cross*, 10 (but the reference is inaccurate).

to his conclusion, following Balthasar, that for Augustine “salvation is aesthetic. It consists in the restoration of beauty from the beautiful itself, and it takes the form of the love of the beautiful—because the beautiful *is* love, and because apart from participation in this love there is finally nothing.”<sup>47</sup>

In Tractate 118 of his work on the Gospel of John, Augustine comments on the gospel accounts of the crucifixion of the Lord in such a way as to show it to be the paradigmatic *kairos*, time and eternity conjoined. He applies to it the prayer of Paul in Ephesians “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph 3:17–19). He then interprets this beautiful apostolic prayer in a cruciform way, saying of the Cross:

Its breadth lies in the transverse beam, on which the hands of the Crucified are extended; and signifies good works in all the breadth of love. Its length extends from the transverse beam to the ground, and is that whereto the back and feet are affixed, and signifies perseverance through the whole length of time to the end. Its height is in the summit, which rises upwards above the transverse beam; and signifies the supernal goal, to which all works have reference, since all things that are done well and perseveringly, in respect of their breadth and length, are to be done also with due regard to the exalted character of the divine rewards. Its depth is found in the part that is fixed into the earth, for there it is both concealed and invisible, and yet from thence spring up all those parts that are outstanding and evident to the senses; just as all that is good in us proceeds from the depths of the grace of God, which is beyond the reach of human comprehension and judgment.<sup>48</sup>

The Cross of Christ is the sign of his glory, but it is rooted and



<sup>47</sup> *Augustine and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 55.

<sup>48</sup> Tractate 118.5; John Gibb and James Innes, trans., in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 2004), 432.

grounded in the mortal dirt of our reality, indeed, in the reality of our deformity. This, above all, makes the Cross beautiful in our eyes.

## The Sacraments as Causes of Sanctification

REGINALD M. LYNCH, O.P.

*St. Patrick Church*

*Columbus, OH*

IN THE COURSE of the twentieth century, many areas of catholic life and thought were reconceptualized, and the Church experienced a great deal of upheaval. Of course this affected not only the life of the Church in its practical dimensions, but the conceptual world of theology as well. It is well known that one of the areas in which this was felt most keenly was the liturgy. Following the Second World War, a great deal of theological reflection focused on liturgical experience, and the connections between sacramentality, Church and culture were of great interest to many emerging theologians. Trends within the *ressourcement* movement produced a renewed understanding of the history of liturgical practice and a heightened awareness of the broader anthropological and cosmological dimensions of the liturgy. These trends were accompanied by a reduced emphasis on the shop-worn speculative categories associated with manualism and some strands of neo-Thomism.<sup>1</sup>

In the second half of the twentieth century, certain new trends in speculative theology arose that tended to view the sacraments from a postcausal perspective. Thinkers such as Karl Rahner and Louis-Marie Chauvet favored an approach to the sacraments that was driven more

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<sup>1</sup> See Philip McShane, "On the Causality of the Sacraments," *Theological Studies* 24 (1963): 433-34; Bernard Leeming, "Recent Trends in Sacramental Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 23 (1956): 195-217. Both of these articles provide helpful insights into the state of this question at the midpoint of the twentieth century.

by the categories of sign and symbolism than the concept of causality.<sup>2</sup> While the questions raised by these approaches cannot be adequately addressed here, this article will expose the historical importance of the subject of sacramental causality, calling attention to those perennial theological questions that gave rise to debates over sacramental causality during the scholastic and modern periods. The Church has consistently affirmed that the sacraments confer the grace that they signify; therefore the question of the *way in which* the sacraments of the New Law confer this grace must be of enduring theological interest.

This article will examine the concept of causality in relation to the sacraments as instruments of sanctification. Because of the immense historical breadth of this subject, it will of course be impossible to offer an exhaustive survey of the entire subject here. This essay will focus on those aspects of historical and contemporary theology that can contextualize the Thomistic approach to this subject. To this end, we will begin with the reception of Augustinian sacramental doctrine during the Middle Ages, exploring the ways in which various scholastic thinkers appropriated this common Augustinian inheritance; we will then examine the historical role of Aquinas's teaching in comparison with a variety of alternative views, concluding with the fate of sacramental causality in twentieth-century theology, paying particular attention to influence of Odo Casel and Edward Schillebeeckx. While an independent defense of Aquinas's teaching cannot be undertaken here, this study intends to present the cogency of his approach in light of the historical sources and the issues which concerned Aquinas himself and to which later commentators responded; further, we hope to demonstrate that the Thomistic approach is a viable—even an attractive—response to a set of perennial theological questions that present themselves even in our own day.

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<sup>2</sup> For a summary of Rahner's thought on this subject, see Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 3rd ed., trans. W. J. O'Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 24–40. Chauvet's approach to this issue relies heavily on Heidegger's ontotheological critique, which Chauvet sees as characteristic of most kinds of classical sacramental theology, Thomist or no. See Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 7–45.



### **Augustine and the Victorines**

Beginning in the early middle ages, theories concerning the causality of the sacraments were frequently proposed as interpretations of Augustine's sacramental doctrine. Although speculative models varied, ranging from various forms of Neoplatonism to the Aristotelianism of the emerging Dominican school, Augustine's influence remains a constant in this area until the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> On this issue, the theological landscape of the Middle Ages was not defined by a split between Augustinianism and scholasticism; one of the issues that drove the debates over sacramental efficacy in the emerging scholastic tradition was the proper interpretation of the Augustinian heritage. How were theologians to understand, defend and preserve the teachings of Augustine in the context of fresh challenges?

During the Donatist controversy, Augustine produced a series of distinctions that would prove indispensable for sacramental theology. Perhaps most importantly, Augustine drew a clear distinction between a sacrament and its fruit: while baptism itself cannot be repeated, the fruition or grace of the sacrament can be lost and subsequently regained.<sup>4</sup> Although Augustine's teaching on this subject is conditioned by the apologetic concerns of a particular period, the distinctions made by Augustine during the Donatist controversy were employed in a variety of subsequent historical periods, although the terminology and surrounding theological context shifted perceptibly.

Much of the Augustinian doctrine inherited in the early scholastic period was strongly influenced by the Berengarian controversy, which

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<sup>3</sup> Almost all Western theologians, including those of the Protestant tradition, have been concerned to show some form of continuity between their own thought and that of Augustine where the sacraments are concerned. It seems that this did not change until the midpoint of the twentieth century. (Thinkers of this period such as Rahner, Schillebeeckx, and Chauvet show decidedly less concern for the legacy of Augustine's sacramental doctrine). Augustine's doctrines concerning sign and sacramental reality are complex and have been subject to much scholarly debate. We have no intention of resolving these issues here. In the following pages, selections of Augustine's teaching that are of particular relevance to sacramental causality will be offered as a lens through which the debates and theories of scholastic and subsequent thinkers can be understood; an independent investigation of Augustinian doctrine must necessarily elude us here.

<sup>4</sup> See *De Baptismo* CSEL 51, 3.16.21, et al.

significantly affected the interpretation of Augustine on the sacraments in subsequent theology.<sup>5</sup> As an outgrowth of this conflict, Augustine's distinction between sacramental elements and interior grace is gradually transformed into the scholastic formula: *res tantum*, *res et sacramentum*, and *sacramentum tantum*.<sup>6</sup> However, Augustine's central distinction be-

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Frances Rogers, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System* (New York: Columbia University, 1917), 30–38. Although Berengar's teaching on the Eucharist was condemned, many of his textual selections and interpretations from Augustine came to be paradoxically normative for later theology. The threefold division between *res tantum*, *res et sacramentum*, and *sacramentum tantum* was gradually developed in response to this problem. N. M. Haring has convincingly argued that the word *sacramentum*—a polyvalent term for Augustine—underwent a transformation during the Berengarian controversy that gave rise to the later medieval understanding of *sacramentum* as outward sign alone. See Nicholas M. Haring, "Berengar's Definitions of *Sacramentum* and Their Influence on Mediaeval Sacramentology," *Mediaeval Studies* 10 (1948): 109–47; Haring, "A Brief Historical Comment on St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* III qu. 67, a. 5: *Utrum non baptizatus possit sacramentum baptismi conferre*," *Mediaeval Studies* 14 (1952): 153–59, et al. There are instances in which Augustine uses what appears to be the reverse of the familiar medieval formula, using the phrase *res visibiles* to refer to "things" or signs employed by the *sacramentum*, which can refer generally to the signate event and the lasting sacramental effect. See *De Baptismo* 3.10.15, et al. However, Augustine's terminology is much broader than this. Elsewhere Augustine describes the sacraments as the visible form of invisible grace; *Epist.* 105.3.12. It seems that Berengar misappropriated the Augustinian understanding of *sacramentum* as referring only to the passing outward sign, whereas Augustine used the term to refer not only to signs, but to lasting effect as well. Lombard inherits this new post-Berengarian formulation of Augustinian sacramental doctrine. In *Sent* IV, d. 4 c. 1, Lombard teaches that infants and faithful adults receive the *sacramentum et rem*, but someone who receives the sacrament unworthily only receives the *sacramentum*, whereas an unbaptized martyr could receive the *res* alone. See Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 148–49. Unfortunately, a more thorough investigation of this issue eludes us here.

<sup>6</sup> For our purposes, this distinction between the end result of the sacraments (*res tantum*), the sacramental event (*res et sacramentum*), and the outward signs themselves (*sacramentum tantum*) is significant for sacramental causality because of the relationship that necessarily exists between the outward signs and the effects toward which they are directed. After Berengar, these Augustinian concepts are universally expressed through the lens of this new threefold distinction. For a study of the development of this terminology, see Ronald F. King, "The Origin and Evolution of a Sacramental Formula: *Sacramentum Tantum*, *Res et Sacramentum*, *Res Tantum*," *The Thomist* 31 (1967): 21–82. The mature use of this threefold division is usually attributed to Hugh of St. Victor. In Hugh's *De Sacramentis*, a post-Berengarian understanding of Augustine's sacramental doctrine is evident in his treatment of the distinction between *res* and *sacramentum*. *De Sac.*, 1, 9, 2. PL 176: 317d–318b. This understanding was inherited from Hugh by his student Peter Lombard. "For [Hugh]

tween the sacramental sign or event and the lasting effect or fruit remained unobscured by these developments.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond his anti-Donatist writings, however, many other important elements of Augustinian thought came to be of central importance for subsequent discussions of sacramental cause. Although he did not speak directly of the sacraments as causes in the scholastic manner, Augustine had a strong sense of sacramental teleology; he saw sacraments as signs through which the power of God flows into the soul.<sup>8</sup> For Augustine, the

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the rite itself (*sacramentum tantum*) not only resembled or pointed to the inner reality (*res*) but also contained and conveyed that inner reality (*res et sacramentum*). The clarification was critical for the theology of the sacraments in general, a clarification made permanent by the increasingly widespread use of Peter's *Sentences*." Thomas Finn, "The Sacramental World in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 568. Hugh of St. Cher (d. 1263), a Dominican contemporary of Aquinas, seems to have been the first to use the term *res et sacramentum* specifically to describe the conferral of the character found in baptism, confirmation, and orders. Others such as Albert, Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, and Aquinas follow this approach. See Bernard Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963), 262.

<sup>7</sup> Because Augustine lacks the technical precision of later theology, at times he uses *sacramentum* to mean the lasting effect imparted by baptism, as distinct from its fruit (baptismal grace). In this much, the word *sacramentum* can appear to be roughly equivalent with later notions of sacramental character. See *De Baptismo*, 1.1.2, 3.10.15, 3.14.19, 3.16.21, 4.25.32, et al. At other times he uses *sacramentum* to refer to the baptismal formula of the rite, where the *verba Evangelicis* impart the power and holiness of Christ to the recipient regardless of the holiness of the minister or the worthiness of the recipient. See *De Baptismo*, 3.10.15, 3.15.20, 3.14.19, 4.25.32, et al. (This use of *sacramentum* in connection with outward rite is distinct from the use of *res visibilis* to indicate the transient material signs). Lacking the threefold precision of later theology, it can be seen here that Augustine is forced to use the same term (*sacramentum*) for what we might now call the form of the sacrament (the *verba Evangelicis* spoken by the minister) and the lasting effect or character (as distinct from grace). Both the conferral of the lasting effect and the spoken formula comprise an essential part of what is now spoken of as the *res et sacramentum*—that is, the reality and the sign or sacramental act taken as a whole. Taken in the broad sense, the medieval categories of *res et sacramentum*, *res tantum*, and *sacramentum tantum* appear not as a betrayal of Augustinianism but as a refusal of the Berengarian interpretation thereof.

<sup>8</sup> Although the degree to which the concept of instrumentality is present in Augustine's thought is disputable, his emphasis on the finality of the sacraments is clear. Concerning the sacraments as signs, see Emmanuel J. Cutrone, "Sacraments," in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 741–43. Concerning the efficacy of sacramental signs, Cutrone states: "Augustine insists sacraments have a power which remains even after the ritual has been performed. The use of material things, elevated to the level of sacrament, has the

sacraments are *visible words* or signs that manifest their interior reality. Because it is the power of the Word that sanctifies the soul, Augustine argues that inasmuch as this power flows through the physical things (*res*) used in the sacraments, those same things become signs of the presence of the Word.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, Augustine taught that grace moved through outward signs, even the sacramental actions of an unworthy minister, as light through an unclean place or water through an aqueduct.<sup>10</sup> Augustine is ambiguous, however, concerning the causal status of these signs taken in themselves. Is it possible to attribute some power to the sacramental elements themselves, as instruments of God?<sup>11</sup>

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ability to work spiritual realities. But that efficacy is not something in the material things, but flows from the very nature of the sacrament as a visible word. The sacrament only has an efficacy because it is Christ's word, the word of faith that is preached . . . when such a sacrament functions within a believing Church, the power of the sacrament is always effective." *Ibid.*, 745.

<sup>9</sup> "Iam vos mundi estis propter verbum quod locutus sum vobis. Quare non ait, mundi estis propter Baptismum quo loti estis, sed ait, propter verbum quod locutus sum vobis; nisi quia et in aqua verbum mundat? Detrahe verbum, et quid est aqua nisi aqua? Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit Sacramentum, etiam ipsum tamquam visibile verbum...Unde ista tanta virtus aquae, ut corpus tangat et cor abluat, nisi faciente verbo: non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur? Nam et in ipso verbo, aliud est sonus transiens, aliud virtus manens. Hoc est verbum fidei quod praedicamus, ait Apostolus, quia si confessus fueris in ore tuo quia Dominus est Jesus, et credideris in corde tuo quia Deus illum suscitavit a mortuis, salvus eris. Corde enim creditur ad iustitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem. Unde in Actibus Apostolorum legitur: Fide mundans corda eorum...quo sine dubio ut mundare possit, consecratur et Baptismus. Christus quippe nobiscum vitis, cum Patre agricola, dilexit Ecclesiam, et seipsum tradidit pro ea. Lege Apostolum, et vide quid adiungat: Ut eam sanctificaret, inquit, mundans eam lavacro aquae in verbo. Mundatio igitur nequaquam fluxo et labili tribueretur elemento, nisi adderetur, in verbo...quamvis nondum valentem corde credere ad iustitiam, et ore confiteri ad salutem. Totum hoc fit per verbum, de quo Dominus ait: Iam vos mundi estis propter verbum quod locutus sum vobis." *Jo. Ev. Tr.* CCL 36, 80.3. See also *Contra Faust.* CSEL 25, 19.16.

<sup>10</sup> "Qui vero fuerit superbus minister, cum zabulo computatur: sed non contaminatur donum Christi, quod per illum fluit purum, quod per illum transit liquidum venit ad fertilem terram. Puta quia ipse lapideus est, quia ex aqua fructum ferre non potest: et per lapideum canalem transit aqua, transit aqua ad areolas; in canali lapideo nihil generat, sed tamen hortis plurimum fructum affert. Spiritualis enim virtus Sacramenti ita est ut lux: et ab illuminandis pura excipitur, et si per immundos transeat, non inquinatur." *Jo. Ev. Tr.* 5.15 (text as in PL 35:1422). The example of light passing through an unclean place can also be found in *De Baptismo*, 3.10.15. William Harmless, "Baptism," in *Augustine through the Ages*, 88.

<sup>11</sup> This issue will come to divide the Franciscan and Dominican schools on this subject for centuries. Philip Cary's recent interpretation is more compatible with the

Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) began a final synthesis of Augustinian sacramental doctrine that would become normative for many scholastic authors.<sup>12</sup> Hugh was very much animated by the Augustinian worldview, and was in large part responsible for recalling the intellectual culture of twelfth-century Paris to the methodological perspective of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*.<sup>13</sup> Hugh's *De Sacramentis*<sup>14</sup> follows the lines of creation and recreation in a manner similar in structure to Augustine's *De Doctrina* and *Civitate Dei*.<sup>15</sup> Throughout his work, Hugh employs a broad sense of sacramentality that reflects the influence of Augustine's *doctrina signorum*, in which the senses associated with the manifestation of the incarnate Word under the mode of the Biblical letter are seen as a model for that same Word at work in the rites of the Church under the veil of sacred signs.<sup>16</sup>

Hugh famously taught that the sacraments were signs or instruments

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extrinsic legalism of the Franciscan Nominalists than with the Thomist tradition. See Philip Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Rogers, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*, 52. The Victorine School, established in Paris in 1108, was of a decidedly Augustinian turn. Hugh's principle work, *De Sacramentis* (with which we are principally concerned here), "presents a synthesis of theology in the framework of an Augustinian vision of history as an account of the two works of God: the *opus conditionis* (creation) and the *opus restaurationis* (salvation). At some points he does draw expressly on texts from *De Trinitate*, *Contra Adimantum*, *De Bono conjugali*, and *Enchiridion*; for his eschatology (2.16-17) on *De civitate Dei* 20-22." Karlfried Froehlich, "Victorines," in *Augustine through the Ages*, 868.

<sup>13</sup> Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 83-106. For the structural influence of Augustine's *De Doctrina* on Hugh of St. Victor, see *ibid.*, 86, et al.

<sup>14</sup> Hugh is best known for his work *De Sacramentis*, which covers not only the sacraments but also offers a comprehensive theological worldview beginning with creation. For a study of the textual history of this and other works by Hugh, see R. Barron, "Hughes de Saint-Victor: Contribution à un Nouvel Examen de son Oeuvre," *Traditio* 15 (1959): 223-97.

<sup>15</sup> Smalley, *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 90.

<sup>16</sup> Although ostensibly a work dealing with biblical interpretation and the nature of Christian doctrine, Augustine's *De Doctrina* roots the signate dimension of reality in creation and the Incarnation. In a visceral sense, the created world is composed of material signs that draw us to God. The Scriptural Word is understood in light of this, and in book three Augustine contextualizes the Christian sacraments in this way as well. *De Doct.* CSEL 80, 3.9.13. When Hugh treats the sacraments explicitly, his use of the biblical letter as a means to understand sacramental signs mirrors Augustine in this regard. *De Sac.* I, 9, 4 PL 176: 317b-318d.

of sanctification, containing grace as medicine in a vial.<sup>17</sup> We see immediately from this text that for Hugh this signate dimension of sacramentality is explicitly understood as instrumental (*id est sacrorum signa vel instrumenta*). Hugh discusses causality to some extent, but only in terms of what could be called formal or final causality, exploring God's reasons for instituting the sacraments.<sup>18</sup> For Hugh, the manner in which the sacramental instruments or signs are related to this finality is more ambiguous. Although Hugh's medical metaphor does not define sacramental causality with great precision, Hugh's description of grace being communicated as if it were held in a physical container does have materialist overtones. For some, this could imply that the sacraments worked by a kind of material causality—as if grace were physically contained in material things such as water, bread, the sign of the cross and similar elements.<sup>19</sup> This interpretation raises a number of problems: if the grace of the *sacramentum* is contained in the sacramental elements materially, it is difficult to explain the relationship of this grace to the final recipient thereof.<sup>20</sup> If grace is conceived of as a product held in a material container, it is difficult to simultaneously describe that same product as something that is effected as a final result in the recipient. Furthermore, if the elements (or signs) *as material causes* (and not efficient instruments) are still to be considered the visible form of invisible grace, it would seem that water as a material element, for example, would necessarily be the form of the sacrament even prior to its use in baptism.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "Vasa sunt spiritualis gratiae sacramenta, non ex suo sanant, quia vasa aegrotum non curant, sed medicina. Non ergo ad hoc instituta sunt sacramenta ut ex eis esset quod in eis esset; sed ut peritiam suam medicus ostenderet in illo remedium praeparavit, a qui languidus occasionem morbi accepit." *De Sac.* I, 9, 4 PL 176: 323.

<sup>18</sup> "Est igitur triplex causa haec institutionis sacramentorum omnium: humiliatio, eruditio et exercitatio hominis. Quae causae si non essent, sacramenta omnino, id est sacrorum signa vel instrumenta, elementa per se esse non possent." *De Sac.* I, 9, 4 PL 176: 322A. (A parallel text from the Victorine school can be found in the *Summa Sententiarum* 4.1, PL 176: 117).

<sup>19</sup> *De Sac.* I, 9, 2 PL 176: 317D. Haring, "Berengar's Definitions of *Sacramentum*," 126–27.

<sup>20</sup> Haring, "Berengar's Definitions of *Sacramentum*," 127. This objection is also raised by Bonaventure: *In IV Sent.* d. 1, p. 1, q. 3, contra 3.

<sup>21</sup> This objection is raised by the author of the *Summa Sententiarum* (written between 1140 and 1146). *Summa Sent.* IV, 1; PL 176:117B. Haring, "Berengar's Definitions of *Sacramentum*," 127. The authorship of the *Summa Sententiarum* is disputed. Although it was thought for a long while to be the work of Hugh of St. Victor himself,

Although questions of causality became more refined in the early scholastic period, Augustine's teaching remained an enduring frame of reference. As speculative theology progressed, Augustine's teaching on the efficacy of the Word in relation to the waters of baptism became an interpretive locus for sacramental causality. In his tractates on John, Augustine taught that the water of baptism, made a sacrament by the presence of the Word, not only touches the body but cleanses the heart as well: *corpus tangat et cor abluat*.<sup>22</sup> Because Augustine says unambiguously that the waters of baptism cleanse the heart, it seems that something causal is being said of the water itself, albeit with obvious and necessary reference to the power and presence of the Word. The interpretation of this phrase, broadly circulated by Peter Lombard, occupied the best minds of the scholastic period.<sup>23</sup>

### Lombard and Early Scholasticism

More explicit discussion of the sacraments as causes of what they signi-

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the *Summa Sententiarum* is now commonly held to be the work of a different member of the Victorine School, composed prior to the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. See King, "Origin and Evolution of a Sacramental Formula," 36–37.

<sup>22</sup> See note 9.

<sup>23</sup> See Augustine's text from *Jo. Ev. Tr.* 80.3, cited in note 9. This passage, taken from an Augustinian sermon on John, was frequently cited during the medieval and scholastic period, largely owing to its use by Lombard as an explanation of the efficacy of baptism. *Sent.* IV, dist. 3 c. 1. (However, an allusion to the same text also appears in the *Summa Sententiarum* of the Victorine School, which predates Lombard's *Sentences*. PL 176: 129c.) This passage is of interest for at least two reasons: the combination between Word and water, from which the mature understanding of sacramental form and matter developed is present here. Concerning sacramental causality specifically, the concept of exterior washing and interior cleansing is of great importance. Many scholastic authors offered their theories of sacramental causality as interpretations of this passage. (For example: Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.* d. 1, p. 1, art. unicus, q. 4; Richard of Middleton, *In IV Sent.* d. 1, a. 4, q. 2; Aquinas, *In IV Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2, s.c. 1 and d. 3, q. 1, a. 5, qc. 3, expos. and d. 18, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1, arg. 3 and d. 26, q. 2, a. 3, ad. 1; *Summa theologiae* (ST) III, q. 38, a. 6, arg. 5 and q. 60, a. 6, co. and q. 62, a. 4, s.c.; *Quodlib.* 12, q. 10, co.; *Super Ioan.* c. 15, 1; *Super Tit.* c. 3, 1; Scotus, *Ox. In IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 4. All textual references to Bonaventure and Scotus refer to the following editions (unless otherwise indicated): S. Bonaventurae, *Opera Omnia*, ed. A. C. Peltier (Paris: Vivés, 1866); Joannis Duns Scoti, *Opera Omnia*, editio nova (Paris: Vivés, 1894). References to Richard of Middleton are taken from Willibrord Lampen, ed., *De Causalitate Sacramentorum iuxta Scholam Franciscanam*, Florilegium Patristicum tam veteris quam medii aevi auctores complectens 26 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1931). Textual citations from Aquinas will be indicated individually.



fy was introduced by Peter Lombard (d. 1160).<sup>24</sup> Lombard studied under Hugh of St. Victor, and was strongly influenced by his sacramental doctrine.<sup>25</sup> Lombard argues that the sacraments should be understood as both signs and causes because they not only signify the invisible grace at work, but sanctify the recipient as well.<sup>26</sup> For Lombard, it is the sanctifying effect of the sacraments that gives them their causal quality. Lombard presents this causal understanding of sacramentality as an interpretation of the Augustinian doctrine of sign, in which the sign conveys an imprint of what it signifies to the mind. Concerning the sacraments as signs, Lombard explicitly uses the language of causality to define the relationship between the sacraments and their sanctifying effect in the soul.<sup>27</sup> Sign and lasting effect were properly distinguished by Augustine against the Donatists; by the thirteenth century, Lombard's *Sentences* were widely used in the schools, and his use of the word *causare* to describe the connection between these same sacramental signs and their effects was frequently commented upon.

With the rising influence of Aristotle in the early scholastic period, there was an impetus to describe this relationship between sacramen-

<sup>24</sup> *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique (DTC)* s.v. "Sacraments, Causalité," 577. It appears that Lombard is the first to use the word *causare* in conjunction with the sacraments. However, the notion that the sacraments convey a real effect in the recipient is clear from the Augustinian tradition. Lombard's immediate predecessors in the Victorine School maintained this as well. See the *Summa Sent.* tract. 4 c. 1, PL 176: 117, et al.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Lombard studied with Hugh of St. Victor, beginning while the latter was completing his *De Sacramentis christianae fidei*. See Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 27. At times Lombard literally transcribes selections from both Hugh's *De Sacramentis* and the *Summa Sententiarum*. Rogers, *Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System*, 66.

<sup>26</sup> "Sacramentum enim proprie dicitur, quod ita signum est gratiae Dei et invisibilis gratiae forma, ut ipsius imaginem gerat et *causa existat*. Non igitur significandi tantum gratia sacramenta instituta sunt, sed et sanctificandi" (emphasis mine). In *IV Sent.* d. 1 c. 4.2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* Lombard's phrase *invisibilis gratiae forma* recall the words of Augustine that he employed earlier in his text: "Sacramentum est invisibilis gratiae visibilis forma." *Sent.* IV, d. 1 c. 2. Augustine's original text can be found in *Epistola* CSEL 34, 105.3.12. See Wayne J. Hankey, "Reading Augustine through Dionysius," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 250n19, 254–55, et al. Use of this Augustinian phrase in this context reflects in part the legacy of the Berengarian controversy. Haring, "Berengar's Definitions of *Sacramentum*," 109–16, et al.



tal sign and effect using Aristotelian causal categories—accompanying this trend was the risk of misapplication. William of Auxerre (d. 1232) is seemingly the first to use explicitly Aristotelian categories to explain the way in which the sacraments function as causes.<sup>28</sup> William took up Hugh's metaphorical description of the sacraments as containers of grace (as medicine in a vial), and made explicit Hugh's implicit materialism, arguing that the sacraments are causes in the material sense, rather than the efficient.<sup>29</sup>

Roland of Cremona (d. 1259) argued against this idea explicitly, proposing instead that the sacraments operate as efficient causes.<sup>30</sup> Cremona explicitly ruled out an extrinsicist approach, arguing that the power operative in the sacraments was not similar to the power of political or rhetorical persuasion. Rather, Cremona argues that the power at work in the sacraments is similar to the potency associated with an efficient cause. Because of its emphasis on movement toward an intended finality, the category of efficient cause would prove itself the most fitting ways to speak of sacramental efficacy in the causal language of Aristotle. Both Lombard and Augustine understood the power of the sacraments as working toward its final completion as an effect in the recipient. Efficient causality preserves the distinction between the end intended and

<sup>28</sup> John F. Gallagher, *Significando Causant: A Study of Sacramental Efficiency*, Studia Friburgensia New Series 40 (Fribourg: University of Fribourg Press, 1965), 57n2.

<sup>29</sup> "Ad hoc dicendum est quod cum dicitur sacramenta iustificant, attribuitur contenti quod est contenti. Est enim sensus: gratia contenta in sacramentis iustificat, unde sacramenta non iustificant tamquam causa efficiens, sed tamquam causa materialis...sacramenta iustificant tamquam medicinalia vasa, quia in ipsis sacramentis datur gratia." *De Sac.*, as cited by Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 61. Gallagher is reliant on the text of Simonin and Meersseman for this citation. See H. Simonin and G. Meersseman, *De Sacramentorum Efficientia apud theologos Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Angelicum, 1936), 118. Much of William's argument in this regard hinges on the issue of the matter involved in the sacrament—partially intending to preserve the nonarbitrary quality of the material elements employed in the sacraments, William described their causality in terms of that same material. The theory of *dispositive causality*, which was taken up by the early Aquinas in the *Sentences* commentary, seems to have originated here with William's theory of material causality. *DTC*, s.v. "Sacraments, Causalité," 578.

<sup>30</sup> *In IV Sent.* d. 1; fol. 79va. Roland seems to be contending with the thought of William of Auxerre (d. 1231), who argued that the sacraments were material causes, rather than efficient. Ephrem Filthaut, *Roland von Cremona, O.P., und die Anfänge der Scholastik im Predigerorden: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der älteren Dominikaner* (Vechta i. O.: Albertus Magnus Verlag der Dominikaner, 1936), 165.

the means by which it is accomplished, while at once speaking of the relationship between the two: efficient causality is in motion toward a final end—for the sacraments, this means that the causality of sacred signs is conditioned and defined by their directedness toward the sanctification of the person, made possible by the operative presence of the power of the Word.

Material causality, by contrast, is far less suitable. In this regard, Cremona recognized Hugh's medicinal imagery for the metaphor that it was: Cremona taught that the sacraments only "contained" grace in the sense that an effect can be contained in an efficient cause.<sup>31</sup> In this much, he saw himself as standing in continuity with Augustine's sacramental theology, citing the same passage from Augustine's tract on John used by Lombard and many others.<sup>32</sup> From this point forward, we begin to see efficient instrumental causality offered as an intrinsic interpretation of Augustinian sacramental teleology. After Cremona, efficient causality was the category of choice for those interested in applying Aristotle to the problem of sacramental causality in a manner that stood in continuity with the Augustinian tradition.

### Intrinsic and Extrinsic Interpretive Traditions

In order to sift the multitude of causal models on offer at the beginning of the scholastic period, we may distinguish between two trends—not yet schools—of interpretation.<sup>33</sup> The Berengarian controversy had made

<sup>31</sup> *In IV Sent.* d. 1; fol. 79va. Ibid, 165.

<sup>32</sup> "Virtutem dixerim, quia augustinus vocat illud virtutem, non est enim virtus politica vel gramatica (!), sed vocatur virtus, sicut frigiditas vocatur virtus aque, aqua agit in corpus baptizati." *In IV Sent.* d. 1; fol. 85<sup>a-b</sup> (emphasis Filthaut), cited in Filthaut, *Roland von Cremona*, 167.

<sup>33</sup> In this much I follow J. Gallagher, a student of J. H. Nicholas, O.P., whose work on this subject is to be commended. Gallagher distinguishes two main patterns of thought that characterize the tradition received by St. Thomas: the first "sees real power in the sacramental rites to cause, under God. Its earliest form spoke of the sacraments as vials of grace, as in Hugh of St. Victor, Praepositinus, Alan of Lille, William of Auxerre, and others, who were taking up the thought of the fathers that grace was contained in the sacraments. This notion developed into seeing grace really in the rite, but as in its cause. At first, this meant as in its material cause, that is, grace was *in* the sacraments; then as in its efficient cause. The work attributed to Alexander, as well as Albert, Gueric of Saint Quentin and William of Meliton see that causality as effecting a disposition in the soul for grace. It is this opinion that

clear that in the hands of the wrong interpreter, the ambiguities inherent in Augustine's sacramental theology could actually conceal very serious error. As a result, the need to articulate *the way in which* the sacraments effect what they signify gradually emerged as a more urgent theological topic. As patristic ambiguity slowly yielded to scholastic precision on this topic, two distinct trends can be seen to emerge. The first approach could be called *intrinsic*, because it understands the sacraments as integrated into a causal action directed by God in which His power works *through* the working of the sacramental sign. There were reactions against the attribution of the category of cause to the sacraments in themselves, however. Seeking to preserve the absolute sovereignty of God with respect to grace, others insisted on a more *extrinsic* approach in which the sacraments were at best causes in the accidental sense, acting only as occasions, conditions or legal arrangements which invite the causal involvement of God in some way.<sup>34</sup> For the intrinsic approach, the sacraments are true

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Thomas will follow in commenting on the book of *Sentences*. Others, such as Roland of Cremona and Hugh of Saint Cher, hint at a causality of grace itself, though not clearly. This view will be developed by Thomas in his *Summa*." Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 80–81. The second "approach to the sacraments . . . sees in them no real power to cause either grace or a disposition for grace. Rather God causes both of these directly, and alone. He does so, *a*) on the occasion of the sacraments being given; or *b*) on the condition of their being given, as in Abelard, Bernard, William of Auvergne; or *c*) because of a pact, an ordination of the sacrament to grace . . . we may place in this group William of Auvergne, Bonaventure, Fishacre, Hugh of Strasbourg, and Kilwardby. Later, moral causality will follow in the same path." *Ibid.*, 81. The intrinsic/extrinsic distinction is also applied by Jean-Pierre Torrell in the context of Christ's resurrection. See J.-P. Torrell, "La causalité salvifique de la résurrection du Christ selon saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 96 (1996): 179–208, as cited by Philip L. Reynolds, "Efficient Causality and Instrumentality in Thomas Aquinas's Theology of the Sacraments," in *Essays in Medieval Philosophy and Theology in Memory of Walter H. Principe, O.S.B.*, ed. James R. Ginther and Carl N. Still (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 67–84.

<sup>34</sup> While we are aware that historical metanarrative can have serious limitations, the distinction offered here between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* approaches to sacramental causality is of great utility because it provides a workable framework for understanding the main lines of doctrinal development that shaped this issue through the centuries. This distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to sacramental causality is broadly congruent with the division between the physical and moral causality that emerged in the schools during the modern period. However, it should be noted that, for Thomists, the crux of the issue is more aptly expressed in terms of act and potency. Gallagher's distinction is most useful as a point of departure for understanding sacramental causality; a well-developed understanding of the issue

causes in the proper sense, the functioning of which has real effect under the direction of God. According to the extrinsic model, comparatively little is said about the functioning of the sacraments themselves, lest the causal sovereignty of God be compromised. In the former, instrumental causality is portrayed as an analogical species of efficient causality; in the latter, causality is attributed to the sacraments in a more equivocal sense.

These new speculative precisions brought fresh challenges for sacramental theology: not all scholastic theories proved equally suited for conveying the received tradition. Early attempts at material and efficient causality were clearly problematic, and while the extrinsic position does avoid attributing a supernatural effect to a natural instrument, it is comparatively deontological, lacking the means to describe the causal dimension of the instrument's action in language other than that of a legal decree, in which something of no inherent value is declared invaluable, by order of the king.

Concerning the Augustinian inheritance, one way in which the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic interpretations of sacramental causality is manifested is in the interpretation of the *virtus aquae* described by Augustine in the above quoted passage.<sup>35</sup> Augustine himself makes it clear that this is not a power had by the water alone, but is spoken of with necessary reference to the power of God. We have seen that Hugh of St. Victor interpreted this teaching using the language of *instrumentality*:<sup>36</sup> as a tool takes on instrumental power in the hand of a builder to work toward an end for which it has no native capacity, so too are the material elements of the sacraments taken up as instruments of divine power. Aquinas and the Thomistic School interpret this *virtus aquae* as a form of real instrumental efficient power, under the direction and impulse of God as principle efficient cause.<sup>37</sup> In this way, the

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from a Thomistic perspective will necessarily transcend these categories. The categories of intrinsic and extrinsic also recall twentieth-century debates concerning nature and grace. In light of this, the work of Gallagher and others not only provides a useful paradigm for understanding the history of sacramental causality but also draws attention to the possibility that a truly intrinsic doctrine of grace must be accompanied and supported by an intrinsic sense of sacramental causality.

<sup>35</sup> "Unde ista tanta virtus aquae, ut corpus tangat et cor abluat, nisi faciente verbo: non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur?" *Jo. Ev. Tr.*, 80.3. See the full text cited in note 9.

<sup>36</sup> *De Sac.* I, 9, 4 PL 176: 322A. See note 18.

<sup>37</sup> See *In IV Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, solutio I; *ST III*, q. 62 a. 1.

material signs are made instruments of the Word, in whose power they participate as instrumental causes directed toward a final end. However, because of the conceptual difficulty involved in attributing any form of causality to the sacramental elements without at the same time compromising divine sovereignty, the extrinsicist approach was unable to develop a technical vocabulary for the *virtus aquae*, and gravitated instead toward a view of the sacraments as conditions or occasions for the expression of divine power.

While the Dominican school began to center around Aquinas's intrinsic model of efficient instrumental causality, the emerging Franciscan school took a decidedly extrinsic approach. Concerning sacramental cause, Bonaventure's (d. 1274) brand of Augustinianism can be understood in part as a reaction to the Aristotelian causal interpretations emerging at the time—the work of both Auxerre and Cremona would have been well known to Bonaventure.

In his treatment of sacramental cause in book four of the *Sentences*, Bonaventure first proposes a version of dispositive causality current in many of the schools: while the sacramental character may be the result of efficient causality, grace itself is caused only dispositionally—that is, the sacraments create the necessary condition in the soul for the reception of grace. Concerning the final end of the sacraments, however, they are causes *sine qua non*—causes without which the final effect is not possible.<sup>38</sup> Bonaventure nods with deference to this position, but in the end he tentatively proposes a more radical solution that would become the favored position of the Nominalist tradition.<sup>39</sup>

Bonaventure acknowledges the Augustinian teaching received through the Victorines: the sacraments are comprised of both the power of the Word and material elements. However, he is concerned with

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<sup>38</sup> In *IV Sent.* d. 1, p. 1, q. 4, *respond.*

<sup>39</sup> In this much, Bonaventure is building in part on the thought of his teacher Alexander of Hales (d. 1245). *Summa Theol. (Halensis)*, Pars IV, q. 5, a. 5. Lampen, *De Causalitate Sacramentorum*, 6–17. *DTC*, s.v. “Sacraments, Causalité,” 579–80. Versions of occasionalist or *sine qua non* causality was taught by others before him, but Bonaventure's specific use of this approach in response to the scholastic approach to sacramental causality ushers in a more idealistic approach to the sacraments which comes to be adopted by the Nominalists. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) proposes an early form of this view, although his work predates the question of causality that arose in the scholastic period after Lombard. See *In Cena Domini*, PL 183: 272a.

the manner in which the spiritual power of the word comes to interact with the material substrate of the elements, and is unable to supply a fitting explanation for the way in which the natural potency or causal power of the elements (or signs) can be used in tandem with the causal power of the Word which works its effect in the recipient.<sup>40</sup> Bonaventure finds each of the four Aristotelian causes lacking in this regard,<sup>41</sup> and his resulting emphasis on divine potency alone foreshadows the causal univocity of the Nominalists. While Aquinas will resolve this difficulty using efficient instrumentality, Bonaventure opts for a more idealistic solution to this problem. In an effort to explain the interrelation between the material sacramental elements and the spiritual effect for which God alone is principally responsible, Bonaventure defends the legitimacy of *sine qua non* or occasionalist causality, in which the sacraments are conditions or occasions without which grace is not given; the causal necessity here stems not from anything intrinsic to the function of the sacramental elements themselves, but from the authority of God who has decreed that they be used for this purpose. To illustrate this, Bonaventure uses the example of a promissory note sealed by the king—the note in itself is completely dependent on the king’s power and authority, having no intrinsic power of its own, and loses what power it has upon the death of the king.<sup>42</sup> As a result, Bonaventure will say that if the sacramental elements are to be considered causes it must be only

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<sup>40</sup> “Sed difficile mihi videtur intelligere, virtutem illam simul esse verbo et element collatam, quantum ad essentiam et naturam, quantum ad eius existentiam, quantum ad durationis mensuram et etiam quantum ad operationis efficaciam; quae Omnia necesse est ponere et explicare circa virtutem illam, si quis dicat, quod aliqua qualitas detur verbo et element, per quam agat et influat in ipsam animam.” *In III Sent.*, d. 40, dub. III. *Opera Omnia*, ed. Ad Claras Aquas (1887). As in Lampen, *De Causalitate Sacramentorum*, 28.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> “Sicut igitur litterae regiae anulo regis sigillatae magnae sunt dignitatis et virtutis et valoris et magna dicuntur et posse et facere, tamen in eis nulla virtus est absoluta, sed sola ordinatio per assistentiam virtutis regiae—quod patet, quia, mortuo rege, non plus curator de litteris suis quam de aliis, tamen nihil absolutum amiserunt.” *In IV Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 4, *Resp. Opera Omnia*, ed. Ad Claras Aquas (1887). Lampen, *De Causalitate Sacramentorum*, 26. This example was used first by Bernard of Clairvaux. See note 39. See also Johann Auer and Joseph Ratzinger, eds., *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 6, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and the Mystery of the Eucharist*, by Johann Auer, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, trans. ed. Hugh M. Riley (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 80.

“in an extended sense.”<sup>43</sup> Bonaventure emphasizes the principle causality of God, while acknowledging that the sacraments can dispose us to receive grace through upbuilding faith and devotion by this same divine power.<sup>44</sup> Because Bonaventure is unable to articulate analogically the relationship between secondary instrumental causes and the principle causality of God, he shifts the focus of the conversation away from the instruments and toward the causality of the principle agent, resulting in a picture of the principle agent as cause in an all but univocal sense, the instruments being comparatively equivocal. As these respective schools continue to develop, the contrast between the Thomist and Franciscan positions on the doctrine of analogy will mark their differing approaches to sacramental causality, the intrinsic approach expressing itself in the analogical language of the Thomist school, and the extrinsic in the comparative univocity of the Franciscan.

### Aquinas and the Thomist Tradition

Working within the received tradition, Aquinas describes sacramental causality intrinsically using the category of efficient causality. Following the lead of Roland of Cremona, Aquinas chooses to use the categories of potency and motion to describe the way in which the sacraments contain the grace they confer. The sacraments contain grace as an instrument contains the final effect intended by an artist. To this end, he understands instrumental efficiency as a participation in the power of the principle

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<sup>43</sup> “Et si tu quaeras, utrum habeant virtutem aliquam creatam super increatam, respondent, quod praeter virtutem aliquam increatam est dicere aliquam virtutem habere sacramentum, sed extensor nomine virtutis. Si enim virtus dicat aliquam qualitatem vel naturam sive essentiam advenientem sacramentum, sicut proprie dicitur, sic secundum eos non est dicendum, quod habeat virtutem, sed extenditur nomen virtutis ad aliquam ordinationem, ut quando aliquid habet efficacem ordinationem ad aliquid, dicitur habere virtutem respect illius.—Et ponunt hoc exemplum: rex statuit, ut qui habent tale signum, habeant centum marcas. Post istam institutionem signum illud non habet aliquam proprietatem absolutam, quam non haberet prius; ad aliquid tamen est ordinatum, ad quod non erat prius. Et quia habet efficacem ordinationem, dicitur habere virtutem, ut faciat aliquem habere centum marcas, et tamen nihil plus habet de bonitate nunc quam prius.” *In IV Sent. d. I p. I, a. 1, q. 4, Resp. 2.4. Opera Omnia*, ed. Ad Claras Aquas (1887). As in Lampen, *De Causalitate Sacramentorum*, 25–26.

<sup>44</sup> “Sacramento enim dicunt assistere divinam virtutem, quae est causa gratiae, et fidem et devotionem succipientis, quae disponit ad gratiam.” *Ibid.*



agent, as color which moves through the air to be received by the eye, containing the form of the final cause as something as yet incomplete, as light still in potentia to be received by the eye. In this way, the sacraments (and all instrumental causes) are causal not equivocally (as in Bonaventure's "extended sense" of causality), but rather analogically, with necessary referent to the potency of the principle agent. Divine sovereignty is not compromised, and yet the sacraments can be considered causes in a real (non-equivocal) sense. This teaching also fits well with the inherited Augustinian tradition. Aquinas describes this instrumental efficiency as the power and intent of the principle agent flowing (*fluere*) through the instrument to reach its point of actualization in the intended recipient, working through the medium of motion to reach its end.<sup>45</sup> In this much, Aquinas's description of instrumental efficient causality as light passing through air to be actuated in its reception by the eye strongly resembles Augustine's description of the sacramental relationship of effect and sign as water passing through an aqueduct to reach its intended recipient.

In an effort to resolve the problem of a natural instrument producing a supernatural effect, in his *Sentences* commentary Aquinas bifurcates efficient instrumental causality between dispositive and perfective instrumental causality, arguing that with respect to the finality of grace, the sacraments are dispositive efficient instrumental causes.<sup>46</sup> Aquinas dis-

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<sup>45</sup> "Ista dicuntur agentia univoca, sicut calor est in igne calefaciente. In quibusdam vero est idem secundum proportionem sive analogiam, sicut cum sol calefacit . . . Ex quo patet quod illud quod est in effectu ut forma dans esse, est in agente, in quantum hujusmodi, ut virtus activa; et ideo sicut se habet agens ad virtutem activam, ita se habet ad continendam formam effectus. Et quia agens instrumentale non habet virtutem agendi ad aliquod ens completum, sed per modum intentionis, ut dictum est, et forma introducta continetur in eo per modum intentionis, sicut sunt species colorum in aere, a quibus aer non denominatur coloratus; etiam hoc modo gratia est in sacramentis sicut in instrumento, non complete, sed incomplete. . . per modum intentionis fluentis duplici fluxu: quorum unus est de potentia in actum, sicut etiam in mobili est forma, quae est terminus motus, dum movetur ut fluens de potentia in actum; et inter haec cadit medium motus, cujus virtute instrumentum agit: alius de agente in patiens, inter quae cadit medium instrumentum, prout unum est movens, et alterum motum." *In IV Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 4, co.

<sup>46</sup> "Ad cujus evidentiam sciendum est, quod causa efficiens dupliciter potest dividere. . . scilicet in disponentem, quae causat dispositionem ad formam ultimam; et perfectientem, quae inducit ultimam perfectionem. . . Hujusmodi autem materialibus instrumentis competit aliqua actio ex natura propria, sicut aquae abluere, et oleo facere nitidum corpus; sed ulterius, in quantum sunt instrumenta divinae misericordiae justificantis, pertingunt instrumentaliter ad aliquem effectum in ipsa anima,



tinguishes between those instrumental efficient causes which touch the finality intended by the principle agent (perfective) and those which do not themselves touch this finality (dispositive), but are part of a chain of efficiency which is working toward the intended finality under the aegis of the principle agent—in this sense, these instrumental efficient causes can be said to dispose for the final end. Unlike Bonaventure (for whom dispositive causality is not a species of instrumental efficient causality), this provides Aquinas with a working model for speaking of the sacraments as real efficient causes without compromising the principle agency of God. The precise nature of Aquinas's mature teaching on this matter has been the subject of prolonged debate, however. Although most Thomists of the modern period came to see a development in Aquinas's teaching on sacramental causality between the *Sentences* and the *Summa*, Aquinas's early doctrine of dispositive cause remained the predominant position of the Thomistic commentatorial tradition for centuries. Because commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard persisted as the standard for theological method and instruction through the fifteenth century, Thomist theological methodology largely conformed itself to this text.<sup>47</sup> Early Thomistic commentators interacted with Thomas pri-

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quod primo correspondet sacramentis, sicut est character, vel aliquid huiusmodi. Ad ultimum autem effectum, quod est gratia, non pertingunt etiam instrumentaliter, nisi dispositive, in quantum hoc ad quod instrumentaliter effective pertingunt, est dispositio, quae est necessitas, quantum in se est, ad gratiae susceptionem." *In IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, co. Aquinas understands instrumental efficient causality (both dispositive and perfective) as distinct from the principal efficient causality attributable to God alone. See *In II Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 1–2, et al.

<sup>47</sup> It was not until the sixteenth century that St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae* replaced Lombard's *Sentences* as the standard textbook for western theology. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 3. Unsurprisingly, it seems that the *Summa* first gained this prominence in Dominican schools, where this transition began as early as 1480–83. Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 137. However, Dominican commentators such as John Capreolus (d. 1444) continued to use the *Sentences* as a medium for debating the Nominalists at Paris in the early fifteenth century. By this time the content of these "commentaries on the *Sentences*" often had less to do with Lombard directly; written soon after the Dominican Order's return to the University of Paris in 1407 (after a long controversy surrounding the condemnations of the previous century), Capreolus's writings are proposed as a defense of Thomist teaching against the criticisms of the Nominalists, rather than a commentary on the thought of Peter Lombard. See Philipp W. Rosemann, "The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard's *Sentences*," in *Rethinking the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, ed. Paul Edward Dutton and John Shinnars (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 139–48.

marily through the framework that was in place in the wider university and employed by their intellectual peers. Because of its dominance in the academy, the *Sentences* formed the common intellectual medium for different theological schools, each of which continued to express their respective positions by commenting on this common text.<sup>48</sup> In this way, both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to sacramental causality continued to be expressed through the medium of the *Sentences*. Conversely, Thomists since the early modern period have understood the *Summa theologiae* to be their primary window into the thought of St. Thomas—as a result Aquinas’s earlier works have come to be viewed through the doctrinal lens of the *Summa*. There are good reasons to favor the later works of an author over his earliest; however, because of the lasting influence of Peter Lombard, early Thomism took Aquinas’s *Commentary on the Sentences* as its point of departure, reading works such as the *Summa theologiae* only later and most likely with reference to the *Sentences*. In this way, the textual hermeneutic of early Thomists such as Capreolus was vastly different than that of later Thomistic commentators and present students of Aquinas. Most other theologians during this period expressed their mature thought in *Sentences* commentaries, and one might easily assume that Aquinas was no different in this respect. Further, the practical need to shape theological discourse around the medium of the *Sentences* was an unavoidable reality for the first generations of Thomists. It is helpful to recall that during this period Thomism was far from dominant, and the need to respond to—and defend Aquinas from—the rise of late scholastic Nominalist interpretations was very real. As in our

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<sup>48</sup> By the middle of the thirteenth century, “the *Sentences* commentary [had come] into its own as a preferred medium of scholastic theological (and philosophical) discourse, certainly rivaling, and often outshining, other vehicles of theological expression (e.g. Quodlibital questions, *Summae*, Biblical commentaries). During the period of 1250-1320 it became increasingly common for theologians to produce several *Sentences* commentaries (or several variations of their one *Sentences* commentary), having either lectured on the *Sentences* several times or having taken several opportunities to rework the material used in their lectures . . . parallel with the development of the *Sentences* commentary into a major bearer of theological ideas, the very structure of the commentaries themselves changed a great deal, and certainly the thought expressed in them saw a great deal of development . . . there arose shared theological tendencies, best described as traditions: a Franciscan theological tradition and a Dominican one.” G. R. Evans, ed., *Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard: Current Research*, vol. 1 (Boston: Brill, 2002), 42.

own times, to do this effectively meant entering into discourse within commonly accepted theological mediums.<sup>49</sup>

An internal factor which extended the life of Aquinas's early thought on sacramental causality was the muted quality of his shift on this subject in the *Summa*. While the explicit language of dispositive sacramental causality is not employed in the *Summa*, it is also not explicitly repudiated. As a result, almost all early Thomistic commentators believed that the sacraments were dispositive causes of grace, following Aquinas's explicit teaching in the *Sentences*. This position was also held by the young Cajetan (d. 1534) in his own *Sentences* commentary, which he produced around the year 1493.<sup>50</sup> Later, however, Cajetan would revise this position in his commentary on Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. Although Aquinas makes no mention of the distinction between dispositive and perfective instrumental causality in the *Summa*, he speaks of sacramental causality in a way that for some indicates that they are perfective instruments (in the manner described in his *Sentences* commentary).<sup>51</sup>

Cajetan's position was controversial at the time, and one of the chief objectors was Sylvester de Ferrara (d. 1528). However, it would subsequently become the standard explanation among Thomists of sacramental cause, upheld by Domingo Bañez (d. 1604), John of St. Thomas (d. 1644) and many others.<sup>52</sup> One of the central issues for these

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<sup>49</sup> For Capreolus, the *Sentences* provided the ground on which he could effectively engage the threat of Nominalism. See note 47, et al.

<sup>50</sup> Cajetan's *Sentences* commentary was not edited as a published final product, but consists rather of notes from students or perhaps his own lecture notes. (His argument in favor of dispositive causality can be found in his commentary on the fourth book of Lombard's *Sentences*: Cajetan, *In IV Sent.* q. 1, a. 1). See Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 191. Capreolus and Sylvester de Ferrara argued for dispositive physical causality as well. See Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 264.

<sup>51</sup> "Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae, sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento, sed principali agenti: sicut lectus non assimilatur securi, sed arti quae est in mente artificis." *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1, co.

<sup>52</sup> Cajetan was the first Thomistic commentator to interpret Aquinas after the *Summa* was adopted as the standard text in Dominican schools and noted the implicit difference between the *Sentences* commentary and the *Summa theologiae* on the subject of sacramental cause. His position was not accepted by some older Thomist contemporaries, such as Sylvester de Ferrara, who maintained in his commentary on the *Summa contra gentiles* that Aquinas never abandoned dispositive causality. Both

commentators is the definition of grace in relation to sacramental instrumentality.<sup>53</sup>

During the modern period and beyond, the position of Cajetan and later Thomists on the subject of sacramental causality was frequently referred to as “perfective physical causality.” Although this terminology is not used by Aquinas in the *Summa*, it is intended to clearly distinguish Cajetan’s teaching from that of both the earlier Thomists and those who favored an extrinsic approach. The word “perfective” is not used by Aquinas in his mature writings; however, its reference to the distinction between dispositive and perfective efficient instrumental causes in his *Sentences* commentary serves to rule out the option of a dispositive interpretation.<sup>54</sup> The word “physical” indicates the motive potency of an instrumental effi-

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Cajetan’s commentary on the *Summa theologiae* and de Ferrara’s commentary on the *Summa contra gentiles* have been standard companions for generations of Thomists—both appear in the Leonine edition of Aquinas’s *Opera*. For an example of this, see *In contra gentiles* IV, c. 57, *Opera Omnia S. Thomae*, ed. iussu Leonis XIII, vol. 15, p. 192. De Ferrara argues that the sacraments are dispositive causes of grace, whose instrumental efficiency extends only to the sacramental character in the strict sense; the character then disposes the soul for the reception of grace. Here de Ferrara is interpreting the text of *ST* III, q. 62. He says that some have claimed that this text teaches that grace is caused instrumentally by the sacraments in an absolute sense. Regarding this interpretation of *ST* III, q. 62, de Ferrara has this to say: “Sed hoc ad mentem S. Thomae esse non puto.” See Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 137–41. De Ferrara refutes this claim using texts from the *De potentia* and the *Sentences*. In this much de Ferrara stood in line with the older commentatorial tradition claiming that Thomism in its purity is found in the *Sentences* and that later works such as the *De veritate* and *De potentia* support this teaching. The absence of an explicit retraction of his earlier position in the *Summa* only further confirms this for de Ferrara.

<sup>53</sup> The crux of the issue here is the status of grace as either created or uncreated. Because an instrument can have no role in the creative process, de Ferrara holds that the instrumentality of the sacraments cannot extend to grace per se, but must be limited therefore to the disposition. Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 137–41. Unfortunately, we cannot offer a thorough treatment of the subject of created and uncreated grace here. For a balanced treatment of this matter, see Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas, 1<sup>a</sup> 1<sup>ae</sup>, Q. 109–114*, trans. Dominican Nuns of Corpus Christi Monastery, Menlo Park California (St. Louis: Herder, 1952), 110–15. Garrigou-Lagrange makes a crucial distinction between grace as the eternal love of God and grace as a potency produced in the human person, by which we participate in His divinity. Simply put, grace is a divinizing and participatory reality, bifurcated analogically along the lines of the relationship already established between creature and creator, albeit in an elevated and entirely supernatural sense.

<sup>54</sup> Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 190–91.

cient cause in the Aristotelian sense, and eliminates those theories which rely on external forms of legal pact or moral coercion.

### Moral Causality

Around the time of the council of Trent, what came to be called “moral causality” arose as a new development within the extrinsicist tradition. Advocates of this position argue that the sacraments do not cause grace after the manner of a physical motive cause in the Aristotelian sense, but are causes after the manner of moral or legal compulsion: God establishes the sacramental economy, and binds Himself to respond to the sacraments with the gift of grace.<sup>55</sup> Although Melchior Cano (d. 1560) was the first to argue for moral causality explicitly,<sup>56</sup> some have claimed that it

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<sup>55</sup> This explanation of sacramental causality was extremely popular from the sixteenth century to the early twentieth. Many claim that there are strong Nominalist tendencies in this school of thought. See Bañez, *Comentarios Ineditos a la Tercera Parte de Santo Tomas*, vol. 2, *De Sacramentis*: QQ. 60-90, ed. Vincente Beltran de Heredia, Biblioteca de Teólogos Españoles 19 (Salamanca: 1953), 47–48. See also Aloisius M. Ciappi, *De Sacramentis in Communi: Commentarius in Tertiam Partem S. Thomae (qq. LX-LXV)*, Pontificum Institutum Internationale Angelicum (Torino: R. Berruti, 1957), 70–71. Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 158.

<sup>56</sup> Melchior Cano (d. 1560) studied under Vitoria at Salamanca, and later succeeded him as chair in 1546. He was deeply involved in the debates surrounding the sacraments at the Council of Trent, particularly those concerning the Eucharist and Penance. His most influential work is *De Locis Theologicis* (Salamanca, 1563), which proposes a new method for theology in relation to its sources. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. rev. (ODCC), s.v. “Cano, Melchior.” For more on the nature and influence of Cano’s *De Locis*, see A. Lang, *Die Loci Theologici des Melchior Cano und die Methode des Dogmatischen Beweises: Ein Beitrag zur theologischen Methodologie und ihrer Geschichte*, Münchener Studien zur Historischen Theologie 6 (München: Kösel & Pustet, 1925). Cano’s restructuring of theology in relation to its sources in *De Locis* had wide-ranging effects on ecclesiology in the modern period. The manner in which theologians conceived of conciliar and papal magisterial authority was deeply affected by his use of ecclesial authority. See Ulrich Horst, *Unfehlbarkeit und Geschichte: Studien zur Unfehlbarkeitsdiskussion von Melchior Cano bis zum I. Vatikanischen Konzil* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1982). Further, many of the manuals of the nineteenth and twentieth century are more indebted on a hermeneutical and methodological level to Cano’s *De Locis* than they are to Aquinas’s *Summa*. Jared Wicks, “A Note on ‘Neo-Scholastic’ Manuals of Theological Instruction, 1900-1960,” *Josephinum* 18 no. 1 (2011): 242. Cano was also deeply involved in ecclesial politics. He served as provincial of Castile, and opposed the Jesuits on a number of issues, theological and otherwise. ODCC, s.v. “Cano, Melchior.” Cano remained a controversial figure at the University of Salamanca for several centuries. During the reform of the curriculum, which began in 1771, attempts were

was Francis de Vitoria (d. 1546), his mentor and immediate predecessor at the University of Salamanca, who first proposed an early version of this theory.<sup>57</sup> Although there are certain differences between moral causality and occasionalism or *sine qua non* causality, many theologians see a strong continuity between the theory of moral causality proposed in the early modern period and the thought of some early Franciscan thinkers, including Bonaventure.<sup>58</sup> We know that Bonaventure saw the sac-

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made to replace the *Summa theologiae* with Cano's *De Locis*, whole or in part. This curriculum controversy followed Salamanca disputes of the previous century concerning Jesuits, Dominicans, grace, Jansenism, and the Chinese rites. See George M. Addy, *The Enlightenment in the University of Salamanca* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1966), 116–17, 189–202, et al. Some see a connection between the Molinist controversy concerning the nature of grace and the sacramental systems connected with the conferral thereof. Some see an intellectual lineage connecting the Franciscan theological positions on the sacramental conferral of grace with the later Jesuit position on grace and the development of moral theology under Melchior Cano. Subsequent thinkers who held that the sacraments were moral causes of grace were likewise involved in arguing for the Molinist position. See Auer, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments*, 79. Dominic de Soto (d. 1560), also a student of Vitoria, initially supported a position substantially similar to Cano's moral causality. See Ciappi, *De Sacramentis in Communi*, 72n8. See also Bañez, *Comentarios Ineditos a la Tercera Parte de Santo Tomas*, vol. 2, *De Sacramentis*: QQ. 60–90, 45. For a study of Soto on this subject, see Alfonso F. Feliziani, "La Causalita Dei Sacramenti in Domenico Soto," *Angelicum* 16 (1939): 148–94. The University of Salamanca provided a meeting place for a wide variety of ideas and intellectual trends in the sixteenth century. Paradoxically, the move toward a renewal in the humanities and classics within the arts faculty that preceded the Thomistic revival (roughly coterminous with Vitoria's tenure) did not transition into the enlightenment along with the rest of the continent, but existed in a comparatively harmonious relationship with scholastic theology and other traditional disciplines for some time. See Crisogono de Jesus, *The Life of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kathleen Pond (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), passim. See also Addy, passim.

<sup>57</sup> See Ciappi, *De Sacramentis in Communi*, 71n7, et al. Vitoria inherited certain Nominalist tendencies which undergird moral causality while studying theology in Paris. *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, vol. 4, *De Sacramentis, De Novissimis*, 3rd ed., (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1956), 73n9. Francis de Vitoria (d. 1546) assumed his chair in sacred theology at the University of Salamanca in 1526. At this time, the *Summa theologiae* was already in use as a textbook for theology at the University. It was de Vitoria that began the Thomistic revival at Salamanca that would eventually produce the Carmelite Thomistic commentatorial school known as the *Salmanticensis*. It is of anecdotal interest that, during the early stages of this revival, the Carmelite masters at Salamanca would influence a young clerical student who would come to be known as St. John of the Cross. See Crisogono de Jesus, *The Life of St. John of the Cross*, 33.

<sup>58</sup> "We can see [moral causality's] roots in Scotus, Bonaventure and other Franciscans

raments as “occasions” for the reception of grace. The sacraments were causes of grace *sine qua non*: necessary conditions for the reception of grace established by divine decree.<sup>59</sup> Duns Scotus expands upon this by speaking of the relationship between merit and reward as a kind of wage contract. Scotus argued that the sacraments conferred grace not because of any intrinsic power or form contained within them, but because God has promised to give graces to those who receive the sacraments.<sup>60</sup> To this extent, Scotus’s mature Nominalism can be seen as a mature manifestation of something already proposed by Bonaventure.<sup>61</sup> By describing the instrumentality of the sacraments solely in terms of merit and reward, Scotus’s position stands as a deeper expression of the extrinsic tradition. Although Bonaventure proposed sacramental occasionalism as a means of preserving God’s causal role in the sacraments, in committing to this model, however preliminarily, he starts down a path which will close in behind the Franciscan thinkers who follow him, making it impossible

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. . . the chain of thought is clear, even if the diverse expressions of it do not state it in the same way, or leave implicit what is explicit in another form.” Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 158. Representatives of the Jesuit theological tradition in twentieth-century Spain include Ockham (*In 4*, d. 1, q. 1, 2) and Biel (*In 4*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, concl. 7) in this lineage as well. *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, vol. 4, *De Sacramentis, De Novissimis*, 65n4. (This series was produced by the Spanish Jesuits in the mid-twentieth century). In at least this much, Jesuits and Dominicans are not divided theologically: a clear lineage exists linking the early Franciscan tradition, the Nominalists, and later proponents of moral causality. This opinion is shared by twentieth-century Dominican commentators as well such as Aloisius Ciappi. Ciappi, *De Sacramentis in Communi*, 70–71. Ciappi is not alone in this regard, but rather stands in continuity with the classical Thomist commentatorial tradition: Bañez argues that in various ways, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Ockham, Richard Fishacre, Scotus, Durandus, and Gabriel Biel all hold that the sacraments are causes of grace because, either through their presence or use, God is moved to confer grace. Bañez, *Comentarios Ineditos a la Tercera Parte de Santo Tomas*, vol. 2, *De Sacramentis*: QQ. 60–90, 44.

<sup>59</sup> For Bonaventure, only the sacramental character or *ornatus* can be attributed to efficient causality. Concerning grace, the sacraments function as “occasions” or “dispositions” for grace. *In IV Sent.* d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 4, resp., s.c. 4, et al. Lampen, *De Causalitate Sacramentorum*, 22–23.

<sup>60</sup> “Merita sunt causa instrumentalis respectu praemii et quod per merita acquiritur praemium.” *Ox. In IV Sent.* d.1 q. 5: *Op. omn.*, vol. 16, 167. See Auer, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments*, 79–80. Lampen, *De Causalitate Sacramentorum*, 56–57.

<sup>61</sup> While Bonaventure and Scotus differ in many ways, in the case of sacramental cause later Thomists saw a deep continuity between the two. See Bañez, *Comentarios Ineditos a la Tercera Parte de Santo Tomas*, vol. 2, *De Sacramentis*: QQ. 60–90, 44. Ciappi, *De Sacramentis in Communi*, 71. Gallagher, *Significando Causant*, 152.



to retreat to the place from whence they had come. Unlike their Thomist contemporaries, for Scotus and later the Nominalists there can be no analogical resolution to the problem of instrumental efficient causality.

Melchior Cano's theory of moral causality is based on a similar system of promise, merit and reward.<sup>62</sup> Cano argues that there is a distinction between natural (or physical) causes, which involve physical motion, and moral causes, which involve the exercise of free will. Cano argues that physical causes cannot reach the essence of the sacramental action, while moral causes can. To illustrate this, he distinguishes between a stick in the hand used for murder (natural cause) and the one who counsels murder (moral cause).<sup>63</sup> (This distinction is significant because the image of a stick in the hand is used by Aquinas to describe the sacraments as instrumental causes).<sup>64</sup> Cano is clear that a moral cause does not cause a physical change of any sort, but functions in the order of merit.<sup>65</sup> Using Scriptural texts from Paul, 1 John and Revelation, Cano argues that the causal power

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<sup>62</sup> Cano uses the idea of a note as an example of a moral cause: "Consequencia videtur esse nota, quoniam id vocamus causam, qua applicata sequitur effectus." *Relectio de Sacramentis*, pars IV, in Melchior Cano, *Opera* (Padua: Typis Seminarii, 1734) (facsimile reprint of the Hyacinth Serry edition, Kila, MT: Kessinger, 2011), 483.

<sup>63</sup> "Causas esse in duplici differentia, alteras naturales, alteras morales. Morales autem appellamus causas liberas, quae scilicet libere movent: ut qui consulit, qui imperat, ejus rei causa est, quae per ejus aut imperium, aut consilium efficitur. Juxta quam distinctionem cum actio peccati dupliciter consideratur, & in ordine effectuum naturalium, & in ordine effectuum moralium, Deus quidem causa naturalis dicitur actionis, quae peccatum est: concurrat siquidem ad brachii motionem, qua hominem interficio, quemadmodum & coelum, motorque angelus simul etiam concurrat. At concursus hic naturalis est: non tamen illius actionis Deus est causa moralis: neque enim aut consulit, aut praecipit, quin potius prohibet. Inter has autem causas discrimen est. Nam naturales suos effectus attingunt per vim a natura inditam, ut ignis calefacit per calorem. Morales vero non attingunt actione physica effectus suos, nec influunt, aut producant qualitates aliquas. Neque enim oportet, ut qui consulit homicidium, actione aliqua physica & naturali quicquam efficiat, quemadmodum natura efficere consuevit." *Relect. de Sacram.*, Pars IV, concl. 6, in Cano, *Opera*, 488.

<sup>64</sup> *ST III*, q. 65 a. 5, co.

<sup>65</sup> "Deinde magnopere considerandum, omnia quae de Sacramentis novae legis asseruntur, eadem & de sanguine Christi in sacris literis affirmari—1. Joan. I. Sanguis Jesu Christi emundat nos ab omni peccato. Apoc. I. Lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo. & c. 12. Vicerunt eum propter sanguinem agni: & ad Rom. 3. quem proposuit Deus propitiationem in sanguine ipsius. Eodem ergo sensu Sacramenta dici poterunt lavate, mundare, causae esse nostrae victoria ac remissionis peccatorum, quo sanguis Christi lavat, mundat, peccataque remittit." *Relect. de Sacram.*, Pars IV, concl. 6, in Cano, *Opera*, 488.



at work in the sacraments is the blood of Jesus Christ.<sup>66</sup> Although these Biblical references are uncontroversial in themselves, Cano uses them to propose a sacramental theology based largely on a legalistic sense of redemptive merit: the sacraments are moral causes of grace in which the blood of Christ pays the price for our sins. Cano uses the example of a Christian held captive by the Turks, for whom a price of ransom must be paid. Cano argues that a ransom such as this is a true instrumental cause of the redemption of the prisoner, but in the moral rather than the natural (or physical) sense.<sup>67</sup> While these statements are not without their clear Biblical resonances, the reduction of the sacraments to an otherwise arbitrary external legalism is less than desirable.

Cano's theory of moral causality was the favored position of many theologians during the modern period, including Jesuits involved in the Molinist controversy such as Vázquez (d. 1604) and de Lugo (d. 1660); moral causality was also favored by many of their nineteenth-century descendants such as Franzelin (d. 1886).<sup>68</sup>

Subsequent Thomists such as Domingo Bañez who were prominent figures in the *De Auxiliis* controversy would respond with strong criticism to Cano's theory, rearticulating the position of Cajetan in the face of these new challenges.<sup>69</sup> Bañez reminds his reader that Aquinas

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> "Sacramenta esse causas efficientes instrumentales nostrae salutis, gratiae, & iustitiae, loquendo de causa morali . . . Quemadmodum, si ego essem apud Turcas captivus, & eum qui daret pecunias redemptionis, videlicet pretium, & manum qua pecunias porrigeret, & pecunias etiam ipsas, quae sunt instrumenta ad redimendum, redemptionis causas esse, non naturales quidem, sed morales, nemo sanae mentis ibi inficias." Ibid, 489.

<sup>68</sup> Auer argues that the history of Cano's theory begins with Bonaventure, and can be traced though the Scotists to the Jesuits of the modern period who held the Molinist position (e.g., Vázquez, de Lugo, and Franzelin). Auer, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments*, 79. The connection intimated here by Auer between sacramental causality and the *de Auxiliis* controversy further highlights the importance of the definition of grace in this debate and its governing role as final cause in sacramental motion.

<sup>69</sup> See Bañez, *Comentarios Inéditos a la Tercera Parte de Santo Tomas*, vol. 2, *De Sacramentis*: QQ. 60-90, 43-51, et al. Bañez argues that, while Christ's passion is certainly the meritorious cause of our redemption, this assertion does not substitute for a discussion of the role of the sacramental signs themselves as physical instruments in the conferral of grace. Bañez points out that the leaden coin found in Nominalist explanations of sacramental causality and the redemptive merit of Cano's moral causality both need some form of physical instrumentality to explain the actual accomplishment of the sacramental action itself. See Bañez, *Comentarios Inéditos a la*

himself acknowledges a category of meritorious causality present in the redemptive power of Christ's passion; however, this teaching is already couched within the framework of instrumental efficient causality, the humanity functioning as conjoined and the sacraments as separated instruments, effecting grace in the soul. Bañez argues that although the redemptive merits of the passion can be partially described by Cano's moral causality, the actual functioning of the sacraments themselves cannot. Recall that Augustine taught that the elements, taken up in union with the Word, became sacraments, working toward the sanctification of man by the power of God. Later thinkers such as Hugh of St. Victor use the category of *instrumentality* to describe the *way in which* the sacraments effect what they signify. Cano's reworking of Nominalist occasionalism raises for us a new question: is it sufficient to view the sacraments as rites ordained by God for our use, the successful completion of which God subsequently rewards? More fundamentally, should the action of sacraments themselves be understood as something we do, or something God does? In response to Cano, Bañez describes sacramental instrumentality by giving the example of a pencil worked by the hand of an artist to effect an image on a sheet of paper—so too are the sacraments moved by the action of the Holy Spirit as physical causes to effect grace in the human soul.<sup>70</sup> Bañez highlights the importance of the Thomistic doctrine referred to as “physical perfective causality,” in which the sacraments are understood as instrumental or analogical extensions of divine potency, functioning according to God's wisdom.

Interestingly, Francisco Suárez (d. 1617), who reacted in part against the Nominalist tradition and rejected Cano's theory of moral causality,<sup>71</sup> argued for a version of physical causality, claiming to affirm the teaching of Cajetan in this regard. However, the differences between these two thinkers concerning the concept of physical premotion (which had such

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*Tercera Parte de Santo Tomas*, vol. 2, *De Sacramentis*: QQ. 60-90, 47–48.

<sup>70</sup> “Sicut revera penicillus attingit ad productionem imaginis quatenus movetur ab artifice, ita sacramenta attingant ad productionem gratiae quatenus sunt instrumenta et movetur a Spiritu Sancto.” Bañez, *Comentarios Ineditos a la Tercera Parte de Santo Tomas*, vol. 2, *De Sacramentis*: QQ. 60-90, 47–48. Bañez is commenting on *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1.

<sup>71</sup> *In ST* III, q. 62, a. 4, disp. 9 sec. II n. 10, 18–23.

wide-ranging implications for the doctrine of grace) affect their respective understandings of sacramental instrumentality as well.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Suárez affirms Cajetan's use of obediential potency in the context of sacramental causality seemingly without qualification. *In 3*, q. 62, a. 4, disp. 9 sec. II n. 13. However, Thomists are quick to point out that Suárez's failure to accept the Thomist doctrine of *physical promotion* compromises his understanding of obediential potency. For Suárez this is an *active* potency rather than a *passive* one. See Ciappi, *De Sacramentis in Communi*, 73n10. Suárez presents his teaching on *active* obediential potency in the context of the sacraments as an interpretation of a familiar Augustinian phrase: "Quaenam sit illa virtus, per quam possunt instrumenta Dei concurrere, quando elevantur. Diximus enim non esse rem aliquam superadditam, sed esse ipsammet entitatem rei, quae hoc ipso, quod creata est, et subordinata primo agenti, est in *potentia obedientiali active* . . . Haec enim ratio obedientialis potentiae communis est sacramentis, quorum elevatio divina solum in hoc consistit, quod Deus altiori modo concurrat dando auxilium sufficiens, ut res operetur secundum hanc potentiam. Necque ad hoc refert, quod sacramenta sint imperfecta in sua entitate. Quia hic concursus non fundatur in naturali eorum perfectione, sed in praedicta virtute obedientiali et in infinita Dei virtute, cui omnia subordinantur . . . Quamquam fortasse non efficiant solum per ipsum motum, qui est ens imperfectum, seu modus entis, et significatur nomine ablutionis vel unctionis, sed per ipsammet res quae moventur, vel applicantur, dum sacramenta fiunt, vel accipiuntur, ut per oleum, aquam, species panis, etc.; sic enim dixit Augustinus aquam esse, quae corpus tangit et cor abluit." *In 3*, q. 62, a. 4, disp. 9 sec. I n. 21 (emphasis mine). Francisci Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, tom. 20, *Commentaria ac Disputationes in Teriam Partem D. Thomae, de Sacramentis in Genere, de Baptismo, de Confirmatione, de Eucharistia usque ad Questionem LXXIV* (Paris: Vivés, 1877), 147. Suárez considers this active form of obediential potency more thoroughly in his commentary on the *Prima Pars*: disp. 31 sect. 5 and disp. 36 sect. 6. Further divisions between Suárez and Cajetan emerge regarding the issue of natural form and potency in the context of instrumental causality. Where Cajetan says that the natural form of the instrument is taken up in the potency of the principle agent, Suárez seems to imply that it remains, to be assisted by divine power in the attainment of its supernatural end. Aquinas's own teaching on this subject in the *Summa* directly denies this in *ST III*, q. 62 a. 1, co.; Cajetan's commentary on this same text reinforces this teaching. Elsewhere Cajetan returns to this concept, using the example of a musician and his instrument to demonstrate the relationship that exists between a principal agent, the instrumental causes he employs, and the final effects that only he can intend: "Exemplum utriusque motus perspicue in cithara: cuius fides si moveantur a non-musico, sonabunt tantum; si vero moveantur a musico, efficiunt non solum sonum, sed sonum musicum, qui est effectus proprius artis musicae." Cajetan, Commentary on *ST III*, q. 62 a. 4, n. IV. Other non-Thomist theologians of the modern period argued for so-called "physical perfective causality" as well: Belarmine (*De sacramentis in genere*, 2.11), Valentia (*Commentaria theologica*, 4 disp. 3, q. 3, p. 1), Ripalda (*De ente supernaturali*, disp. 40 s. 3 n. 13). See *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, vol. 4, *De Sacramentis, De Novissimis*, 71n3. Even here, however, in a manual sympathetic to the Suárezian approach, the Thomist and Suárezian traditions are explicitly contrasted as intrinsic and extrinsic approaches, respectively, to efficient causality in the sacraments. *Ibid.*, 71.

### Trent

The Council of Trent (1545–63) proved to be a major watershed for sacramental theology. Called principally to respond to the crisis of the Protestant Reformation, the council clearly teaches that the sacraments both contain (*continere*) grace and confer (*conferre*) or give (*dare*) it to their recipients, and that their use (or a desire therefore) is necessary for salvation.<sup>73</sup> The council's description of the sacraments as containing and conferring grace is reminiscent of prescholastic Victorine Augustinianism, and clearly rules out those most radical forms of occasionalism which had taken root in the doctrines of the Protestant reformers. However, this acknowledgement does little to resolve the longstanding conflict between the intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to sacramental causality that developed after the time of the Victorines.

Of the theological advisors present at the Council, many favored a more extrinsicist approach to sacramental causality. Although Cajetan died before Trent (d. 1534), Melchior Cano was deeply involved in drafting the council documents, particularly the treatise on the sacraments.<sup>74</sup> Some have argued that the ambiguity present in the final draft of the council document reveals that the council fathers sought to focus solely on the Protestant error, avoiding the condemnation of existing Catholic positions.<sup>75</sup> Some scholars argue that the use of the word *con-*

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<sup>73</sup> "Si quis dixerit, sacramenta novae legis non continere gratiam, quam significant, aut gratiam ipsam non ponentibus obicam non conferre, quasi signa tantum externa sint acceptae per fidem gratiae vel iustitiae, et notae quaedam christianae professionis, quibus apud homines, discernuntur fideles ab infidelibus: a.s." Conc. Trid. Sess. 7 decl. 1 c. 6. "Si quis dixerit, non dari gratiam per huiusmodi sacramenta semper et omnibus, quantum est ex parte Dei, etiam si rite ea suscipiant, sed aliquando et aliquibus: a.s." Conc. Trid. Sess. 7 decl. 1 c. 7. "Si quis dixerit, per ipsa novae legis sacramenta ex opere operato non conferri gratiam, sed solam fidem divinae promissionis ad gratiam consequendam sufficere: a.s." Conc. Trid. Sess. 7 decl. 1 c. 8. "Si quis dixerit, sacramenta novae legis non esse ad salutem necessaria, sed superflua, et sine eis aut eorum voto per solam fidem homines a Deo gratiam iustificationis adipisci, licet omnia singulis necessaria non sint: a.s." Conc. Trid. Sess. 7 decl. 1 c. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Cano was the theologian for Philip II at the Council of Trent. He was particularly involved in framing the Council's teaching on the Eucharist and Penance. *ODCC*, s.v. "Cano, Melchior." Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 297.

<sup>75</sup> While the explicit definition of the sacraments as instruments was proposed in a plenary session, it was rejected in the final draft in favor of the more minimalist phrase *ex opere operato*. Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 10. H. Lennerz states: "In canone praeparato concilii Tridentini legabatur: 'per ipsa sacramentorum

*ferre* in the Council documents is an intentional attempt to avoid the use of the word *causare*.<sup>76</sup> This is not to say that the council fathers did not believe that the sacraments were causes—rather, it seems that it was deemed most useful to avoid an official teaching that would favor one school’s interpretation of the word *causare* over another’s. In the climate of the Protestant Reformation, further division within the Church over sacramental theology was extremely undesirable; instead, universally acceptable language was actively sought so as to present a unified stance against Protestant doctrine. This is not to say, however, that all causal theories are equally in accord with the council. Although Trent did not advocate for a specific causal model, the council does clearly teach against radical forms of occasional causality, building on the *Decree for the Armenians* from the Council of Florence (1439), which also insists that the sacraments “contain” and “confer” the grace they cause.<sup>77</sup> While the sacramental doctrine of the Protestants was radically occasional and extrinsicist, other ostensibly Catholic theories that we have already examined share some of these tendencies. Recall that Bonaventure and the Nominalists favored an occasionalism which emphasized divine causality and saw little causal role for the sacraments themselves beyond disposing the recipient in faith and devotion to receive the grace which God alone confers.

Trent clearly ruled out, among other things, theories which reduced

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opera; haec paucis placebant, quia erant verba Lutheri; sed pluribus displicebant, qui proposuerunt vel ‘per ipsa sacramenta,’ vel ‘per ipsa sacramenta tamquam instrumenta,’ vel ‘per sacramenta ex opere operato,’ ‘per usum sacramentorum,’ ‘per opus operatum sacramentorum,’ ‘ex vi, virtute ipsorum sacramentorum.’ Electa et approbata deinde est forma ‘per ipsa sacramenta ex opere operato.’ Dicit ergo concilium, per ipsum ritum sacramentalem valide positum dari gratiam; hoc definitur contra Protestantem; hinc proxime et directe in oppositione ad opus operantis ipsius subiecti, sed ex sensu quem terminus eo tempore universim habebat opponitur etiam operi operantis ministri.” From this much, we can see that the Council actively sought language that would target the Protestants without causing further internal division. H. Lennerz, *De Sacramentis Novae Legis in Genere*, editio secunda (Roma: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1939), 220. See also *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, vol. 4, *De Sacramentis, De Novissimis*, 66.

<sup>76</sup> Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 10–12.

<sup>77</sup> DS 1310–11, *Decr. Pro Armeniis*. See P. Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments: A Study in Positive Theology*, authorized translation from the French edition, 4th ed. (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1930), 182–83.

the sacraments to mere external signs.<sup>78</sup> Aquinas's original objection to the extrinsicist approach was that it reduced the causality operative in the sacraments of the new law to the accidental status of a sign, no different from the sacraments of the old law.<sup>79</sup> To this extent, Trent's determination to avoid sacramental models which reduce the sacraments to mere outward signs broadly reflects Aquinas's original concerns.

After Trent, theologians tended to avoid the most radical positions of pre-Tridentine Nominalism because it too closely resembled the teachings condemned by the Council.<sup>80</sup> This aversion to radical occasionalism did not lead to widespread acceptance of the Thomistic position, however. Aside from ruling out the extremes of occasional causality, many theologians after Trent remained very willing to consider theories of causality which were less than Aristotelian in their structural underpinnings. It was generally held that physical causality, taught by the Thomists, and moral causality, held by (post-Tridentine) Scotists and many Jesuits, were both equally compatible with the letter of Trent.<sup>81</sup> Generally speaking, the positions established in the theological schools during the Tridentine period regarding sacramental causality persisted without significant change until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although Cajetan's position came to be accepted almost universally by Thomists, it was widely misunderstood and rejected by many other theologians during this period.

However, Trent did affirm that the sacraments function *ex opere operato*, rather than *ex opere operantis*.<sup>82</sup> This distinction—between the working of the sacraments themselves (*opere operato*) and our use of them (*opere operantis*)—was developed during the middle ages as a means of preserving an Augustinian distinction with which we are al-

<sup>78</sup> Conc. Trid. Sess. 7 decl. 1 c. 6. See note 73 for text.

<sup>79</sup> "Sed si quis recte consideret, itse modus non transcendit rationem signi. Nam denarius plumbeus non est nisi quoddam signum regiae ordinationis de hoc quod pecunia recipiatur ab isto." *ST III*, q. 62, a. 6, co. The position described by Thomas here using the example of a leaden coin was held by Fishacre (*In IV Sent.*, d. 1), Kilwardby (*In IV Sent.*, d. 1) and Bonaventure (*In IV Sent.*, d. 1, a. unic., qu. 1); cited in *Summa Theologiae*, Editiones Paulinae (Torino: Commerciale Edizioni Paoline s.r.l., 1988), 2172n3. See also *ST III*, q. 62, a. 6.

<sup>80</sup> A strict *sine qua non* occasionalism was almost universally recognized as unacceptable after Trent. Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments*, 185.

<sup>81</sup> See Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch, ed. James Canon Bastible (Cork: Mercier Press, 1958), 330.

<sup>82</sup> Conc. Trid. Sess. 7 decl. 1 c. 8. See note 73 for text.

ready familiar, forged during the Donatist controversy: the actions of an unworthy minister are distinct from the action and effect of the rite itself.<sup>83</sup> Aquinas himself insisted that this distinction differentiated between the sacraments of the old law and the new: while the sacraments of the old law function as signs which do not in themselves confer grace, the sacraments of the new law work *ex opere operato*, conferring grace in an intrinsic manner consonant with the Augustinian approach, functioning as instrumental causes participant in divine power.<sup>84</sup> Subsequent Thomists saw the working of the sacraments *ex opere operato* as an essential means of defending an intrinsic conception of the sacraments as “physical” or efficient instrumental causes.<sup>85</sup>

Trent clearly teaches that the sacraments are effective because of a power intrinsic to their operation; as such a view of the sacraments as fundamentally human actions that God subsequently rewards is radically inadequate. As we have said previously, one of the questions raised by moral causality and other extrinsicist systems is this: should the sacraments be understood fundamentally as something we do, or as something God does? There is no question that, for Cano and the extrinsicist tradition that went before him, God—and not human agents—is responsible for causing grace. But what about the sacraments themselves? Many occasionalist theories used the example of a leaden coin, made valuable only by decree of the king. Applied to the sacraments, the coin frequently represents human sacramental action—that is, a sign we invoke or participate in, such as water being used to wash. Later Protestant sacramental theories would exhibit highly exaggerated forms of occasionalism, which Trent clearly condemns. But Trent’s insistence that the sacraments function *ex opere operato* also militates against an understanding of the sacraments as ritual human actions which God rewards, and seems to speak in favor of an intrinsic causal approach—it is the working of the sacraments themselves—*ex opere operato*—which sanctifies the human person.

Despite this Tridentine teaching, however, many theologians in the modern period and into the first half of the twentieth century found

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<sup>83</sup> Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments*, 162–65.

<sup>84</sup> *In IV Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 5. *ST* III, q. 62, a. 6, co.

<sup>85</sup> Ciappi, *De Sacramentis in Communi*, 69–70.



Cano's moral causality to be an attractive alternative to an unmodified occasionalism—it shared many of the basic characteristics which made occasionalism appealing in the first place. However, moral causality had the added benefit of appearing less extrinsicist and tenuous, because of Cano's added emphasis on the presence of the blood of Christ *in* the sacraments. Although emphasizing this Pauline concept<sup>86</sup> does not resolve the important questions raised in the scholastic debates over sacramental cause, it does reinforce the sense that there is some saving reality contained in and conferred by the sacraments themselves, even if this explanation is lacking on speculative grounds and the extrinsic legalism of the Nominalist approach is not avoided.<sup>87</sup>

### Contemporary Implications

At the beginning of the twentieth century, interest in sacramental causality among theologians remained widespread.<sup>88</sup> During this time, Louis Billot proposed a then-popular theory of sacramental causality called *in-*

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<sup>86</sup> Cano refers to Romans 3:25. “Iustificati gratis per gratiam ipsius, per redemptionem, quae est in Christo Iesu, quem proposuit Deus propitiationem per fidem in sanguine ipsius, ad ostensionem iustitiae suae propter remissionem praecedentium delictorum in sustentatione Dei, ad ostensionem iustitiae eius in hoc tempore: ut sit ipse iustus, et iustificans eum, qui est ex fide Iesu Christi” (Rom 3:24–26). Alberto Colunga and Laurentio Turrado, eds., *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementiam novo editio*, 12th ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2005). This text, taken from the Clementine Vulgate, reads “*per fidem* in sanguine ipsius,” where Cano's citation omits the phrase *per fidem*. While this omission may very well be the result of textual variants, the larger context of faith in Christ in which this passage occurs renders it a less obvious reference to the blood of Christ as a form of efficient sacramental causality. However, Cano also employs other passages such as 1 Jn 1:7, where the image of washing from sins has more discernable baptismal overtones. Cano further references 1 Cor 1, wherein the connection between Christian baptism and the crucifixion is clearly drawn. *Relect. de Sacram.*, Pars IV, concl. 6, in Melchior Cano, *Opera*, 488. See note 65 for portions of Cano's text.

<sup>87</sup> Despite its deep continuity with the Nominalist tradition, many authors see moral causality as somewhat distinctive because of its heavy focus on merit and the notion that the sacraments “contain” the blood of Christ, the price of our redemption. It is this language of containing that makes moral causality appeal as a post-Tridentine model. See Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 299.

<sup>88</sup> We cannot offer a comprehensive history of sacramental causality in the twentieth century and its many related theological topics here. With the exception of Odo Casel, the selection of authors presented here all engage more or less directly with the classical causal categories employed by their predecessors.



intentional causality, which emphasized the identity of the sacraments as signs which expressed the intention of the agent—although their material elements did not contain a spiritual force as such, their sign function was similar to that of a will, that conveys real property to an heir.<sup>89</sup> When compared with the instrumental physical motion of Aquinas's causal system, the difference between this theory and moral causality seems minimal. Billot sees a kind of physical effect in the character, but the disposition to receive grace itself is a kind of moral cause.<sup>90</sup> Billot's emphasis on sign indicates a broader shift in sensibilities that would manifest itself elsewhere in theological circles. This is due in part to the liturgical movement; equally significant was the rise in existentialist alternatives to classical metaphysics. By this point, however, the sacramental systems inspired by moral causality, and their overtones of legalism, seemed less appealing to some. As a result, many sought completely new alternatives. Influenced in part by Rahner and Chauvet, in the mid-twentieth century widespread interest arose in the use of categories such as symbolism and experiential participation as modes of expressing sacramental efficacy.<sup>91</sup> This interest in experience and liturgy-as-event has its roots in the mystery theology of Odo Casel, and to some extent the liturgical movement begun by Romano Guardini and others.<sup>92</sup> When moral causality rose to

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<sup>89</sup> Billot's theory can be found in his work *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, t. I in III S. theol. q. 62.3, et al. See A. H. Maltha, "De Causalitate intentionali Sacramentorum animadversiones quaedam," *Angelicum* 15 (1938): 337n1.

<sup>90</sup> A. H. Maltha provides a useful description of Billot's theory in comparison with the works of Aquinas (both his early and his mature writings). Maltha, "De Causalitate intentionali Sacramentorum animadversiones quaedam," 337–66.

<sup>91</sup> Fully formed alternative sacramental systems emerged in the middle and later twentieth century and had their roots in these historical developments. If time and space permitted us to do so, a study of Karl Rahner's symbolic approach to the sacraments would be of great interest. For a treatment of this subject generally sympathetic to Rahner, see Daniel A. Tappeiner, "Sacramental Causality in Aquinas and Rahner: Some Critical Thoughts," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975): 243–57. Louis-Marie Chauvet has also provided an influential account of sacramentality, using the Heideggerian notion of symbol and event. See Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament*, 46–83, et al. For a critique of this approach from a Thomistic perspective, see Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 4 (2006): 255–94.

<sup>92</sup> The liturgical movement served as a context for the work of both Casel and Schillebeeckx. See Erik Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx: A Theologian in His History*, vol. 1, *A Catholic Theology of Culture (1914-1965)*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Continuum, 2003), 199–207.

prominence in the early modern period, it represented a shift from one form of efficient cause to another: originally, moral causality was proposed as a (non-Aristotelian) form of efficient instrumental causality. However, Casel seems to express the general sentiments of the liturgical movement in shifting the conversation away from speculative arguments about efficient causality entirely and focusing instead on the experience of entering into the mystery of the liturgy.<sup>93</sup> Casel frequently interprets the institution of the Eucharist in light of texts such as First Corinthians 11:26.<sup>94</sup> He portrays the Eucharist as a representation of—and a participation in—the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, under the veil of mystery.<sup>95</sup> This approach begins with liturgical experience, and speaks of the gift of grace in light of our participation in the mystery of Christ. Under this approach, no kind of efficient cause is explicitly proposed as an explanation of sacramental efficacy. Rather, it is understood that, through our participation in the represented mysteries of Christ, the sacraments have their effect. Although Casel is not particularly interested in traditional speculative categories, his emphasis on mystery can be understood as part of a larger trend in theology during the modern period. Much of the disinterest in traditional causal language during this period was driven by a desire to escape the empty legalism which had marked those sacramental systems influenced by the Nominalist tradition;<sup>96</sup> it would be extremely unfortunate if in some way, these same

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<sup>93</sup> See Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship and Other Writings*, ed. Burkhard Neunheuser (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962), 58–60, et al.

<sup>94</sup> “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26, RSV). See Odo Casel, *Die Liturgie als Mysterienfeier*, vol. 9, *Ecclesia Orans: Zur Einführung in den Geist der Liturgie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1923), 63.

<sup>95</sup> Referencing the institution of the Eucharist, Casel says: “Deshalb sagt auch Paulus (1 Kor. 11, 26) ‘So oft ihr dieses Brot esset und den Kelch trinket, verkündet ihr den Tod des Herrn, bis er kommt.’ . . . Dieser Tod aber war unsre Erlösung; er findet seinen krönenden Abschluß in der glorreichen Auferstehung, wie ja auch der nunmehr in der Eucharistie Gegenwärtige der Auferstandene und Verklärte ist. So wird die Eucharistiefeier zum Gedächtnis des gesamten Erlösungswerks; die Menschwerdung, das Leiden, die Auferstehung, die Glorie des Gottmenschen ist Gegenstand der Gedenkfeier. Vielmehr ist der Herr, wenn auch mystisch verhüllt, selbst unter seiner Gemeinde zugegen; er vollzieht immer wieder unter ihnen sein Opfer.” *Ibid.*, 63–64.

<sup>96</sup> Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to the Sacraments in the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 92–96, 134–37.

tendencies were not definitively banished, but merely cloaked in mystery. Some scholars see the emphasis on mystery that appears during the modern period as an extension of the Nominalist emphasis on the radical omnipotence and freedom of God and its accompanying reticence regarding causal connections. Where causal explanation fails, the rhetoric of mystery can appear as a supplement for metaphysical explanation.<sup>97</sup>

The shift away from the traditional language of causality was welcomed by many theologians in the first half of the twentieth century, who wanted a renewed focus on the sacraments as signs rather than continued debate over the nature of the sacraments as causes.<sup>98</sup> It seems that for many, the interminable debates waged over ossified school positions had lost its savor—more to the point, the significance of the question of causality was no longer of central concern.

Scholastic explanations of efficient causality tend to begin and end with divine intentionality. For Thomists, whether one holds to perfective or dispositive physical causality, the sacraments function as instrumental efficient causes operating under the agency of God, whose motive power is extended analogically through the instrument as a *vis fluens*.<sup>99</sup> While other traditions from the scholastic period such as Nominalism may have lacked the analogical subtlety to speak clearly about instrumentality, they certainly did not underemphasize divine volition. Moral causality, although distinct from the scholastic tradition, also focuses somewhat univocally on divine agency and identifies the value of the blood of Christ alone as a form of efficient cause. Thus, most of the standing theological positions found in seminary manuals at the beginning of the twentieth century expressed various models of efficient causality, all with reference to divine agency. In Casel and his confreres, however, we see a strong focus on the liturgical subject in history as the recipient of the fruit of a mystery in which he participates through experience. The ideas of Casel and his contemporaries reflect the turn toward the subject

<sup>97</sup> *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (LThK)* (1965), s.v. “Voluntarismus,” 871–72.

<sup>98</sup> For evidence of this, see either of the following: Leeming, “Recent Trends in Sacramental Theology,” 204–9, et al., or Colman O’Neil, “The Role of the Recipient and Sacramental Signification,” 2 parts, *The Thomist* 21 (1958): 257–301, 508–41. Many other examples of this can be found during this period. Of particular interest is the work of Rahner and Schillebeeckx in this regard.

<sup>99</sup> Aquinas defines the actuation of potency through efficient motion as power flowing toward an end. See note 45.

that is characteristic of post-Copernican thought. Casel's mystery theology can offer many insights about the nature Christian participation in liturgical action, and its popularity might also partially explain the disinclination of many post-*Ressourcement* theologians to appropriate sacramental models that emphasize with stronger language the category of efficient cause. For some scholars, however, the ambiguities of Casel's theory only further beg the question of sacramental cause: if the sacraments are fundamentally encounters with mystery, *how* do they cause what we say they effect?<sup>100</sup> Casel's disengagement from this question is a result of his own methodological choices. However, some scholars have asserted that Casel's position seems to be essentially a form of moral causality.<sup>101</sup> Although Casel's supporters might bristle at this, the suggestion seems plausible. At the very least, the absence of any discernible form of physical instrumentality in his system could point to a minimalist approach to efficiency.

Although not everyone in the twentieth century was convinced by the arguments of Casel, there was a decided shift toward liturgy-as-event using the category of symbol or sign, even among those of Thomist sympathies. Technically speaking, the focus here can be described in terms of the familiar threefold division of sacramental reality: *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum*, and *res tantum*. When this sequence was first formed, discussions of efficient causality in the sacraments frequently centered on the production of grace. For Aristotle and Aquinas, physical efficiency is tied to the final cause, which in this case is the perfection of the subject in grace. This is also called the *res tantum*. (This is especially true when Thomists speak of sacramental efficacy in the perfective sense, as opposed to the dispositive). For some, a perceived focus on the causality of the *res tantum* alone seemed to preclude serious consideration of the sacraments as signs (*sacramentum tantum*). Because of the turn to the subject, there was an increasing tendency to view the sacraments through the lens of experience, which produced a much different perspective. If we view the categories of *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum*, and *res tantum* according to the chronology of human experience, we see that the *res et sacramentum*, as both sign

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<sup>100</sup> See McShane, "On the Causality of the Sacraments," 433–34.

<sup>101</sup> See Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 288.

and thing effected, represents the liturgical event. Because of this, the *res et sacramentum* becomes the locus for (at least) three kinds of theological concern: ecclesiology, liturgical experience (or active participation), and symbolism.

In the twentieth century, widespread theological interest in viewing the efficacy of the sacraments through the lens of either liturgical event, symbolism or ecclesiology gave renewed focus to the *res et sacramentum* among some Thomists interested in sacramental causality. Because dispositive causality focuses on the natural scope of action proper to the instrument rather than its participation in the potency of the principle agent, the *res et sacramentum* enjoys a special focus under this theory.<sup>102</sup> As a result, interest in the *res et sacramentum* during this period (and therefore by extension dispositive causality) is not always fueled by a close study of the primary texts of Aquinas, but rather by other extratextual concerns.

From the time of Trent until the middle of the twentieth century, the early Thomistic theory of dispositive physical causality was all but abandoned.<sup>103</sup> Most Thomists followed Cajetan, arguing instead for physical perfective causality. For those twentieth-century dogmatic theologians still concerned to argue for some form of physical causality, however, describing the sacraments as dispositive causes came to have its advantages: dispositive causality effects the *res et sacramentum* directly, while only disposing for the finality of grace (*res tantum*). By shifting the causal focus in this way, it becomes possible to emphasize the causality of the sign action itself as part of the liturgical event of the *res et sacramentum* using traditional speculative categories.<sup>104</sup> Writing in the 1950s, Bernard Lee-

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<sup>102</sup> Cajetan notices that one of the principal differences between the *Sentences* and the *Summa* in this regard is that in the *Summa* the natural form of the instrument is taken up in the potency of the principal agent. By contrast, dispositive efficient causality concerns those efficient causes whose natural form cannot “touch” the final cause. See *In IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, solutio I; *ST III*, q. 62, a. 4, co.; Cajetan, *Commentary on ST III*, q. 62, a. 4, n. IV.

<sup>103</sup> Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 348.

<sup>104</sup> Although he does not share many of the sensibilities of twentieth-century theologians, Capreolus teaches that dispositive causality, as proposed by Aquinas in the *Sentences*, is focused in a certain sense on the *res et sacramentum*. Because the instrumentality of the sacraments only reaches (pertingunt) the *res et sacramentum* (which is the sacramental character or its equivalent), there is a sense in which the efficacy of the sacraments is focused there. Speaking of material elements as sacra-

ming argues in favor of dispositive physical causality and argues that it is preferable to perfective physical causality because the line of causality passes directly through the sign—it is the symbolic reality that causes—that is, the *res et sacramentum*.<sup>105</sup> This is appealing to Leeming because it focuses attention on the causality present in the sacramental event; it also allows for the articulation of a kind of sacramental cause operative *through* the mystical body of Christ—that is, the Church gathered in liturgical prayer.<sup>106</sup> Whether or not this is faithful to the original thought of Aquinas, this model was appealing to some because of its causal emphasis on sacramental character, which unites us to Christ and imparts a capacity for the reception of sacramental grace through the liturgical action of the Church. Taken in this way, the sacraments *cause* our union with Christ *in* the Church, *through* which we then receive the gift of grace. In this way, Leeming believed that a new articulation of dispositive physical

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mental instruments, he says: “In quantum sunt instrumenta divinae misericordiae justificantis, pertingunt instrumentaliter ad aliquem effectum in ipsa anima, qui primo correspondet sacramentis, sicut est character, vel aliquid hujusmodi. Ad ultimum autem effectum, qui est gratia, non pertingunt etiam instrumentaliter, nisi dispositive, in quantum hoc ad quod instrumentaliter effective pertingunt, est dispositio, quae est necessitas, quantum in se est, ad gratiae susceptionem.” Capreolus, lib. 4 d. 1, 2, 3, q. 1, a. 1 concl. 3. See Johannis Capreoli, *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, vol. 6, ed. Ceslaj Paban and Thomae Pègues (Turinibus: Alfred Cattier, 1906), 3–4.

<sup>105</sup> “The earliest and most authoritative commentators on St. Thomas not only accepted the symbolic reality but judged it to be the immediate cause of grace: Herve of Nedellec (Natalis), d. 1323, Paludanus, d. 1342, Capreolus, d. 1444, Sylvester of Ferrara, d. 1528, and Cajetan in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, written about 1493. These theologians developed the system of ‘dispositive’ causality, which explained that the rite causes the symbolic reality, and this in turn, unless there be an impediment, causes grace. Later theologians, however, felt that this concept of sacramental causality was not acceptable, and in consequence paid less attention to the *res et sacramentum*, although they all held it. Thus Cajetan in his *Commentary on the Summa*, and Dominic de Soto, d. 1560, reject the symbolic reality as an explanation of the validity of sacraments and of the ‘reviviscence.’” Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 264. That is, the *res et sacramentum* remains the seat of sacramental character for Cajetan and de Soto (indicated here by the term “reviviscence”), but not the final cause that directs the motion of the efficient cause. Leeming correctly notes that later Thomists shift the emphasis of efficient instrumental causality in the sacraments away from the *res et sacramentum*, where it has only a dispositive relationship with grace, and toward the *res tantum*, where efficient causality truly works toward the perfection of the final cause as a *vis fluens* that touches the final cause.

<sup>106</sup> See Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 346–55.

causality could serve the wider interests of the Church by responding to the ecclesiological and liturgical trends of the early to mid-twentieth century.<sup>107</sup> However, the *way in which* the Church then imparts this grace, the reception of which our membership in the ecclesial body disposes us for, remains an open question.

Other Thomists in the twentieth century also felt that the *res et sacramentum* had ecclesiological significance.<sup>108</sup> Among these must be counted the young Edward Schillebeeckx, who argued that the Church is the fundamental locus for sacramental activity. According to Schillebeeckx, sacraments can be viewed from the perspective of the recipient community or from the perspective of God—either way, the medium through which the sacraments work is the ecclesial symbolism of the Church. This is a sign of the Church's symbolic action, and a "personal symbolic

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<sup>107</sup> In 1956, B. Leeming observed that current trends in sacramental theology displayed "an inclusive tendency, greater emphasis upon the mystery of the sacraments, clearer recognition of the permanent efficacy of sacraments and stronger insistence upon the connection between sacraments and the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ." Leeming, "Recent Trends in Sacramental Theology," 204. For Leeming, these trends are "manifest first in an outlook, which tries to reconcile opposing views than to stress differences; for instance on the question of sacramental causality the intransigent disputes about "moral," "physical" and "intentional" causality have far less prominence and the effort is rather to incorporate into synthesis the differing elements stressed by different theologians...the trend is genial, but sometimes results in a lack of clearness and blunt facing of the problems." Ibid. Leeming lists the following authors as exhibiting these sentiments: Scheeben, Billot, Gonthier, Vonier, de Lubac (specifically referencing *Catholicism* and *Corpus Mysticum*), Mersch, N. M. Haring, Landgraf, Weisweiler, Danielou, H. Rahner, Graber, Roguet, Haynal, Marin-Sola, Bouïessé, A. M. Henry, L. Richard, M. M. Philipon, Taymans d'Eypernon, and A. Piolanti. Ibid., 204n1.

<sup>108</sup> For an example of this tendency, see Toshiyuki Miyakawa, "The Ecclesial Meaning of the *Res et Sacramentum*: The Sevenfold Cultic Status in the Visible Church as the Effect of the Sacraments," *The Thomist* 31 (1967): 381–444. J. M. Donahue states that "The special sacrament-community orientation of Vatican II theology invites renewed attention to the doctrine of the sacramental character. For in the traditional sacramental synthesis this instrumental participation in Christ's priestly power and mission is vitally involved in both the existential liturgical action and in its continuing influence on the Christian soul. The character is essential to every phase of the Church's sacramentality." John M. Donahue, "Sacramental Character: The State of the Question," *The Thomist* 31 (1967): 445. For a recent attempt to adapt Thomistic sacramental doctrine in light of the teaching of *Lumen Gentium*, see Benoit-Dominique de la Soujeole, "The Economy of Salvation: Entitative Sacramentality and Operative Sacramentality," *The Thomist* 75 (2011): 537–53.



act of Christ through the institutional medium of the Church.”<sup>109</sup> This ecclesial focus within the category of sacramental sign or symbolism is, broadly speaking, congruent with other trends in the twentieth century that desired to speak of the sacraments less as causes than as ecclesial events. This focus on ecclesiology in the context of the sacraments reflects a more anthropological—and less metaphysical—understanding of the sacraments as causes. It goes without saying that Schillebeeckx exerted an incredible degree of influence in many areas of theology throughout the second half of the twentieth century; sacramental theology was no different in this respect.<sup>110</sup>

Although perhaps not readily apparent, Schillebeeckx and Casel are more intimately related than one might suppose: both Schillebeeckx and Casel developed their respective theories within the context of the liturgical movement, as responses to the isolated individualism of modern times and the equally isolated speculations of dogmatic theology. Both can be understood as Catholic theologies of culture, which use the liturgy to express the corporate identity of the Church in society in different ways.<sup>111</sup> In fact, E. Borgman argues that Schillebeeckx’s doctoral thesis can be understood as a systematic interpretation of Casel’s mystery theology in light of his own Thomistic training.<sup>112</sup> Here an ecclesiological

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<sup>109</sup>Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, trans. Paul Barrett (Franklin, WI: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 74, et al.

<sup>110</sup>From within the Thomistic commentatorial tradition, a constructive response to these trends was offered by Colman O’Neill in the late 1950s. See Colman O’Neill, “The Instrumentality of the Sacramental Character: An Interpretation of *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 63, a. 2,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 25 (1958): 262–68; O’Neill, “The Role of the Recipient and Sacramental Signification,” 2 parts, 257–301, 508–41.

<sup>111</sup>“Casel’s theology was not only, or even primarily, an interpretation of the Catholic liturgy, though his work was usually read in this way. Casel himself was primarily interested in a theology of culture—but not in the same way as Schillebeeckx.” Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx*, 201. “In Casel’s view the liturgy, in the midst of a modernity which had been stripped of any sense of mystery, was the only place where God’s holiness was still experienced and venerated . . . in Schillebeeckx’s view the liturgical celebration of the sacraments was ultimately a concentration of the human quest for God . . . Like Casel’s work . . . *De sacramentele heilseconomie* (Schillebeeckx’s thesis) in fact contained a theological view of human nature, modern culture and the significance of the Christian tradition.” *Ibid.*, 206. Borgman argues that there are important differences between Casel and Schillebeeckx, but their fundamental point of departure is very similar.

<sup>112</sup>“Schillebeeckx’s major study on the sacramental economy of salvation [Borgman refers to his dissertation, *De sacramentele heilseconomie*] . . . began especially with



response to questions of cultural identity again reflects the generally anthropological focus of this new theological hermeneutic.

For many twentieth-century theologians, the impulses of both Schillebeeckx and Casel were extremely influential. However, to say that grace is mediated through the sacramental mystery of the Church does not in and of itself provide a specific account of the *way in which* this effect is reached. Writing in 1971, Johann Auer proposed an explanation of sacramental causality influenced by both Schillebeeckx and Casel. (This theory appears in a series of textbooks on dogma that he co-edited with Joseph Ratzinger.)<sup>113</sup> Although in dialogue with modern trends, Auer retains several traditional causal categories from the broader tradition. Auer proposes that while sacramental character is “ontically real,” the subsequent causation of grace is not physical but moral. Auer emphasizes that sacraments have objective efficacy as signs within the mystery of the Church. In this regard he seeks to follow Schillebeeckx, and implicitly Casel.<sup>114</sup> Auer does not specify the mode of causality involved in producing the sacramental character. However, his phrase “ontically real” leaves open the possibility that some form of physical instrumentality could be involved, albeit of the dispositive kind.<sup>115</sup> Even if there is dispositive physical causality involved here, however, it is clear that all physical in-

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the so-called ‘mystery theology’ of the German Benedictine Odo Casel . . . In a sense, *De sacramentele heilseconomie* is to be regarded as a critically modified development of Casel’s theology of the mysteries.” *Ibid.*, 201. To support this, Borgman cites *LThK* (1961), s.v. “Mysterientheologie,” 724–27.

<sup>113</sup>The series *Dogmatic Theology*, edited by Johann Auer and Joseph Ratzinger, has appeared in English translation from the Catholic University of America Press. The volume in question here, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and the Eucharist*, vol. 6, is authored by Johann Auer. (The German original, *Allgemeine Sakramentenlehre und das Mysterium der Eucharistie*, was first published in 1971 by Friedrich Pustet Verlag, Regensburg).

<sup>114</sup>See Auer, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments*, 67–82. Auer defines the sacramental character as “ontically real,” and as “dispositive for grace, not in the physical but in the moral sense.” *Ibid.*, 73. He further claims that “The decisive consideration for the understanding of sacrament and its objective efficacy is that it is not regarded as a thing or object, but rather as a sign and a *function within the mystery of God, Christ, and the Church*, as an organ for humans of their encounter with God (Schillebeeckx), as an answer to fundamental questions of human existence (Smulders), and as a ‘sign’ in the comprehensive sphere of the Christian *mysterium*.” (The parenthetical references here are Auer’s). *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>115</sup>Any efficient instrumentality operative here must be dispositive because its action clearly does not touch the finality of grace.

strumentality is ruled out with respect to the finality of grace. Here Auer seems to make explicit what Casel and Schillebeeckx only implied: while sacramental character may be affected physically or “ontologically,” sacramental grace is given through the mystery of the Church’s liturgy via moral causality.<sup>116</sup>

The Second Vatican Council ushered in a new era of reflection on the ecclesiological dimension of sacramentality which has born much fruit in recent years. However, as the example of Auer shows, an ecclesiological approach to sacramentality does not of itself guarantee an intrinsic causal approach to the sacraments. Duns Scotus taught that the sacraments were effective because a pact had been established between God and the Church, ensuring that God would give grace when the sacraments were correctly performed.<sup>117</sup> Melchior Cano’s system of moral causality is an adaptation of this model. Although modern ecclesio-sacramental systems ostensibly reject the legalism of previous thinkers and offer a more explicitly communal anthropology, the degree to which these new systems are truly distinct from classical moral causality is not always clear. In the case of Auer, however, it would seem that the affinity between the new and the old is greater than one might wish. The age-old question of the *way in which* the sacraments confer what they signify re-asserts itself: the issue here remains the role of instrumental causality in the context of the relationship that exists between God and the recipient of grace, whether this recipient is conceived of in individual or ecclesiological terms.

In many ways, the theological paradigm set by persons such as Casel and Schillebeeckx has dominated the discussion of liturgical theology in our time. At the risk of oversimplification, one might say that theological discussion of the sacraments in the mid to late twentieth century has

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<sup>116</sup>This is reminiscent of the dispositive model inherited by Bonaventure from Alexander of Hales and others, in which the character is the product of efficient causality, but grace itself is given *sine qua non*.

<sup>117</sup>“Ad questionem secundam patet per idem, quod nec manifeste possibile, nec aliquo modo necessarium est ponere illam virtutem, quae sit forma realis in sacramento . . . nec per illam, si poneretur, aliquid causaretur in anima, nec causaretur ipsa regulariter, nisi ex pactione divina cum Ecclesia et sic sine tot superfluis in aqua et anima intermediis potest salvari, quod pactio divina sit immediata respectu effectus conferendi recipienti sacramenta.” *Ox. In IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 5, resp. Lampen, *De Causalitate Sacramentorum*, 58.

been centered on liturgical praxis or experience within the context of the Church, rather than on the nature of instrumental causality. Although some like Auer and Leeming have retained a vestige of the classical vocabulary of causality, they are clearly in the minority. For many students of sacramental theology and liturgical studies, the question of causality is not even a consideration. Be that as it may, even those who would reject the classical causal theories must turn to other conceptual models to explain the teachings of Trent and the lived experience of the Church, both of which confirm that the operation of the sacraments themselves (*ex opere operato*) confers the grace signified. Our attempts to understand the sacramental reality of grace at work in the Church must necessarily raise the question of the *way in which* the sacraments have this effect. Regardless of theological vocabulary, this unavoidable question at play here is that of *causality*. Because the sacraments effect the sanctification of man, any functional theological hermeneutic must necessarily have something to say about this saving reality. Whether one chooses to embrace a classical approach or no, the question of sacramental causality will be theologically relevant so long as the sanctifying effects of the sacraments themselves remain so. This is a question that, in the end, is not always served well by ambiguity. In response to the emphasis on mystery and liturgical experience found in Casel and many authors in our own day, Bernard Lonergan warns against confusing speculative theology with the warmth of religious feeling. Although the former cannot directly stimulate the latter, the categories of speculative theology remain proven tools that can assist our own assimilation of the light of faith.<sup>118</sup> Although twentieth-century theologians such as Rahner and Chauvet prefer the ambiguity of symbolic language to the tight precision of scholastic vocabulary, twentieth-century Thomist Colman O'Neill, O.P. reminds us that Aquinas's choice of the category of cause represents an intentional decision to describe the sacraments as something more than symbols—

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<sup>118</sup> "Just as the equations of thermodynamics make no one feel warmer or cooler . . . so also speculative theology is not immediately relevant to the stimulation of religious feeling. But unless this fact is acknowledged explicitly and systematically, there arises a constant pressure in favor of theological tendencies that mistakenly reinforce the light of faith and intelligence with the warmth of less austere modes of thought." Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Understanding," *Gregorianum* 35 (1954): 643. As cited by McShane, "On the Causality of the Sacraments," 434.

the causal language of creation itself can be extended to describe Christ's saving interaction with the symbolic reality of the sacraments.<sup>119</sup> Unlike its medieval, modern and contemporary alternatives, the Thomistic approach to sacramental causality offers an integration between cause and effect, sign and sacred reality, that relates intrinsically to the human person in the order of grace; this is accomplished in no small part by addressing the subject of causality—*the way in which* the sacraments confer what they signify—with a degree of clarity and theological precision that is not often found in contemporary sacramentology. **N&V**

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<sup>119</sup> “The medievals, had they wanted to say of the sacraments ‘they cause because, and to the degree that, they are symbols,’ had sufficient command of Latin to say it clearly, and clarity was a tool of their trade. In fact, they used the word ‘cause’ in their sacramentology because that was the term they used to speak of God’s creating the world; a [sic] St. Thomas used it because he considered that it could be extended to signify as well the active intervention of Christ in the symbolic act of the sacrament; and he went to the trouble of explaining that he was choosing this word so as to make it clear that an exclusively symbolic account of the sacraments does not measure up to the tradition of the Fathers (*Summa theol.*, III, q. 62, a.1; *ib.*, ad 1).” Colman E. O’Neill, *Sacramental Realism: A General Theory of the Sacraments* (Chicago: Midwest Theological Forum, 1998), 127. (The essay was originally published in 1983 by Michael Glazier).

## John Capreolus: Prince of Thomists or Corruptor of Thomism?

CHARLES D. ROBERTSON

*Center for Thomistic Studies*

*Houston, TX*

THOMISTIC STUDIES in the twentieth century have been largely dominated by a desire to recover the authentic sense of St. Thomas by focusing on his doctrine of the real distinction of essence and existence. The great Thomistic commentators, such as John Capreolus, Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, etc., according to this project, have obscured the meaning of this distinction by adopting terminology not found in the writings of St. Thomas. Not all scholars, however, have been convinced that the commentators have been unhelpful in understanding this distinction. In a paper published in 1964, John Deck argued that St. Thomas's doctrine of the real distinction between essence and existence prevents one from considering things to be totally dependent on God for everything that is in them. He held that there cannot be a thing that is both dependent on another and composed of essence and existence, for this latter would imply a causeless component. In other words, essence is considered causeless, and so the reality composed of *esse* and essence is not entirely dependent on God, but only in part.<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Dewan

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<sup>1</sup> John Deck, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Language of Total Dependence," in *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 237-54. Deck's main concern is with an argument from *Summa Contra Gentiles* II, q. 52, art. 6: "The substance of anything is to it through itself and not through something else...But the existence of any created thing is to it through something else . . . Therefore the existence of no created thing is its substance." His reading of this passage is that to exist "through itself" is to be uncaused:

responded to Deck's paper by examining an argument that John Capreolus used to explain the necessity of a real distinction between essence and existence.<sup>2</sup> Dewan thus saw the fifteenth-century commentator as a helpful pedagogue in coming to understand the thought of St. Thomas on this important point of doctrine.

However, in a paper published shortly before Deck's, Norman J. Wells accused, not St. Thomas, whom he explicitly exonerates of the charge, but Capreolus of rendering essence impervious to causal influence in the latter's interpretation of his master's doctrine. According to Wells, Capreolus's use of St. Albert in explaining the doctrine of St. Thomas leads him astray:

Whereas St. Thomas sets off a creature's essence and its *esse* by contrasting the *per se* character of the one with the *per aliud* character of the other, St. Albert makes use of *a seipso* in regard to the essence and *ab alio* in reference to *esse* . . . However, in St. Albert's text, unlike St. Thomas's, it is quite explicit that the *per se* or *a seipso* character of essence or *id quod est* persists and is operative apart from *esse* and apart from any efficient cause. *A seipso*, then, positively excludes any and all penetration of an efficient cause. This is the sense of *per se* that Capreolus would have his reader take from the text of St. Thomas—essence has a being of its own, altogether independently of an efficient cause.<sup>3</sup>

When all is said and done, the sources Capreolus used to help explain St. Thomas's doctrine of the real distinction ultimately obscure the teaching of the Angelic Doctor:

St. Thomas Aquinas, avowedly, is Capreolus' chief proxy; but in the text (the defense of the first thesis) we have examined he

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"The meaning here is unmistakable. A created, caused thing has its existence through something else (its cause), but its substance is to it through itself." Deck, "St. Thomas Aquinas and the Language of Total Dependence," 244.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Dewan, "St. Thomas, Capreolus, and Entitative Composition," *Divus Thomas* 80 (1977): 355–75.

<sup>3</sup> Norman J. Wells, "Capreolus on Essence and Existence," *Modern Schoolman: A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy* 38 (1960): 11.

has been textually superseded by St. Albert, Robert Grosseteste, St. Augustine, Avicenna, and now Henry of Ghent. St. Thomas, however, is not superseded doctrinally, for all of these citations are offered as positions on essence and existence which to Capreolus “videntur de mente S. Thomae fuisse.” And the over-all burden of such texts holds for an uncreated essence on the part of the creature as contrasted with a created existence. Whereas the existence of creatures is due to God as efficient cause, their essence does not come to be by an efficient cause. For Capreolus, consequently, essence is distinguished from existence as that which *is not* produced by a creative efficient cause is distinguished from that which *is* produced by a creative efficient cause. It is a distinction between the necessary and the contingent, neither of which can be identified with the other. It seems to be clear that this is what Capreolus thinks is “de mente S. Thomae.” I think, though, it is a position that is not true to the doctrine of St. Thomas himself.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, Capreolus’s interpretation of St. Thomas is such that the latter’s doctrine on the real distinction between essence and existence is approximated to the doctrine of Henry of Ghent. Capreolus thus introduced the notion of the being of essence (*esse essentialiae*) into the Thomist tradition, betraying the thought of the master by obscuring the true meaning of existence.<sup>5</sup> Wells’s examination of Capreolus was an *ex*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Dewan, “Capreolus, Saint Thomas et l’Être,” in *Jean Capreolus Et Son Temps 1380–1444: Colloque De Rodez* (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 83n3: “J’ai pensé un moment utiliser l’occasion pour répondre à certaines critiques de Capreolus publiées pendant ce siècle. On sait qu’il est accusé d’avoir permis à la doctrine d’Henri de Gand sur l’*esse essentialiae* d’envahir le thomisme, et ainsi d’avoir trahi la pensée de S. Thomas. Ceux qui le disent ont tort. Cependant je vais attendre une autre occasion pour le montrer en détail.” In an unpublished translation of this article, Fr. Dewan expands this note to read: “I considered at one point using this occasion to reply to certain criticisms of Capreolus published in this [twentieth] century. He has been accused of having permitted the doctrine of Henry of Ghent on *esse essentialiae* to invade Thomism, and thus of having betrayed the thought of St. Thomas. This is not true. However, I have decided to await another occasion to show this in detail. The critic I have chiefly in mind is Norman J. Wells, “Capreolus on Essence and Existence,” in *Modern Schoolman* 38 (1960): 1–24. In contrast I might recall the paper of Cornelio Fabro, “Per la

*professo* attempt to add to the historical background of an earlier paper by W. Norris Clarke S.J.,<sup>6</sup> and to identify Capreolus as “a very influential exponent of the position he [i.e., Clarke] has criticized.”<sup>7</sup> In order to evaluate Wells’s account of Capreolus, therefore, it will be helpful to understand the position he was attempting to buttress.

Clarke’s intent in his 1955 article “What Is Really Real?” was to explore some of the implications of the “existential interpretation of Thomistic metaphysics.”<sup>8</sup> He saw himself as participating in “a systematic and highly fruitful program of rethinking the whole of Thomistic philosophy in the light of this great central insight.”<sup>9</sup> The examples of scholarship that he provides in the footnotes as representing the aim of this program set the stage for his own essay. Joseph Owens, in his article “A Note on the Approach to Thomistic Metaphysics,” insisted that the subject of metaphysics, being as being, “can never remain in the metaphysical order, once it is severed from its basis of real and actually exercised existence.”<sup>10</sup> George Klubertanz, in his article “Being and God According to Contemporary Scholastics,” was concerned to outline the various Thomistic positions about the starting point of metaphysics. He sided quite clearly what he calls the “Metaphysical Approach,” which

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semantica originaria dello ‘esse’ thomistico,” *Euntes Docete* 9 (1956): 437–66. In this paper on the vocabulary of being in the Thomistic school, he noted that Capreolus, like almost everyone else, had fallen into the use of the verbal formulations of the very adversaries he was facing; nevertheless he, rightly in my judgment, called [at 461] the Thomistic doctrine ‘genuine’ in the writings of Capreolus.”

<sup>6</sup> W. Norris Clarke, “What Is Really Real?,” in *Progress in Philosophy: Philosophical Studies in Honor of Rev. Doctor Charles A. Hart*, ed. James A. McWilliams (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1955), 61–90.

<sup>7</sup> Wells, “Capreolus on Essence and Existence,” 1.

<sup>8</sup> Clarke, “What Is Really Real?,” 61n1: “The aim of this essay is not to validate this interpretation but to explore some of its implications. For the explanation and defense of the whole approach, the reader is referred to the many well-known writings on the subject, such as Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (2nd ed., Toronto, 1952); Maritain, *Preface to Metaphysics* (New York, 1939), and *Existence and the Existent* (New York, 1948); J. de Finance, S.J., *Etre et agir* (Paris, 1945); the entire volume of the *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 1946, devoted to the subject, etc.”

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Owens, “A Note on the Approach to Thomistic Metaphysics,” *New Scholasticism* 28 (1954): 463.



he identified with the existential interpretation.<sup>11</sup> Spurred on by these studies, Clarke would himself enter the fray and essay to purify Thomism from an alien metaphysical tradition that had infiltrated it, namely, “the traditional practice among Thomistic metaphysicians (traditional, that is, for the past three or four centuries) of describing the content of ‘real being,’ the object of metaphysics, as ‘that which is or can be,’ thereby including within its extension two classes of beings, actual and possible.”<sup>12</sup> The inclusion of the “possibles” within the object of metaphysics is “inseparably linked,” according to Clarke,<sup>13</sup> with “the analysis of being taken as a noun (the object of metaphysics) as signifying essence with some relation to existence but prescinding from the actual exercise of this existence.”<sup>14</sup> Consequently, his point of attack was to show that this analysis of being as a noun fails from the standpoint of normal gram-

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<sup>11</sup> George P. Klubertanz, “Being and God According to Contemporary Scholastics,” *Modern Schoolman* 32 (1954): 1–17. The article is a summary of three then-current approaches to Thomistic metaphysics. Claiming that “this study will make no attempt to determine the issue,” he proceeds to subject caricatures of the so-called “conceptual approach” (that of Capreolus, Cajetan, and John of St. Thomas) and the “physical approach” (Laval-River Forest) to devastating criticism while claiming that the “metaphysical (read: existential) approach” alone relies on the very words of St. Thomas, offering us the undiluted wisdom of the master.

<sup>12</sup> Clarke, “What Is Really Real?,” 62.

<sup>13</sup> To me, it does not seem so inseparable, for the inclusion of possible being in the object of metaphysics is found also in those manuals that lack this analysis of being as a noun. Indeed, Clarke himself gives examples of such texts within the body of his essay.

<sup>14</sup> Clarke, “What Is Really Real?,” 62–63. In *Being and Some Philosophers* (98), Gilson focuses on the way that Suarez analyzes “being” as participle and noun. This appears to be the basis for Clarke’s claim that this manner of identifying the object of metaphysics had been “traditional . . . for the past three or four centuries.” However, Mark Gossiaux, in his article “Thomas of Sutton and the Real Distinction between Essence and Existence,” *Modern Schoolman* 83 (2006): 263–84, points out that this way of analyzing the word “being” is found in Sutton and Giles: “One should note that this same division of being reappears in other works of Sutton, and it is also found in Giles of Rome, who makes use of it to show how a created being may be regarded as a being *per suam essentiam* and *per participationem*” (266). Gossiaux considers both of these defenders of the real distinction to have failed in their understanding of St. Thomas: “In the *De esse et essentia*, he [Sutton presents a largely Aegidian theory of essence and existence, which he claims to be in harmony with the thought of Aquinas. In his final discussions of essence and existence in *Quodlibet* III one finds no criticism or repudiation of Giles’ theory from the attacks of Henry and Godfrey. A study of his texts fails to substantiate the claim that he arrived at an authentically Thomistic understanding of the real distinction between essence and existence” (277).

mathematical usage. Once the precise meaning of the word “being” is clarified, it will be clear that “as applied to actual and possible being is used in two radically and intrinsically different senses which, though related by dependence and analogy of extrinsic attribution, cannot be reduced to any one single meaning applicable to all by proper and intrinsic analogy.”<sup>15</sup> It will then remain for him to respond to objections to his position. In evaluating Clarke’s essay, I will first determine whether his critique of the analysis of the word “being” is sound. Second, I will outline the various senses in which the term “object” is used in relation to science in order to evaluate fairly his responses to the objections he proposes. Finally, I will point out the danger he wants to avoid by his approach to the object of metaphysics and relate it directly to Wells’s critique of Capreolus.

Clarke presents two examples of the analysis of the word “being” and the identification of being as a noun with the object of metaphysics. It is worth citing the latter of these, taken from a “Lavaliste” manual by Henri Grenier, in full:

Wherefore being taken concretely, as the participle of the verb “to be,” is used in two ways:

- 1) As a *participle* or formally, including to be or to exist as actually exercised, i.e. the very exercise of the act signified by the verb, just as *currens*, as a participle, means one who is actually running;
- 2) As a *noun* or materially, designating the essence or subject which is ordered to actual existence, but prescinding from whether or not it actually possesses this existence. Hence being as a noun signifies being *in actu signato*, i.e. as designated or denominated from the act of existence, although it neither affirms nor denies the exercise of this act.<sup>16</sup>

It is the noun that expresses the formal object of metaphysics. To this analysis, Clarke objects:

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<sup>15</sup> Clarke, “What Is Really Real?” 68–69.

<sup>16</sup> Henri Grenier, *Cursus Philosophiae*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Quebec: Le Séminaire de Québec, 1937), 7, cited in Clarke, “What Is Really Real?” 65.

The Latin present participle allows of three uses, one participial and two substantival. In ordinary grammatical parlance the participial use is strictly adjectival, requiring always the presence of some substantive which it modifies... There remain two noun uses. According to the first it signifies the subject of an action understood as actually exercising this action. Thus: *Studens non debet simul audire musicam* ("Someone studying should not simultaneously listen to music"). In the second it signifies the same subject as one whose characteristic or proper activity is the action expressed by the participle but prescinding from whether or not he is at present actually carrying on this activity or state. Thus: *Studens debet satis dormire* ("A student should get sufficient sleep").<sup>17</sup>

Since there are two noun uses, it remains to be determined which of the two is the object of metaphysics: that which includes the actual exercise of the act, or that which is capable of the act? Clarke asserts rather than argues that it is certainly not the latter, for

"being" as applied to actual and possible being is used in two radically and intrinsically different senses... The serious danger in attempting to include both actual and possible being under the single, apparently more ultimate category of real being is that it almost inevitably misleads one into believing, and at the very start of metaphysics, that there is some common element intrinsic to both of these orders which constitutes them to be real precisely as real. . . the only element common to both is intelligible essence precisely and exclusively as intelligible, since a possible essence has no more in it than that.<sup>18</sup>

I grant that the only element common to both is essence as intelligible, but will argue that this is what suits "being taken as a noun" to be the formal object of metaphysics. However, first I will show that his identification of two distinct noun uses of the participle is simply mistaken.

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<sup>17</sup> Clarke, "What Is Really Real?," 66–67.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

Thus his conclusion, namely, that “being” is used in two radically and intrinsically different senses, does not follow.

The grammatical rule governing the use of the participle in a sentence is that it must express activity contemporaneous with the main verb of the clause governing it.<sup>19</sup> Both examples given by Clarke are of a present indicative active participle (*studens*) contemporaneous with a present indicative active verb requiring a complementary infinitive (*debet + audire/dormire*). In this respect they are the same. The difference between the two, however, is that the first denotes a subject engaged in the activity of studying (*Studens*, i.e., one engaged in the act of studying, *non debet simul audire musicam*) whereas the second (*Studens debet satis dormire*) denotes a subject who is described by a characteristic activity in which he may or may not be currently engaged. The first example is precisely what is meant by the participial use of a participle, for it cannot stand alone without an understood subject of the activity, and thus corresponds to *ens* as a participle or adjective (the thing engaged in an act of existing). The second example is precisely what is meant by using the participle as a noun, standing as the very subject of the main verb, and thus corresponds to *ens* used as a noun (the thing that is characterized by the act of existing but may or may not be currently engaged in said activity). Consequently, since Clarke explicitly grants that “being used as a noun” is the object of metaphysics, and that this analysis of the word “being” is “inseparably linked” with the inclusion of the “possibles” in the object of metaphysics, the case should be closed.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Charles E. Bennett, *New Latin Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1918), 217ff.

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps Clarke spoke loosely in saying that the two issues are “inseparably linked,” for he is fully aware that Henri Grenier’s third edition of his *Cursus Philosophicus* lacks the analysis of the word *ens* while maintaining the traditional division. See Henri Grenier, *Cursus Philosophiae*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Quebec: Le Séminaire de Québec, 1947), 12. We will have the opportunity to comment on this text below. He also notes that H. D. Gardel’s manual lacks a discussion of being as noun and participle while expounding the traditional division: “Primarily, ‘being as being’ (the object of metaphysics) signifies existence (*esse*) in its immediate sense of real and actual existence: *ens actuale*, as the expression goes. But ‘being as being’ is not limited to this: *ens possibile*, i.e. anything capable of entering the world of concrete existence. Thus, whatever has been, or is, or will be, or could really be, under whatever mode or manner, is comprised under the object of metaphysics, yes even that which is affined to the concrete order of things by way of privation or negation. One thing only is debarred, the being

However, there are independent reasons, of which Clarke seems to be aware, for holding that real being is divided into actual and possible. After citing various texts of St. Thomas that he thinks establish conclusively that the object of metaphysics excludes possible being, he engages two arguments that demand its inclusion on the basis of the “Aristotelian conception of science as concerned only with essential predicates.”<sup>21</sup> First, there is the problem of the need for properties essentially predicated of being in order to arrive at a sound conclusion. Since existence belongs only to God as an essential predicate, existence itself cannot be the object of metaphysics. This objection, he thinks, “can be disposed of quite briefly.” His response to this line of argument is “simply to refuse to accept its premises in a rigid and univocal sense and to insist that the too narrow concept of Aristotelian science be enlarged to make room for the new *sui generis* element of reality brought into focus for the first time by St. Thomas and for the *sui generis* character of the science of metaphysics resulting from the nature of its object.”<sup>22</sup>

Second, for metaphysics to be a true science, it “must have the characteristics of absolute necessity and immutability.”<sup>23</sup> If only actually existent things are the proper object of metaphysics, we will lack that necessity and immutability, for we only have direct access to contingently existing beings. Hence we have recourse to the essential order to found the necessity of the science. This position is identified as presupposing that the mutable world “cannot bear within itself any necessity or immutability whatsoever,” which has the marks of a “Platonic-Augustinian depreciation of the contingent.”<sup>24</sup> Also, it assumes that “only essences in the strict sense can be abstracted,”<sup>25</sup> which is to ignore that Thomistic epistemology “has found a way, by its theory of the special mode of abstraction of the notion of being through the judgment of separation . . . to disengage and retain for intel-

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of reason (ens rationis), which is the subject of logic.” H. D. Gardeil, *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. John A. Otto, vol. 4 (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1956), 42. Interestingly, the translator inserted a footnote referencing Clarke’s article at the end of this passage to point out that this interpretation of the object of metaphysics was controversial.

<sup>21</sup> Clarke, “What Is Really Real?” 79.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 81

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

lectual analysis not only the essential but the existential aspects of the real beings that are its object.”<sup>26</sup> Consequently, on the basis of the Aristotelian notion of science, there is no reason to object to the idea that “Thomistic metaphysics . . . studies real being (essence-existing) formally as existent (that is, under the unifying formal object of the act of existence), which is not at all the same as to say formally as *particular*.”<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, as if to support this position, he refers the reader to an article by Gerald Phelan, who notes about the formal object of metaphysics that

when, therefore, the question is asked, “What is the formal object of metaphysics,” there can be but one answer, namely, that which formally constitutes its object, being (ID QUOD *est*), as being (*id quod EST*); and this is the act of being. Metaphysics cannot, consequently, be regarded as a philosophy of form or philosophy of essence. It is a philosophy of *whatever is or can be in any manner whatsoever*, considered specifically in the light of the ultimate existential actuality of all reality, the act of being (*esse*).<sup>28</sup>

Here Phelan explicitly includes what can be, the possible, within the formal object of metaphysics. Why, then, does Clarke seek to exclude the possible from the formal object of metaphysics? Is it confusion on his part about the various meanings of subject and object in the Aristotelian notion of science? Here it will be good to discuss the various meanings of “subject” and “object” of a science, including in our consideration Capreolus’s use of these terms, for it will have some bearing on our evaluation of Wells’s view.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Gerald B. Phelan, “A Note on the Formal Object of Metaphysics,” *New Scholasticism* 18 (1944): 199.

<sup>29</sup> Melvin Glutz begins his treatment of the subject and object of a science by pointing out the difficulty of coming to a uniform terminology: “There is a difference of terminology and viewpoint among the scholastics regarding the subject of a science. This can be confusing, especially when we are reading the text of St. Thomas and paralleling his doctrine with that of his commentators.” Melvin A. Glutz, *The Manner of Demonstrating in Natural Philosophy* (River Forest, IL: Dominican House of Studies, 1956), 41. Glutz follows the terminology of John of St. Thomas “as being more in

First, it is to be noted is that science, psychologically considered, is an intellectual habit that is formed by individual acts of science. We engage in an act of science when we come to know something previously unknown by means of recognizing the connection of the predicate with the subject through a middle term. Each act is related to a habit, and is thus placed in its proper species by the habit. The first division of scientific knowledge is between speculative and practical knowledge, a division that is made on the basis of the end of the science, namely, whether it is ordered to knowledge itself or to some further operation. If there are going to be diverse habits of speculative science, they must be diversified by being ordered to diverse objects. The proximate basis for the division of objects of science is what Capreolus calls its *genus scibile*:

the division of sciences according to kind, or also of their unity according to kind, is to be observed according to the general division or unity of the knowable object insofar as it is knowable; thus it is that all those sciences are the same according to genus whose objects are reduced to the same knowable genus (*genus scibile*); and those differ in genus whose objects are not reducible to the same knowable genus, but to diverse genera; likewise, it is the case that those sciences differ in genus whose demonstrative or probative middle terms are not reduced to one knowable genus but to diverse ones.<sup>30</sup>

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harmony with the usage of St. Thomas,” but points out that most others follow Cajetan. Cajetan’s terminology resembles that of Capreolus, and since it is the latter with which we are primarily concerned, we will pay special attention to Capreolus’s formulation. See also the attempt to harmonize the different ways of speaking in William A. Wallace, *The Role of Demonstration in Moral Theology: A Study of Methodology in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Thomist Press, 1962), 23–27. He relies directly on Capreolus.

<sup>30</sup> Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. Ceslaus Paban and Thomas Pègues, 7 vols. (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1967), I:36b: “divisio scientiarum secundum genus, vel etiam earum unitas secundum genus, attendenda est paenes divisionem vel unitatem generalem scibilis in quantum est scibile; ita quod omnes illae scientiae sunt eadem secundum genus, quarum objecta reducuntur ad idem genus scibilis; et illae differunt genere, quarum objecta non sunt reducibilia ad idem scibile, sed ad diversa genera; similiter quod illae scientiae different genere, quarum media demonstrativa vel probativa non reducuntur ad unum scibile, sed ad diversa.”

Since the *genus scibile* is the basis for the division of the speculative sciences, one and the same habit of science can embrace a diversity of objects. Here it is a matter of determining which object belongs *per se* to a particular habit and thus serves to unite diverse acts of knowing under a single habit as opposed to those objects that are only accidentally related to the habit:

But in the object something is considered as formal and something as material. But what is formal in the object is that according to which the object is referred to a potency or habit; but what is material is that in which this is founded. . . . From which it is clear that a power or habit is referred to the formal notion of the object *per se*; but to that which is material in the object *per accidens*. And those things which are *per accidens* do not vary a thing, but only those things which are *per se*: therefore a material diversity of object does not diversify a power or a habit, but only a formal diversity does. For there is one power of sight, by which we see rocks and men and the sky, because that diversity of objects is material, and not according to the formal notion of the visible.<sup>31</sup>

The material object of a habit of science, then, is that which admits of multiplicity but is united under a single formal notion. One can have multiple acts of knowledge terminating in diverse conclusions, but the diversity of conclusions does not diversify a habit of science. In this connection, it is important to note the difference between the *subject* and the *object* of a science, for the terms are sometimes used interchangeably: “the subject of a science is not entirely the same as its object . . . for the object of a science, properly speaking, is the demonstrated conclu-

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., I:37a: “Sed in obiecto consideratur aliquid ut formale et aliquid ut materiale. Formale autem in obiecto est id secundum quod obiectum refertur ad potentiam vel habitum; materiale autem id in quo hoc fundatur . . . . Ex quo patet quod potentia vel habitus refertur ad formalem rationem obiecti *per se*; ad id autem quod est materiale in obiecto, *per accidens*. Et ea quae sunt *per accidens* non variant rem, sed solum ea quae sunt *per se*: ideo materialis diversitas obiecti non diversificat potentiam vel habitum, sed solum formalis. Una est enim potentia visiva, qua videmus et lapides et homines et caelum, quia ista diversitas obiectorum est materialis, et non secundum formalem rationem visibilis.”



sion. But the subject of a science is that which serves as the subject in the demonstrated conclusions.<sup>32</sup> What diversifies habits of science, then, is not the diverse conclusions achieved, for nothing prevents two sciences from reaching the same conclusion. It is the means of getting there that determines which science it belongs to. So it is the formal object of a science that will unify the various acts of knowledge under a single habit. But the formal object itself can be considered in different ways:

The specific unity of a scientific habit is observed according to the unity of the formal notion of the object which that habit regards first and essentially; thus it is that all those habits are the same in species that regard the same object under the same formal notion first and adequately, whether that notion is general or special. And I am speaking of the formal notion of the object insofar as it is knowable. Likewise, concerning the formal notion, I understand not only what is related to it as *what (quod)* is known, but also what is related to it as *that by which (quo)* the object is known. For diverse habits can regard the same object under the same formal notion in the first way, but are distinguished by the notion of object taken in the second way . . . It is clear therefore that a diversity of means of demonstration takes away the unity of a habit . . . For the specific unity of a habit there is required a twofold unity of formal notion, namely of that which is related to it as *that which (quod)* and of that which is related to it as *that by which (quo)*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., I:46b: “subjectum scientiae non omnino est idem quod objectum ejusdem . . . quia objectum scientiae proprie est conclusio demonstrata. Sed subjectum scientiae est illud quod subjicitur in conclusionibus demonstratis.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., I:36b–37a: “Unitas specifica habitus scientifici attendenda est paenes unitatem rationis formalis objecti, quam ille habitus primo et per se respicit; ita quod omnes illi habitus sunt idem specie, qui respiciunt idem objectum sub eadem ratione formali primo et adaequate, sive illa ratio sit generalis sive specialis. Et loquor de formali ratione objecti in quantum est scibile. Similiter intelligo de ratione formali, non solum quae se habet ut quod cognoscitur, sed etiam de ratione formali quae se habet ut quo objectum cognoscitur. Nam habitus diversi possunt respicere idem objectum sub eadem ratione formali primo modo, qui tamen distinguuntur per rationem objecti secundo modo sumptam . . . Patet ergo quod diversitas mediorum demonstrativorum tollit unitatem habitus . . . Ad unitatem ergo specificam habitus requiritur duplex unitas formalis rationis, scilicet illius quae se habet ut quod, et illius quae se habet ut quo.”

Here the formal notion of the object (*ratio formalis objecti*) is divided into that which is primarily and essentially regarded in the object (*quae se habet ut quod*), called the formal object *quod*, and that by means of which the object is known (*quae se habet ut quo*), the formal object *quo*. The formal object *quod*, called also the *ratio formalis quae*,<sup>34</sup> is the subject of demonstration viewed as the adequate subject of the properties to be demonstrated of it.<sup>35</sup> The formal object *quo*, also called the *ratio formalis sub qua*,<sup>36</sup> determines the means of demonstration and so it is the definition of the subject that serves as the middle term joining it to the predicate in the conclusion.<sup>37</sup> This determines the *genus scibile* as it is the means by which that which is primarily attained is attained, and so it is the proximate basis for the division of scientific habits:

not just any diversity of means of demonstration diversifies the habit of science, but only the diversity of means that require a diverse notion of knowing (*ratio scibilis*) according to genus; just as the middle term in natural science differs from that in mathematical and divine: for the means of demonstration of

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<sup>34</sup> See Josef Gredt, O.S.B., *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, 7th ed., 2 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1937), I:187.

<sup>35</sup> Thus it is that John of St. Thomas calls this the “formal subject”: “The material subject is that thing about which something is demonstrated in some science; but the formal subject is that condition or notion according to which that subject is considered in such a science; and that subject to which such a condition primarily and essentially belongs is called the principal subject or the subject of attribution. *Subjectum materiale est res illa, de qua aliquid demonstratur in aliqua scientia; formale vero est illa habitudo, seu ratio, secundum quam subjecta illa considerantur in tali scientia; et illud subjectum cui primo et per se convenit talis habitudo, dicitur subjectum principale seu attributionis.*” Johannes a Sancto Thoma, *Cursus Theologicus in Summae Theologicam D. Thomae*, vol. 1 (Paris: Vivès, 1883), q.1, d.2, a.11 (402).

<sup>36</sup> Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae*, I:187.

<sup>37</sup> John of St. Thomas calls the formal object *quo* simply the formal object: “the material object is that proposition which is proven by inference and is known as an inferred truth; but the formal object is that notion under which and through which such a conclusion is illustrated and manifested: which indeed is found among the inferential principles as in the means that prove the conclusion. . . . *objectum materiale est illa proposito quae per illationem probatur et scitur tamquam veritas illata; formale vero est ratio illa sub qua, et per quam illustratur et manifestatur talis conclusio: quae utique in principiis inferentibus invenitur tamquam in medio probativo conclusionis.*” Johannes a Sancto Thoma, *Cursus Theologicus in Summae Theologicam D. Thomae*, vol. 1, q.1, d.2, a.11 (402).

Physics are taken from something which is suited to mobile being not *per accidens*, such as motion or sensible matter or the principle of motion; thus it is that there is always implied in such middle terms something pertaining to motion. But mathematical middle terms imply something suited to quantity insofar as it is of this kind; thus it is that middle terms of this kind fall in diverse genera contained under the knowable insofar as it is of this kind.<sup>38</sup>

The formal object primarily attained, then, is determined by the way the subject is viewed: as subject of properties that belong to it in virtue of mobility, quantity, or being. In order that the principles of demonstration in the science have the requisite necessity to cause the necessity of the conclusion, there must be some degree of abstraction from the particular. As the adequate objects of our knowledge are material beings, having matter as their individuating principles, the formal object *quo* will differ inasmuch as it defines the subject of demonstration in accordance with some grade of materiality. Hence the being that is studied in physics has certain properties demonstrated of it in view of needing sensible matter for its existence and for our understanding of it. But sensible matter, as the principle of individuation, must be left out of our consideration. The subject, then, must be considered as including matter in its definition, but prescinding from individual or signate matter. The activity proper to material beings, motion, is that by which we have intellectual access to a universal science of sensible beings. The formal object *quod* of natural philosophy, then, focusing on the actuality proper to material beings as such, is being insofar as it is capable of motion. This restricts the science to those things that

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<sup>38</sup> Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones*, 1:44b–45a: “non quaelibet diversitas mediorum demonstrationis diversificat habitum scientiae, sed solum diversitas mediorum quae requirit diversam rationem cognoscendi secundum genus; sicut differt medium naturale a mathematico et divino: media enim demonstrationum Physicae sumuntur ab aliquo quod convenit rei mobili non per accidens, sicut motus vel materia sensibilis vel principium motus, ita quod semper in talibus mediis implicatur aliquid pertinens ad motum; media autem mathematica implicant aliquid conveniens quantitati in quantum hujusmodi; ita quod hujusmodi media cadunt in diversa genera contenta sub scibili in quantum hujusmodi.”

are composed of form and matter; but it includes whatever it does not explicitly exclude, and so the special sciences of nature that examine things in their most particular aspects belong to this same degree of abstraction and are included within the formal object of the philosophy of nature.

Likewise, then, the being studied in Metaphysics is defined not in terms of what belongs *per se* to sensible being or being marked by quantity (which belongs to the second degree of abstraction), but to being as such. And so all things proper to materiality are left out of the quasi-definitions of being used as middle terms. The conclusions of the science will be verified in anything that exists, that is, whatever essences there are to which existence accrues. But they are equally applicable to anything that can be considered as capable of extramental existence. The formal notion of being, which is the formal object *quod* of metaphysics, includes whatever it does not explicitly exclude, considering all beings, possible and actual, in their order to the act of existence. This can be confirmed by the words of St. Thomas himself when speaking of God's power:

whatever can have the notion of being (*rationem entis*) is contained under absolute possibles in whose respect God is called omnipotent. But nothing is opposed to the notion of being except non being (*non ens*). Therefore that which implies in itself simultaneous existence and non existence is repugnant to the notion of absolute possibility which falls under divine omnipotence. Moreover, this does not fall under omnipotence, not because of a defect of divine power, but because it has neither the notion of something that can be made nor the notion of the possible. Therefore, whatsoever does not imply a contradiction is contained under these possibles, in respect of which God is called omnipotent. But those things that imply a contradiction are not contained under omnipotence for they do not have the notion of the possibles.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 25, art. 3c: "quidquid potest habere rationem entis, continetur sub possibilibus absolutis, respectu quorum Deus dicitur omnipotens. Nihil autem opponitur rationi entis, nisi non ens. Hoc igitur repugnat rationi possibilis absoluti, quod subditur divinae omnipotentiae, quod implicat in se esse et

Here the possibles are things, intelligible essences, that God can create. That is, they are *things* that are in potency to an act of existence. Thus they are sharply divided off from that nonbeing called a being of reason (*ens rationis*). These latter beings are purely mental relations that, although they may be founded in reality, cannot exist outside the mind. Consequently, the possibles must be considered real precisely in the sense that they have in their own intelligible content a strict ordination to the act of existence. They are not considered without reference to the act of existence, but are always considered as something to which that act may accrue.

But, to this line of interpretation Clarke objects:

in the possible essence this ordering is still only a purely rational relation, the essence as related by *thought* to its possible existence as *thought*, whereas in the actual being the relation is a real one between real essence and real existence. There still remains the unbridgeable gap between real and nonreal relations, and we are still left with the minimum note of intelligibility as the ultimate constitutive note of reality as such.<sup>40</sup>

This objection brings to sharper focus that the term *real* has not yet undergone analysis. What constitutes the real? To what is the real opposed? The traditional Thomists, criticized by Clarke, included potential being along with actual being in their understanding of real being as the formal object of metaphysics. But real being is certainly opposed to the being of reason that the possible essence seems to be in virtue of its “purely rational relation” to existence. But it is not as if the traditional Thomists were unaware of this problem. A couple of examples from the manualists cited by Clarke himself show this to be the case.

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non esse simul. Hoc enim omnipotentiae non subditur, non propter defectum divinae potentiae; sed quia non potest habere rationem factibilis neque possibilis. Quaecumque igitur contradictionem non implicant, sub illis possibilibus continentur, respectu quorum dicitur Deus omnipotens. Ea vero quae contradictionem implicant, sub divina omnipotentia non continentur, quia non possunt habere possibilium rationem.” Citations of *Summa* from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Institut d'études médiévales (Ottawa: Studium Generalis O. P., 1953.) See also Lawrence Dewan, “St. Thomas and the Possibles,” *New Scholasticism* 53, no. 1 (1979): 76.

<sup>40</sup> Clarke, “What Is Really Real?” 70.

First, there is the division of being given by Josephus Gredt:

Being (*ens*) is divided a) as a (logical) potential whole analogue α) by a quasi-essential division into real being and being of reason. Real being is what has existence in nature; a being of reason is what does not have objective existence except in the intellect. Real being is divided into *ens a se* or uncreated being (God) and *ens ab alio* or created being. Created being is divided into the ten categories. Being of reason is divided into negation and relation of reason, which are the quasi-categories of being of reason—Being of reason properly speaking is not being, or does not have essence, but is only conceived as a being; therefore it does not essentially pertain to the science of being as being or Metaphysics. β) By a quasi-accidental division, being by reason of its state into actual and possible insofar as it has being (*esse*) actually or only possibly. – b) As an actual whole, being is divided into entitative parts, which are essence (which in created being is a potential part or potency) and existence (which is the act of a being). The division of being into complete being, which is the whole thing composed of essence and being, and incomplete being, which is partial, i.e., essence and being taken individually, follows this division.<sup>41</sup>

This division is given of immaterial being in general, and so it indicates being as attained at the third degree of abstraction. Gredt includes being

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<sup>41</sup> Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae*, 2:5: “Dividitur ens a) tamquam totum potentiale (logicum) analogum α) divisione quasi essentiali in ens reale et ens rationis. Ens reale est, quod habet esse in rerum natura: ens rationis est, quod non habet esse obiective nisi in intellectu. Ens reale dividitur in ens a se seu ens increatum (Deum) et ens ab alio seu ens creatum. Ens ab alio dividitur in decem praedicamenta. Ens rationis dividitur in negationem et relationem rationis, quae sunt quasi praedicamenta entis rationis. – Ens rationis proprie non est ens, seu non habet essentiam, sed concipitur tantum ut ens; ideo etiam per se non pertinet ad scientiam circa ens ut ens seu ad Metaphysicam. β) Divisione quasi per accidens dividitur ens ratione status in ens actuale et possibile, quatenus habet esse actu aut possibiliter tantum. – b) Tamquam totum actuale ens dividitur in partes entitativas, quae sunt essentia (quae in ente creato est pars potentialis seu potentia) et existentia (quae est actus entis). Hanc divisionem sequitur divisio entis in ens completum, quod est totum compositum ex essentia et esse, et ens incompletum, partiale: essentiam et esse singillatim sumpta.” See also *ibid.*, n. 21.

of reason at this third degree of abstraction, and in the logical section of his work, he identifies logic as a speculative science dealing with immaterial being, but not without qualifying how being is said of beings of reason: "Logic relinquishes matter by a merely negative abstraction, attaining nothing perfect, but only being of reason, which is a being only in a qualified sense."<sup>42</sup> It seems to me that he should further qualify how logic is included among the speculative sciences,<sup>43</sup> but this point is not essential to the issue at hand. More importantly, we must identify that which the science of metaphysics primarily and essentially attains, namely, that of which being is essentially predicated. Since being, used as a participle, is essentially predicated of God alone, the being that is essentially predicated of all the things studied in metaphysics, the whole universe of being, must be being used as a noun. In this way, metaphysics will treat common being, abstracting from corporeal imperfection while remaining open to the entitative composition of act and potency. So anything of which being, used as a noun, can be essentially predicated, falls in the formal object of metaphysics, whereas that of which it is only improperly predicated does not:

Being taken as a noun is not only said of every actual being, but also of every merely possible being, as is clear from the concept of being taken nominally; it is said not only of complete being, but also of incomplete or partial being: that being taken nominally is said of essence is clear in itself; for being taken nominally is essence, but it is also said of existence, not as "that which" but as "that by which." Being as a noun is likewise said even of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 2:190: "Logica abstractione mere negativa relinquit materiam, nihil perfectionis attingendo, sed ens rationis, quod est ens tantummodo secundum quid."

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *In de trinitate*, q. 5, art. 1, ad 1 (Leonine 50:139): "But the things logic deals with are not sought to be known for their own sake, but as a kind of tool for the other sciences; and therefore logic is not contained under speculative philosophy as if a principal part, but as something reduced to speculative philosophy inasmuch as it serves philosophy by its instruments, namely, syllogisms and definitions and other things of this kind which we need in the speculative sciences. *Res autem de quibus est logica non queruntur ad cognoscendum propter se ipsas, set ut amminiculum quoddam ad alias scientias; et ideo logica non continetur sub speculatiua philosophia quasi principalis pars, set sicut quiddam reductum ad philosophiam speculatiuam prout ministrat speculationi sua instrumenta, scilicet sillogismos, et diffinitiones, et alia huiusmodi quibus in scientiis speculatiuis indigemus.*"

being of reason, though improperly, as a being of reason is only improperly a being.<sup>44</sup>

Second, there is the division given by Henri Grenier, in the third edition of his *Cursus Philosophicus*, which relinquished the analysis of the word being as noun and participle:

The division of being: 1<sup>st</sup>. Being, taken universally, is divided into *real being* and *being of reason*. Real being is that which has existence (*esse*) in nature. Being of reason is being that has objective existence in reason, to which no existence corresponds in reality; e. g., species, genus. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Being is again divided into *actual being* and *possible being*. Actual being is that which has existence in reality. Possible being is that which does not have existence in reality, but which does not have a repugnance to existence. In possible being, two things ought to be distinguished: a) *thing* or essence; b) the state of possibility. On the part of *thing*, possible being is called something real, not existing in act, but as the object of a real power, insofar as it can be made by a real power. On the part of state, possible being is a being of reason, because the state of possibility excludes actual existence.<sup>45</sup>

On this account, the *state of possibility*, treated by Gredt as a quasi-acci-

<sup>44</sup> Gredt, *Elementa Philosophiae*, 2:6: “Ens nominaliter sumptum non tantum dicitur de omni ente actuali, sed etiam de omni ente mere possibili, ut patet ex conceptu entis nominaliter sumpti, quod abstrahit ab existentia; dicitur non tantum de ente completo, sed etiam de incompleto seu partiali: Ens nominaliter sumptum dici de essentia, per se patet; ens enim nominaliter sumptum est essentia, at dicitur etiam de existentia, non ut ‘quod,’ sed ut ‘quo.’ Ens ut nomen tandem dicitur etiam de ente rationis, etsi improprie, sicut improprie tantum ens rationis est ens.”

<sup>45</sup> Grenier, *Cursus Philosophiae*, 12: “Entis divisio: 1. Ens universaliter sumptum dividitur in ens reale et ens rationis. Ens reale est ille quod habet esse in rerum natura. Ens rationis est ens habens esse objective in ratione, cui nullum esse correspondet in re; v.g., species, genus. 2. Ens adhuc dividitur in ens actuale et ens possibile. Ens actuale est illud quod existentiam habet in re. Ens possibile est illud quod existentiam non habet in re, sed quod repugnantiam non habet ad essendum. In ente possibili duo distingui debent: a) res seu essentia; b) status possibilitatis. Ex parte rei, ens possibile dicitur aliquid reale, non actu existens, sed ut objectum potentiae realis, quatenus fieri postest ab aliqua potentia reali. Ex parte status, ens possibile est ens rationis, quia status possibilitatis excludit existentiam actualem.”



dental division of being as a potential logical whole, falls under being of reason for it explicitly excludes actual existence. The intelligible essence, on the other hand, although not existing in act, is called real for it is the object of a real power. That is, it is the kind of thing that is within God's power to make.

This brings us to Clarke's final objection to calling this kind of being *real*. Although an intelligible but nonexistent essence is "founded on the most real of all realities, the divine essence seen by the divine intellect as really and existentially imitable in this particular way," to call this a real being is to make "a subtle and elusive, but nonetheless illicit, transition from thought to reality."<sup>46</sup> Granting that the intelligible content of a possible essence differs from that of a being of reason, he considers that it proves too much to call this a real being: "But it does not follow that *what* is being thought about thereby acquires any ontological status of its own as opposed to ontological or extramental nonbeing."<sup>47</sup> If it did follow, then even the being of reason should be called real, for it too has intelligible content. Consequently, the possible essence can only be called real by way of extrinsic attribution, for in itself it has only intentional being: "Thus an object of thought can be called 'a being' or 'real' not because it is a real being in itself, but because it is thought by a real being, and, in the case of a possible, has an intelligible relation to the real order."<sup>48</sup>

But this response presupposes that he has established conclusively that being as a noun, the formal object of metaphysics, means nothing other than the actually existent essence. Consequently, the proper use of the term *real* applies only to actual existents. We have seen, however, that this is not the proper meaning of being as a noun. The formal object of metaphysics does not exclude possible being, for it is by a definition of being that can be essentially predicated of both created and uncreated being that we can have demonstration about being as such. Being as actually existent is essentially predicated only of God, and can only be used as a middle term in the demonstrations of the divine attributes. Because of this fundamental disagreement about the meaning of being

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<sup>46</sup> Clarke, "What s Really Real?," 85.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

taken as a noun, Clarke's criticism of calling possible being real is based on terms that are not shared by his opponents. Having refused to allow the meaning of being as essence any ontological significance unless understood as existing in act, he is attributing to his opponent a view that the latter would certainly not accept. He is saying that by calling the possible essence real, his opponent attributes an independent existence to it. His opponent, however, would not accept that the term real is entirely coterminous with *existent* or *actual*. His opponent takes the term *real* in a sense closer to its etymological roots, as derived from *res*, thing. Consequently, that is real which is an intelligible essence, even when considered apart from its actual existence, as long as existence is not explicitly excluded from its consideration. It is real precisely as a thing or essence to which the act of existence can or does accrue.

Although Clarke is certainly correct to point out that being refers primarily to actually existent things, he errs when identifying the object of metaphysics as "being taken as a noun, signifying existing essence precisely as existent,"<sup>49</sup> to the exclusion of possible being, for his analysis of being used as a participle and a noun is flawed. But part of the reason he errs is that he nowhere clarifies exactly what he means by the term "object" as related to a science, and uses it in different ways at different times. We have seen, however, that the object of metaphysics can be understood in three ways: first, there is the material object, namely, the conclusions attained in the science; second, there is the formal object *quo*, the definition of the subject as the middle term in the demonstrations; third, there is the formal object *quod*, which is the subject as viewed from the standpoint of the intelligibility provided by the formal object *quo*. The formal object *quod* of metaphysics, then, must be that of which being can be essentially predicated in such a way that it includes both created and uncreated being. Possible being, though it has no actual existence, falls under the formal object of metaphysics, for being can be predicated essentially of it. But the possibles are only considered real in relation to the active power of God, who can give them actual existence.

At this point, we can briefly consider Wells's treatment of Capreolus mentioned at the beginning of this essay. Wells brings up some very good

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

texts to show the mind of Capreolus with respect to nonactual essences, and his interpretation of these texts seems to be correct. It is his evaluation that Capreolus's thought is at variance with that of St. Thomas with which I take issue. The main issue treated by Wells is how Capreolus understands St. Thomas when the latter says: "The substance of each thing belongs to it essentially (*per se*), and not by another (*per aliud*) . . . but of every created thing, *esse* belongs to it by another; for otherwise it would not be created."<sup>50</sup> The concern is that Capreolus interprets this in such a manner that he makes essence impervious to any efficient causality.<sup>51</sup> That Capreolus does have this interpretation is confirmed by the way he explains the demands of *per se* predication such that any consideration of the efficient cause of an essence is left out of the picture. Consequently, what is necessary in the essential order is the prerequisite of the existential order: "In short, he is arguing from essence to existence; that is, if this is what essence is, then existence must be such and such."<sup>52</sup> Further, to say that essences come to be by an efficient cause on this view would introduce multiplicity into the divine essence, for the necessary and immutable truths about them are founded in the divine intellect. But "this solution takes place because the problem has been posed in terms of an *esse essentiae* and an *esse existentiae* and the tradition behind them."<sup>53</sup> Confirmation of this can be found in Capreolus's approval of Henry of Ghent's terminology: "as Henry says, and well in my judgment, essence has a twofold *esse*, namely a being of essence and a being of existence."<sup>54</sup> It belongs to this metaphysical tradition, as opposed to that of St. Thomas himself, that "essence as essence has being proper to itself,"<sup>55</sup> and so does not need any creative efficient cause.

However, Capreolus himself, in a passage cited by Wells, warns against understanding him to be saying that essence has some being that is not from God. After saying that a "safer" way of dealing with the

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<sup>50</sup> SCG II, q. 52, as cited in Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones*, 1:302a: "Substantia uniuscujusque est ei per se, et non per aliud . . . Sed cujuslibet rei creatae esse est ei per aliud; nam alias non esset creatum."

<sup>51</sup> Wells, "Capreolus on Essence and Existence," 11.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones*, 3:76a: "sicut dicit Henricus, et bene, meo iudicio, essentia habet duplex esse, scilicet esse essentiae, et esse existentiae."

<sup>55</sup> Wells, "Capreolus on Essence and Existence," 21

essences of creatures is that given by St. Thomas in *De potentia*,<sup>56</sup> he says about his own way of dealing with the problem: “Nevertheless, the other way is not erroneous, nor proximate to error, except insofar as it seems to posit that essence has some being (*esse*) and not from God.”<sup>57</sup> With this proviso, he approves of Henry’s terminology and clarifies that the “being of essence” is dependent upon God as exemplar cause, whereas the “being of existence” is from God as efficient cause. The former should not be said to be created, for it is nothing other than the divine essence as understood by the divine intellect. It is that *by which* God creates rather than that which God creates.<sup>58</sup> That essence as essence has a being proper to itself in the way Wells understands it is not a position that Capreolus holds. Rather, Capreolus is willing to talk about the being of essence as existing in the divine intellect to ground the necessary and immutable truths about nonactual beings. He thus keeps strictly to the demands of Aristotelian science by insisting on elaborating our understanding of essences on the basis of what can be predicated of them *per se*. He clearly understands that the formal object of metaphysics is that which belongs to being as such, and that this includes those intelligible essences that have no actual existence but are possible in relation to the active power of God. Wells, who follows Clarke’s understanding of the formal object of metaphysics, cannot help but judge Capreolus’s thought to be a departure from that of St. Thomas.

Wells’s interpretation of Capreolus has not been without its adherents. Maurer relied explicitly on Wells for his characterization of the great commentator, pointing out that Capreolus’s manner of distin-

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 3, art. 5, ad 2: “To the second it ought to be said that from the fact that being is attributed to the quiddity, not only being, but the quiddity itself is said to be created, for before it has being it is nothing, except perchance in the intellect of the creator, where it is not a creature but the creating essence. *Ad secundum dicendum, quod ex hoc ipso quod quidditati esse attribuitur, non solum esse, sed ipsa quidditas creari dicitur: quia antequam esse habeat, nihil est, nisi forte in intellectu creantis, ubi non est creatura, sed creatrix essentia.*” Thomae Aquinatis, *Quaestiones Disputatae*, ed. Raimondo Spiazzi and P. Bazzi, 8th ed., vol. 2 (Turin: Marietti, 1949), 49b.

<sup>57</sup> Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones*, 3:76a: “Nec tamen alia via est erronea, nec errori proxima, nisi pro quanto videtur ponere quod essentia habet aliquod esse, et non a Deo.”

<sup>58</sup> This is not alien to the thought of St. Thomas himself. See, for example, *ST I*, q. 44, art. 3.

guishing essence from existence is vulnerable to the critique of Suarez.<sup>59</sup> Both Wells and Maurer followed the lead of Gilson who saw Suarez's analysis of being used as a noun and participle as the foundation for the latter's denial of the real distinction of essence and existence.<sup>60</sup> In light of Gilson's critique of Suarez, Clarke was concerned to identify the object of metaphysics as that which is, and not that which can be. But Clarke's attempt to overthrow the "traditional Thomist" position has been found wanting. A critical reappraisal of Gilsonian critiques of the commentatorial tradition then seems to be called for. Capreolus, and those he influenced, had formulated their notion of the formal object of metaphysics in light of St. Thomas's interpretation and application of Aristotelian science as exemplified in the *Posterior Analytics*. Consequently, a proper assessment of Capreolus and the other commentators should take that logical doctrine into account. N&V

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<sup>59</sup> See Armand Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982), 348, 423n3.

<sup>60</sup> Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 96–107.



## The Personhood of the Separated Soul

MARK K. SPENCER

*University of St. Thomas*

*St. Paul, MN*

A DEBATE has recently arisen over the questions of whether, on the Thomistic view, the human soul is a person after death and prior to resurrection, and whether it is the same person as the soul-matter composite of which it was a part before death. Such questions are of great importance for those who hold to the immortality of the soul. Answering them requires us to inquire deeply into what we human persons are, and into the plausibility of the Thomistic answer to that question. According to many Thomists, a person is a substance with the highest degree of dignity that a substance can have, is incommunicable, and is capable of ruling itself (*dominus sui, sui iuris*) and acting autonomously with subjective interiority.<sup>1</sup> If the separated soul lacks these character-

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<sup>1</sup> Aquinas uses “lord of oneself” (*dominus sui*) and “lord of his acts” (*dominus sui actus*) in his account of free will, not as a defining mark of personhood as such (though it is of the essence of persons to be free) at *Scriptum super sententiis* I, d. 17, q. 2, a. 3; II, d. 7, q. 1, a. 2; III, d. 18, q. 1, a. 2; *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* q. 5, a. 10; *Summa contra gentiles* (SCG) II, c. 23; III, c. 111–13, 155; *Summa theologiae* (ST) I-II, q. 6, a. 2, ad 2; II-II, q. 64, a. 5, ad 3; q. 122, a. 1. He uses “a law to himself” (*sui iuris*) similarly at ST II-II, q. 104, a. 5. All citations from Aquinas are from [www.corpusthomicum.org](http://www.corpusthomicum.org) (Navarre: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2012), and all translations are mine. The later Thomistic tradition considered these to be defining marks of personhood as such; cf. Thomas de Vio Cajetan, *Expositio super sancti Thomae Aquinatis* (Rome: Leonine ed., 1888), vol. 4, I, q. 29, a. 1, n. 11, 329; Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus* (Paris: Victor Palme, 1877), vol. 3, t. 6, d. 9, dub 1, 341; Edouard Hugon, “Si l’âme séparée est une personne,” *Revue Thomiste* 17 (1909): 593; Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993), 117. Oth-

istics, then it is difficult to see how the soul's existence after death can provide me with a rational basis, apart from supernatural hope and faith in the resurrection, for the commonly held beliefs that I shall live on after death, and that my dead loved ones are now alive in another place.<sup>2</sup> Most Thomists have denied that the separated soul is a person because they hold that the human person is essentially a composite of matter and soul.<sup>3</sup> It is thought that to hold that the separated soul is a person is to be a substance dualist, not a Thomistic hylomorphist.<sup>4</sup> Each account of the separated soul thus runs into problems.

In this essay, I argue that a Thomist can hold that human persons survive their deaths constituted by separated souls, and thus can hold the common beliefs about personal immortality. Unlike others who have defended this "alternative" or "survivalist" view (in distinction to

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ers in this tradition describe the person as "autonomous," "for oneself," "interior to oneself" or "possessing oneself": Mariasui Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1965), 34; Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerard Phelan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 463; *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 41; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 30–32. Aquinas calls the human person incommunicable in his *Commentary on the Sentences at In III Sent* d. 5, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2, and this is examined by all his major commentators.

<sup>2</sup> Aquinas argues that the immortality of the soul satisfies somewhat one's personal desire for immortality at SCG II, c. 79.

<sup>3</sup> When writing strictly, I say "matter and soul," not "body and soul," because the body is matter formed by the soul, on one sense of "body"; on another sense, the body is matter under quantified dimensions, without any powers. Still, I think it makes sense and is in accord with the standard usages of the Thomistic tradition to say that the soul is "apart from the body" to refer to the state of the soul when not informing matter, and to say that the soul is "in the body" when it is in the state of informing matter. Phrases like "the soul in the body" just mean "the soul in the state of informing matter such that they constituted the body." Cf. *De ente et essentia* c. 2; SCG IV, c. 81; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 1; q. 76, a. 5, ad 1. Cf. Eleonore Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 512; Patrick Toner, "St. Thomas on Death and the Separated Soul," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010): 590–91; Christina Van Dyke, "Not Properly a Person: The Rational Soul and Thomistic Substance Dualism," *Faith and Philosophy* 26 (2009): 195; John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 298–99.

<sup>4</sup> David Oderberg, "Hylemorphic Dualism," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 22 (2005): 72; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 208–16; Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism," 517–23.



the “standard” or “corruptionist” view that the separated soul is not a person), I shall show that Aquinas and many of his followers did not hold this view, implicitly or explicitly.<sup>5</sup> Nor do I think that the corruptionist view is an implausible interpretation of Thomism. However, I argue that one can (and perhaps should) hold the survivalist view, while also holding to other, more fundamental Thomistic positions on being and personhood. A full investigation of the question of whether a Thomist can hold the survivalist view requires inquiry into and synthesis of the historical Thomistic tradition, in a deeper way than has been done by others in this debate. I engage in that inquiry and synthesis in this essay, and locate the current debate within that tradition. I show which elements of the Thomistic tradition can be held, and how these must be interpreted, to be both a Thomist and a survivalist. I first summarize the arguments of the two views, considering the metaphysical arguments for these views, not the moral arguments related to the punishment or rewarding of the soul.<sup>6</sup> Next, I present an interpretation of Thomistic views on existence, personhood, and the separated soul. Finally, on that basis, I argue for my position.

### The Survivalist View

A first argument for the survivalist view is based on the fact that Aquinas thinks that the separated soul can engage in the acts typical of persons;<sup>7</sup> I

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<sup>5</sup> For this terminology, see Christopher Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus* (London: Continuum, 2009), 120–21; Patrick Toner, “Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 26 (2009): 121; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 597.

<sup>6</sup> For moral arguments for the survivalist view, see David Hershenov, “Soulless Organisms? Hylomorphism vs. Animalism,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85 (2011): 474–76; David Hershenov and Rose Koch-Hershenov, “Personal Identity and Purgatory,” *Religious Studies* 42 (2006): 441; Stump, “Resurrection and the Separated Soul”, in Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 463. For a response from the corruptionist view, see Toner, “Personhood and Death,” 130–31. Cf. *De veritate* q. 13, a. 3, ad 1; *ST I*, q. 21, a. 1; q. 23, a. 3; q. 75, a. 4; I-II, q. 1, a. 1; II-II q. 61, a. 4, ad 1; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus*, vol. 3, *Philosophia naturalis, De anima* (Paris: Vives, 1883), q. 9, a. 1, 432–33.

<sup>7</sup> For those who hold this view, see Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship*, 77–79; Christopher Brown, “Souls, Ships, and Substances,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007): 655–68; Jason Eberl, “Aquinas on the Nature of Human Beings,” *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 341–42; “Do Humans Persist between Death and Resurrec-

refer to this as the *Argument from Acts*.<sup>8</sup> The separated soul thinks, wills, loves, and desires;<sup>9</sup> it experiences pleasure or pain;<sup>10</sup> it remembers forms that it abstracted in the body;<sup>11</sup> it has relationships and communicates with other separated souls, angels, and God;<sup>12</sup> it can pray and hear prayers;<sup>13</sup> it can appear to composite humans.<sup>14</sup> One of Aquinas's axioms is that the way that a thing acts follows from the way that it exists, that is, its mode (or kind) of operation follows its mode of being.<sup>15</sup> The fact that the separated

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tion?," in *Metaphysics and God*, ed. Kevin Timpe (New York: Routledge, 2009); "The Metaphysics of Resurrection," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 74 (2001): 215–30; "Varieties of Dualism," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 50 (2010): 39–56; David Oderberg, *Real Essentialism*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), chap. 10; Oderberg, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology," *European Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 4 (2012): 1–26; Stump, *Aquinas*, 50–54; Eleonore Stump, "Resurrection and the Separated Soul," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, chap. 34; Eleonore Stump, "Resurrection, Reassembly, and Reconstitution," in *Die menschliche Seele: Brauchen wir den Dualismus?*, ed. Bruno Niederberger and Edmund Runggaldier (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2006); J. P. Moreland and Scott Rae, *Body and Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 206.

<sup>8</sup> Stump, *Aquinas*, 52–53, 208. Cf. Mary Rousseau, "Elements of a Thomistic Philosophy of Death," *Thomist* 43 (1979): 582–601; Victor Edmund Sleva, *The Separated Soul in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1940), 120–77.

<sup>9</sup> *De veritate*, q. 19, a. 1; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 3, q. 9, a. 1; *In II Sent* d. 19, q. 1, a. 1; *SCG* II, c. 83; *ST* I, q. 89, a. 1; *ST Supplement* q. 69, a. 2; q. 70, aa. 2 and 3. Although the last source is not by Aquinas but a compilation of his other writings, I cite it because those who defend the survivalist view cite it, and I wish to convey their views here.

<sup>10</sup> *De veritate*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 12; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 7, q. 1, a. 1, and q. 2, a.un.; *SCG* IV, c. 91; *ST* I-II, q. 4, a. 5; *Supp* q. 70, a. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Sentencia libri de anima*, I, lect 10, n. 152; *Quaestio disputata de anima*, a. 15, ad 17; *De veritate* q. 19, a. 1; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 3, q. 9, a. 1; *In IV Sent* d. 50, q. 1, a. 2; *SCG* II, c. 81; *ST* I, q. 89, a. 4–6.

<sup>12</sup> *De veritate*, q. 19, a. 1; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 15, ad 11 and 20; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 3, q. 9, a. 1; *In IV Sent* d. 50, q. 1, a. 1; *ST* I, q. 89, aa. 2 and 8.

<sup>13</sup> *De veritate*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 12; *In IV Sent* d. 15, q. 4, a. 5, qu. 1, corpus and ad 3; *ST* II-II, q. 83, a. 11; *Supplement* q. 72, aa. 1–3. Aquinas says that prayers are acts, and acts are attributed to persons, at *In IV Sent* d. 45, q. 3, a. 2, ad 3, and *Supplement*, q. 72, a. 2, ad 3, though at *ST* II-II, q. 83, a. 11, ad 5, he says that separated souls are invoked as persons only because they were parts of persons and will be part of persons after the resurrection. Cf. Eberl, "Do Humans Persist?," 193; Hugon, "Si l'âme," 590. I am grateful to Tim Pawl for this point.

<sup>14</sup> *In IV Sent* d. 45, q. 1, a. 1, qu. 3; *ST* I, q. 89, a. 8, ad 2; *Supplement*, q. 69, a. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1 and 2;

soul engages in acts typical of human persons suggests that it is a human person, so as to be the kind of thing capable of such acts. The person is in an unnatural condition without matter, lacking nonintellectual powers and operations, except insofar as these are “rooted” in the soul.<sup>16</sup> Despite being unable to exercise these powers, it can at least weakly exercise the rational powers, which are the powers most proper to human nature.<sup>17</sup>

A second argument for the survivalist view turns on the claim that for Aquinas, composition or constitution is not identity; I refer to this as the *Argument from Constitution*. Aquinas holds that a substantial whole is greater than the sum of the parts that compose it, or the principles that constitute it, that is, that internally give it existence of some kind.<sup>18</sup> For example, in the present life, the whole human being is composed of, but greater than, not identical to, soul and matter.<sup>19</sup> The survivalist view holds that a thing can lose parts, and the remaining parts can still

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*Quaestiones de quodlibet* 10, q. 3, a. 2; SCG III, c. 113; ST I, q. 50, a. 5; q. 75. aa. 2 and 3; q. 105, a. 5. Cf. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 8; Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 373.

<sup>16</sup> SCG IV, c. 81; ST I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 2; Eberl, “Do Humans Persist,” 194–96, 201. Aquinas says the nonintellectual powers remain “in root” (*radice*) in the separated soul, not as actually present, because they require bodily organs to be actually present, at *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 19, ad 5; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 9, q. 4, a. 2. One thing is in another “in root” when the latter immediately causes the former when placed in the right conditions. Cf. *Sententia libri De anima* I, lec. 14, n. 199; Domingo Bañez, *Scholastica commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1 (Salamanca, 1585), q. 76, a. 1, dub 5, concl 1 n. 2, 162. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 441, says the soul contains the powers *eminenter*, able to “emanate” or cause them when placed in its natural condition of informing matter.

<sup>17</sup> Stump, *Aquinas*, 52–53; Eberl, “Aquinas on the Nature,” 339–41. Cf. *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 10, q. 4, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 6, ad 14; a. 19, od, 5; ST I, q. 89, a. 1; q. 117, a. 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Sententia libri metaphysicae* VII, lect 17, n. 1674: “quia aliquid est sic ex aliquo compositum ut omne, idest totum sit unum, et non hoc modo sicut cumulus lapidum, sed sicut syllaba, quae est unum simpliciter; in omnibus talibus oportet, quod ipsum compositum non sit ea ex quibus componitur: sicut syllaba non est elementa.”

<sup>19</sup> Stump means the same thing by “constitution” as Brown means by “composition.” Aquinas and later Thomists sometimes use *compositio/compositum* and sometimes use *constitutio/constitutum* for situations where one set of principles gives rise to a whole that is greater than their sum. See Oderberg, “Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology,” 15, on the lack of distinction between constitution and composition. Cf. *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 2, a. 9; q. 2, a. 1, ad 1; SCG II, c. 68; ST I, q. 76, a. 1; III q. 2, a. 1, ad 2.

constitute the original whole, if the remaining part or parts retain these characteristics: first, the principle of specific identity for the original whole, that is, that in virtue of which the original whole is the kind of thing that it is; second, the same act of existence as the original whole, that is, the same ultimate actuality whereby the whole exists; third, what remains must be able to perform the operations typical of the species of thing that the original whole was. In the human person, the soul is the principle of identity. The soul is the primary bearer of the human person's act of existence, and so is able to exist apart from matter, while continuing to bear that same act of existence. And, as we saw in the *Argument from Acts*, the soul is that in virtue of which the person performs intellectual operations, the operations most typical of the human species, and it can perform these operations separated from the composite.<sup>20</sup> So a human person could lose all of his or her matter and still be constituted, as the same whole, by the soul, though he or she would not thereby be identical to the soul.<sup>21</sup> On this basis, the survivalist holds that identity of soul is necessary and sufficient for personal identity.<sup>22</sup> Some proponents of this view contend that I ordinarily refer to myself as "I" and others refer to me by name in virtue of my soul, my "chief part," because it is the subject of my intellect, and I am identified by myself and others in virtue of my psychological or intellectual characteristics and behavior. For this reason, I can still refer to myself as "I" and others can refer to me by name when I am constituted just by my soul.<sup>23</sup>

The separate soul does not seem to fulfill the definition of a person as an "individual substance of a rational nature," because it lacks

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<sup>20</sup> *Quaestiones de anima* a. 1, 3, 5; SCG II, c. 50; ST I, q. 75, a. 2; q. 76, a. 1; q. 79, a. 1. Cf. Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 71.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship*, 78–79; Eberl, "Do Humans Persist," 340; Stump, *Aquinas*, 52; Stump, "Resurrection," 461.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, "Souls, Ships, and Substances," 657; Eberl, "Do Humans Persist," 194; Oderberg, *Real Essentialism*, 255–57; Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism," 516. An extreme version of this position is held by J. P. Moreland and Scott Rae, who hold as Thomists that human persons are essentially just souls, though souls are substantially united as form to matter; matter becomes part of what is essentially a soul. This is contrary to what Aquinas says, but we shall see later (at note 164) that it is not as at odds with Thomism as might be at first thought. Cf. Moreland and Rae, *Body and Soul*, 14, 201, 206; Van Dyke, "Not Properly a Person," 187–88, 196–200.

<sup>23</sup> Oderberg, "Hylemorphic Dualism," 96. The soul is called "what is principally" (*quod est principale*) in the human person at ST I, q. 75 a. 4.

a complete nature.<sup>24</sup> Still, the survivalist holds that a separated soul retains what is necessary and sufficient to constitute a human person. The survivalist agrees with Aquinas that a human person is not identical to a soul, but contends that, in the separated state, a person is constituted by a soul, while remaining an individual rational animal and individual substance of a rational nature.<sup>25</sup> This situation is similar to a thought experimental situation in which a human person is reduced to a disembodied head; persons are not just heads, though they can be constituted by heads.<sup>26</sup> Despite the strangeness of the claim that there could be disembodied animals, it is necessary for the survivalist to maintain that the separated soul is an animal, since Aquinas holds that human persons are essentially animals.

### The Corruptionist View

The texts of Aquinas are on the side of the corruptionist view.<sup>27</sup> The main argument for this view is that the separated soul cannot be or constitute a human person because it lacks complete human nature.<sup>28</sup> I refer to this

<sup>24</sup> *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia dei*, q. 9, a. 2; *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 1: *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*.

<sup>25</sup> Stump, *Aquinas*, 52–54; “Resurrection,” 462. Aquinas denies that the soul is a person at *ST I*, q. 75 a. 4, and *Super I epistolam beati Pauli ad Corinthios lectura* 15, lec. 2: “anima autem cum sit pars corporis hominis, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego.”

<sup>26</sup> Brown, “Souls, Ships, and Substances,” 657.

<sup>27</sup> This view has been defended or presented in the contemporary debate by: Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), 138; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 215–20; Leo Elders, *The Philosophy of Nature of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997), 274–84; Robert George and Patrick Lee, *Body-Self Dualism in Contemporary Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 66–81; John Haldane, “The Examined Death and the Hope of the Future,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 74 (2001): 253–54; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death”; Patrick Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” *Philosophical Studies* 155 (2011): 65–81; “On Hylemorphism and Personal Identity,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 19 (2009): 454–73; “Personhood”; “Thomas versus Tibbles,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007): 639–53; Van Dyke, “Not Properly a Person.”

<sup>28</sup> *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 2, ad 14; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 1, ad 5: “...anima est pars humanae speciei, et ideo, licet sit separata, quia tamen retinet naturam unibilitatis, non potest dici substantia individua quae est hypostasis vel substantia prima; sicut nec manus, nec quaecumque alia partium hominis. Et sic non competit ei neque definitio personae, neque nomen.” Cf. Seva, *Separated Soul*, 110; Van Dyke, “Not Properly a Person,” 202–3.

argument as the *Argument from Nature*.

Things belong to their species essentially, and, in order to belong to a species, a thing must have all the essential parts of that species: in our case, matter and soul. Patrick Toner argues that the idea of something retaining animality while constituted by only an immaterial soul is incoherent, since humanity requires animality, animality requires being able to sense, and this requires having bodily organs.<sup>29</sup> In this way, he objects to some of the premises of the *Argument from Constitution*. Aquinas consistently holds that without matter the soul is not a person; for example, in considering “raptures,” experiences in which one has a direct experience of God, he says that if this involves one’s soul leaving the body, then one is dead and is not a person or a human during the experience.<sup>30</sup> The corruptionist view holds that if the separated soul alone had human nature, then it would be unnecessary and impossible for it to unite to matter because it would be substantially complete on its own, or, at least, matter would be just accidentally, not naturally and substantially, united to the soul.<sup>31</sup> Matter would be a mere instrument of the soul, as Plato thought.<sup>32</sup> But the soul does need to unite to matter for substantial completion and for its natural operations. So the separated soul, though the principle of specific identity for the human person, does not have complete human nature and is not a human person.

Furthermore, as Toner objects to the *Argument from Constitution* in what I call the *Argument from Parthood*, it is unclear what a person is on the survivalist view. A thing cannot be constituted by just one of its proper parts without a supplementing proper part. There is no supplementing proper part in the separated soul, and so, on the survivalist view, after death and before the resurrection, the person is constituted by just one part. But then there is no way to distinguish the soul and the

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<sup>29</sup> Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” 74–77. As Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, 28, argues, we do not have bodies; rather, we are bodies, that is, matter formed by a soul. Cf. Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 589.

<sup>30</sup> *De veritate*, q. 13, a. 5, ad 3; *ST* II-II, q. 175, a. 6, ad 1. Cf. Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 595.

<sup>31</sup> *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, ad 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Quaestiones de anima*, aa. 1–2; *Sententia libri De anima* I, lect 8–9; *ST* I, q. 76, aa. 1–2.

person, such that they could be related as constituting thing to constituted thing. So the separated soul cannot constitute a person.<sup>33</sup>

Corruptionists also diffuse the claim that their view lessens our rationally based hope for personal immortality. I refer to this set of arguments as the *Arguments from Death and Resurrection*. Toner emphasizes that although the soul is not the person, the relation between them is unique; no other thing besides the human person has a form that is subsistent, capable of surviving the things' demise because the form is the primary bearer of its act of existence. Death deprives *me* of existence, but it does not destroy my act of existence.<sup>34</sup> Bearing that act of existence, and being the form by which the person has human nature, allow intellectual activity to continue in the soul, and they provide the possibility that the person could return to existence through resurrection. We cannot know, except by faith, that there will be a resurrection, but we can know that this is a possibility because of the nature of the soul.<sup>35</sup> So there is room for rationally based hope.<sup>36</sup> But death is still an

<sup>33</sup> Toner, "Hylemorphism and Personal Identity," 456–62. But Oderberg, "Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology," 14–15, suggests that Aquinas did not hold to the principle of supplementation presented here, and that there is independent reason not to hold to this principle: two things (he gives the example of a statue and the clay that constitutes it) can share all their proper parts but still be different things. Furthermore, the mereological principle invoked here has to do with spatial things and does not apply in the case of the soul. Later in the essay, I shall present a version of this principle of supplementation.

<sup>34</sup> *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1; *SCG IV*, c. 80, 81; *ST III*, q. 50, a. 4: "Pertinet autem ad veritatem mortis hominis vel animalis quod per mortem desinat esse homo vel animal, mors enim hominis vel animalis provenit ex separatione animae, quae complet rationem animalis vel hominis." Cf. Toner, "St. Thomas on Death," 593. As we have seen, some (e.g., Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 387–89) think that the person could partially survive as the separated soul, but this is not Aquinas's meaning. In some places, he does seem to allow this as when, at *In IV Sent* d. 43, q. 1, a. 1, qq. 1, ad 2, he says "anima Abrahae non est, proprie loquendo, ipse Abraham, sed est pars ejus"; one could interpret *proprie loquendo* as allowing for an "improper speaking," according to which the soul is partially the person. But Aquinas just means that we can refer to the separated soul as the person, but this is just to refer to a part by the name of the whole of which it is or was a part. When John of St. Thomas, at *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 3, 114, says of death that "perit esse hominis, ut hominis, non ut animae," then this must be taken similarly.

<sup>35</sup> Toner, "St. Thomas on Death," 594; "Personhood and Death," 130; Charles Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1959), 157.

<sup>36</sup> George and Lee, *Body-Self Dualism*, 73, urge caution here: we are here at the limits of what reason can tell us about life after death.



evil for us, because it deprives us of existence. The corruptionist view claims that the survivalist view lessens both the sense of evil that we feel about death, and the marvelousness of the resurrection. The resurrection is wonderful, the corruptionist view holds, because it restores my very self, whereas on the survivalist view, the self survives death and is not restored, but only completed at the resurrection.<sup>37</sup>

The proponents of the corruptionist view furthermore point out, in response to the *Argument from Acts*, that although personal acts continue in the separated soul, they are diminished, and this is evidence that the separated soul is not a person; I refer to this as the *Argument from Weakness*. The separated soul is only capable of limited thought since it cannot turn to phantasms, which is its natural mode of operating. It must rely on forms that it abstracted while in the composite, on the insights it can have into other separated souls, and on divine infusion of forms. It lacks most moral virtues, since most of these are habits of bodily powers, which it lacks. These diminished powers indicate that it is not a person, despite the fact that it will have more perfect self-knowledge than it had in this life, and will be able to understand forms directly without phantasms. This higher mode of cognition is not better for souls, because it is contrary to their nature, which is to inform matter.<sup>38</sup> Toner argues that the separated soul is, strictly speaking, “nobody.”<sup>39</sup> The fact that something acts like a person does not necessitate that it is a person; indeed, Aquinas thinks that there are things, like the Eucharistic species, that act like something—for example, bread and wine—without actually being that thing.<sup>40</sup> Since there are independent reasons to say that the separated soul is not a person, the corruptionist holds, the fact that it acts like a person does not show that it is a person. We can refer to separated souls as persons, as when we pray to saints, but in doing so

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<sup>37</sup> *ST* III, q. 50, a. 4; *Supplement* q. 86, a. 2, ad 3. Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 592. Cf. Giuseppe Butera, “The Immaterial Grounds of Transcendentality,” *St. Anselm Journal* 6 (2008): 5–6.

<sup>38</sup> *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 19, ad 5; *ST* I, q. 89; Capreolus, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis* (Turin: Alfred Cattier, 1900), IV, vol. 7, d. 50, q. 1, concl 2, 259; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 5, concl 1, 162. Cf. Rouseau, “Elements of a Thomistic Philosophy”; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 156–57.

<sup>39</sup> Toner, “Personhood and Death,” 129.

<sup>40</sup> I am grateful to Patrick Toner for raising this point.



we employ synecdoche, referring to a part by the name of the whole of which it was, and hopefully will again be, a part.

David Hershenov objects that both views fall prey to a “too many thinkers problem.” On both views, the soul after death can think. But if the soul after death can think, and it is the same soul as was part of the composite prior to death, then the soul prior to death would be capable of thinking. But then there are two thinkers where there appear to be only one: the soul and the soul-matter composite. This is one thinker too many. According to Hershenov, whether or not the soul is a person, it is a thinker, and thus either view seems to lead to the unacceptable situation of too many thinkers thinking a human person’s thoughts.<sup>41</sup>

Toner responds to this argument on behalf of the corruptionist view, and turns it into an objection to the survivalist view. He argues that, on the Thomistic view, prior to death, the composite is what (*quod*) thinks, and the soul is that by which (*quo*) it thinks. So when I say, prior to death, that my soul thinks, what I mean is that *I* think in virtue of a power that belongs *to me* only in my soul, not in my body.<sup>42</sup> At death, as John Haldane explains, the powers of the soul are “transferred” to the soul alone, just as, when one chemical is precipitated out of another, the precipitated chemical takes on powers that belonged to the prior chemical.<sup>43</sup> Prior to death, there is one thinker, the composite person, and after death, there is another thinker, the soul. Thus, on the corruptionist view, there are not too many thinkers. However, Toner argues that for the survivalist, the problem remains. The survivalist view says that the person constituted by the separated soul can think. But Aquinas says that the separated soul itself can think, since it can operate intellectual powers. But then, Toner contends, on the survivalist view, there are two thinkers there: the separated soul and the person it constitutes; this is one thinker too many.<sup>44</sup>

The corruptionist view is thus able to raise at least five arguments in its defense and in objection to the survivalist view. A complete defense

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<sup>41</sup> Hershenov, “Soulless Organisms,” 474–76.

<sup>42</sup> Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” 73; “Personhood and Death,” 133–34.

<sup>43</sup> Haldane, “Examined Death,” 254.

<sup>44</sup> Toner, “Personhood and Death,” 134.

of the latter, and response to the former, requires a deeper understanding of the traditional Thomistic view of personhood.

### Thomism on Existence

In order to understand fully the place that this debate has in traditional Thomism, and in order to understand my own later arguments, one must understand more deeply the Thomistic metaphysics of existence; what follows is my interpretation of that metaphysics, according to which the thesis that the separated soul is the person can be held.

Central to this metaphysics is the real distinction between the essence of a created thing and its existence;<sup>45</sup> this is at the core of the Thomistic account of personhood and of my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*. The essence of a thing, considered either as its specific or individualized nature, can be understood without a thing having that essence actually existing; *what* a thing is, is separable from *that* a thing is.<sup>46</sup> For example, *what* a human is—a rational animal—is different from the reality *that* some human actually exists. In order for there to be really existing created beings, essences must be actualized, or made to exist; to exist is to be actual, and not to be nothing or a mere conceivable or causable possibility.<sup>47</sup> Existence is what is most actual in and “intimate” to a thing; that is, it is the complete fullness and actuality of a thing and of all of its parts. It is the perfection of an essence, even more perfect and actual than the form that is part of every created essence.<sup>48</sup> The act of ex-

<sup>45</sup> *Expositio libri Boetii de hebdomadibus* lec. 1; *De ente*, c. 4; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2; *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1; SCG II, c. 52; ST I, q. 3, a. 4. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 13, 300; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 2, concl 2, 222; Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 61–68, 142–50; Lawrence Dewan, “Etienne Gilson and the Actus Essendi,” *Maritain Studies* 15 (1999): 70–96; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 136.

<sup>46</sup> *De ente* c. 4.

<sup>47</sup> *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9; *De ente*, c. 4; ST I, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1. Cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 3, 216; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus in summa theologiam divinae Thomae*, vol. 1 (Paris: Vives, 1883), I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 25, 606–7; Ludovico Billot, *De verbo incarnato* (Rome: Propaganda Fide, 1895), 135; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 454.

<sup>48</sup> *In II Sent* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4: “Esse autem est magis intimum cuilibet rei quam ea per quae esse determinatur”; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9: “esse est inter omnia perfectissimum . . . esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium

istence or of being (*actus essendi, esse, esse actualis existentiae*) formally causes a being, its essence, and its parts, actually to be.<sup>49</sup>

Like other actualities, such as substantial forms, in order to be individuated the act of existence must be received and limited by a potentiality really distinct from it, an essence.<sup>50</sup> For example, in order for an act of existence to be mine, it must be received and limited by my human essence. The act of existence is prior to and more fundamental to a thing than the essence, in the sense that actuality is prior in the order of nature to potentiality. The essence entirely depends on the act of existence for its reality.<sup>51</sup>

One might object that a thing must exist in order to receive and limit, and thus an essence would have to exist in order to receive exis-

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perfectionum”; SCG II, c. 54; ST I, q. 8, a. 1. Cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 3, 216; Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 33–34; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 190; Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Brian McNeil, et al., trans., *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 4, *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 402.

<sup>49</sup> The first two terms are used by Aquinas, and all three are used by his commentators. Cf. *Expositio De hebdomadibus*, lec. 2; *De ente* c. 4; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 6, ad 2; SCG I, c. 22, 28; ST I, q. 3, a. 4; q. 4, a. 1; q. 7, a. 1; q. 8, a. 1. On *esse* as what is most formal in a thing: Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3, ad Aur, 328; *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1Aur, 119; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, ad 3, 220; Lawrence Dewan, “A Text from Cajetan Touching on Existence,” *Acta Philosophica* 16 (2007): 306; “Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*,” 78, 87.

<sup>50</sup> *De ente*, c. 4; *Super librum de causis expositio* lec. 9; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 16; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 9, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4; *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 4, ad 4; SCG I, c. 32; II, c. 52; ST I, q. 7, a. 3; I-II, q. 85, a. 4. This is developed in Francis Sylvester of Ferrara, *Commentary on Summa contra Gentiles* (Rome: Leonine ed., 1918–26), vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 4.1–2, 442–43: the form or *forma partius* formally gives existence to the composite, while the essence or *formal totius*, including form and matter, is the proper recipient (*susceptivum*) of an act of existence. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 aliorum, 121; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 52, n. 3.2 and 9.3, 388, 391; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 26, 607; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 4, 217; dub 2, ad 2, 4, 223–24; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, a. 1, q. 2, 130; Dewan, “St. Thomas and the Ground of Metaphysics,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 54 (1980): 151; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 186–89.

<sup>51</sup> *In II Sent* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4; *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9; ST I, q. 3, a. 4; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 3 Scotus, 106; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 5, and ad 2, 217 and 219; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 34.

tence, leading to a vicious circle.<sup>52</sup> The Thomist responds that in any act of generation, a whole being, including both essence and act of existence is generated, but with a structure of actuality and potentiality, that is, of act of existence and essence. Neither is temporally prior to the other, but the act of existence is, as actuality, prior metaphysically and in the explanation of the thing as a real being. The essence explains the limitation of this act to being the act of a particular thing of a specific kind, but it does not exist temporally prior to receiving existence. A potentiality can receive an actuality without existing temporally prior to that actuality, if it is what explains the limitation of that actuality in the thing of which they are both principles. For example, when a human person is generated, he or she comes into existence as a complete being, with a human essence and an act of existence. But the act of existence explains why he or she really exists, while the essence explains why he or she is not pure actuality, but an actual human being. The essence explains the limitation of the act of existence, but this essence did not exist prior to its actualization in the event of generation.

The two principles of being, act of existence and essence, are two sorts of completion in a thing. A thing is complete in the order of essence (*esse essentiae*) when it has everything that it needs to be the kind of thing that it is, such as form, individual matter, and substantial modes. A thing is complete in the order of existence or being (*esse existentiae*), when this essence is actualized by an act of existence.<sup>53</sup> The relation between these two orders will be important for my version of the *Argument from Constitution* and my response to the *Argument from Nature*.

The act of existence is not a part or an accident. According to Thom-

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<sup>52</sup> I owe this objection to Tim Pawl.

<sup>53</sup> Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, concl 1–2, 301–12; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 5, n. 3, 43; vol. 11, III, q. 17, a. 2, n. 18, 228; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 7.2, 444; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem* q. 3, a. 4, 213; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 4, a. 19, aa. 25–27, 603, 606–7; Salamanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 14, d. 9, dub 1, 148; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, 72; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 454–57. For an argument, wrong in my view, that this is not Aquinas's position, see Norman Wells, "Capreolus on Essence and Existence," *Modern Schoolman* 38 (1960): 24. Wells is correct that Capreolus bases this distinction on the work of Henry of Ghent (*Quodlibet* 1, q. 9, *Opera omnia*, vol. 5; available at <http://philosophy.unca.edu/henry-ghent-series>), as Capreolus says, but Capreolus also shows the roots of this distinction in the work of Aquinas, e.g., SCG II, c. 52; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 1.

ism, one principle can add to another without adding in the manner of a part or accident; this point will be central to my response to the *Argument from Parthood*. The act of existence does give a thing kindhood; it is because I have a human essence, not because I have an act of existence, that I am human. Likewise, the act of existence does not add any definable content to *what* a thing is, as parts and accidents do; knowing that I have an act of existence does not add to my knowledge of the kind of thing that I am.<sup>54</sup> Though it inheres in a created being, the act of existence comes to a being from without, not from its own formal or material causality, as do a thing's parts.<sup>55</sup>

The act of existence that belongs to a given thing fits or is proportioned to that thing's essence.<sup>56</sup> This is important for my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*. Furthermore, the act of existence helps to explain a thing's transcendental properties. A thing is one insofar as its principles are actualized by one act of existence.<sup>57</sup> Acts of existence are indivisible, so there are no partial existences, because the act of existence is an actuality, and things are only divisible insofar as they have potenti-

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<sup>54</sup> *De potentia*, q. 5, a. 4, ad 3; q. 7, a. 2, ad 9; *Sententia libri metaphysicae* IV, lect 2, n. 558. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, concl 3, 313; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 12, ad 4, 77; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 1, concl 3, 216–17; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, s. 1, q. 2, 122; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 36; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 87; Wipfel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 106.

<sup>55</sup> *Expositio de hebdomadibus*, lec. 2; *De potentia*, q. 1, a. 1: "esse significant aliquid completum et simplex sed non subsistens"; q. 7, a. 2, ad 7: *esse non est subsistens sed inhaerens*; SCG II, c. 52; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 4; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 52, n. 9.1, 390; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 4, n. 18, n. 25, 602, 606; Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 402–3; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 35–36.

<sup>56</sup> SCG I, c. 42; II, c. 52; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 1; q. 104, a. 1, ad 1. On what it is for one thing to "fit" or "be proportioned" (*convenit*) to another, see *Sententia libri De anima* I, lect 8, n. 130; *Super epistolam Beati Pauli ad Collosenses*, 1, lec. 4, n. 41; ST III, q. 1, a. 1. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 33, ad 1 Scotus, 214; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 80–81, n. 1, ad 1, n. 2.2, 507; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 208; Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 401–3; Gilbert Narcisse, *Les Raisons de Dieu* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1997), 102–4, 164–76; Wipfel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 107; Dewan, "Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*," 83.

<sup>57</sup> *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 2; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 6, q. 1; 9, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2; ST III, q. 17, a. 2. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 32, 214; *Expositio* III, vol. 11, q. 17, a. 2, n. 3–4, 223–24.

ality.<sup>58</sup> Existence, as a thing's supreme actuality, is the cause of knowledge of that thing;<sup>59</sup> this is important for my expansion on the *Argument from Acts*. Existence also makes a thing good.<sup>60</sup> It is the highest perfection, and it confers value or "nobility" (*nobilitas*) on a thing, so that the greater the potency for existence a thing has, the more perfection and nobility it has.<sup>61</sup> This is important for the Thomistic account of personhood.

For my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution* and my response to the *Arguments from Nature* and *from Death and Resurrection*, and in order to understand the traditional Thomistic view on personhood and the separated soul, we must consider how the above principles are

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<sup>58</sup> Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1 aliorum, 120; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 4, n. 1, 594. The Thomistic tradition is opposed to the view of Francisco Suárez, *Commentaria una cum quaestionibus in libros Aristotelis de anima* (Madrid: Salvador Castellote, ed., 1992), vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 18 (available at <http://www.salvadorcastellote.com>); *Disputationes metaphysicae* (hereafter *DM*) d. 31, s. 11, n. 15, n. 32, n. 35, that every entity is its essence and existence, and matter and soul each contributes its partial existence to the complete existence of the whole person; cf. P. Joseph Greth, *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1909), 419. The tradition is also opposed to Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 387–89, 461, who holds, building on the non-Thomistic arguments for partial survival in Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 245–306, that the separated soul could have "part" of the existence of the human person.

<sup>59</sup> *ST I*, q. 5, a. 2; q. 14, a. 3; q. 16, a. 1, ad 3; q. 87, a. 1. Cf. Dewan, "Text from Cajetan," 306; Lawrence Dewan, "Is Truth a Transcendental for St. Thomas Aquinas?," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 2 (2004): 13.

<sup>60</sup> *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1; q. 21, a. 1; q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; *ST I*, q. 5, a. 1; q. 16, a. 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 13, 214. Cf. Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 406; Dewan, "Text from Cajetan," 297–98, 302.

<sup>61</sup> *De ente*, c. 1; *Sententia libri De anima* III, lect 10, n. 733; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 18; *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 17; *SCG I*, c. 23, c. 28; II, c. 52, c. 62, c. 68; *ST I*, q. 5, a. 5; q. 50, a. 5; q. 75, a. 2–3. Ferrara explains the link between actuality and nobility well at *Commentary on SCG I*, c. 11, n. 8.2, 27; c. 18, n. 5, 50; c. 23, n. 7, 73; c. 28, n. 2.4, 86; c. 65, n. 10, 183; c. 77–78, n. 2.4, 86; II, c. 50, n. 2, 385. Cajetan links nobility to intellect, freedom, and lordship at *Expositio* vol. 4, I, q. 26, a. 3 n. 5, n. 7, 302–3; cf. *Expositio* vol. 4, I, q. 44, a. 4, n. 4, 462; vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 1–2, n. 12, 299, 300. Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 47–49, emphasizes the link between personhood, existence, and having the transcendental properties to a high degree. Cf. Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 404; Dewan, "Gilson and the *Actus Essendi*," 74; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 30; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 90; McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 143; Caitlin Smith-Gilson, *The Metaphysical Presuppositions of Being-in-the-World* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 101; Albert Wingell, "'Vivere viventibus est esse' in Aristotle and St. Thomas," *Modern Schoolman* 38 (1961): 117; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 187.

found in human persons. This can be understood through a contrast between humans and nonhuman material things. In the latter, the whole composite, both form and matter, receives and exercises the act of existence. It does so in virtue of (*quo*) its essence.<sup>62</sup> Form and essence receive existence “first” in that they are the principles by which (*quo*) a thing is the act of existence, but the whole composite receives this act “first” in that it is what (*quod*) exists.<sup>63</sup>

An act of existence is an essence’s dynamic self-manifestation into reality as an actual being capable of and oriented to operations, which perfect the existing being. The act of existence is not a static and passive placement into existence, or merely something received, but is an “exercised” actuality.<sup>64</sup> Essential parts, form and matter, are joined by a thing’s efficient causes and then receive their actuality, the act of existence, from God, and they thereby “constitute” and exercise the existence that has been conferred on them and inheres in them.<sup>65</sup> When essential parts come apart, then the potentiality that underlies that act of existence ceases to be, and the being goes out of existence.<sup>66</sup> For example, when a nonrational animal, such as a horse, is generated, it is essentially composed of matter and soul, which it receives from its parents. When these two come together to compose a complete individual essence, they receive existence, and thereby are the potentiality that constitutes and exercises that act, and a real horse comes about. When the horse dies, the essential parts that

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<sup>62</sup> One thing acts in virtue of another when the former is properly the agent, but the latter is the proximate subject of the power whereby the former performs this action.

<sup>63</sup> SCG II, c. 54. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, concl 2, 313; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 28, 213; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 33; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 461.

<sup>64</sup> Capreolus argues that created substances have their existence in themselves (*in se*) received (*susceptivum*) and exercised (*elictum*) at *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 4 Aureolus, 110. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 82, a. 3, n. 13, 300; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 7–9; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 191; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 101–2; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 460–63.

<sup>65</sup> *Sentencia libri metaphysicorum* IV, lec. 2, n. 558: “Esse enim rei quamvis sit aliud ab eius essentia, non tamen est intelligendum quod sit aliquod superadditum ad modum accidentis, sed quasi constituitur per principia essentiae. Et ideo hoc nomen ens quod imponitur ab ipso esse, significat idem cum nomine quod imponitur ab ipsa essentia.” Cf. *Expositio De hebdomadibus*, lec. 2; McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei*, 144, 155; Balthasar et al., *Realm of Metaphysics*, 402.

<sup>66</sup> *In II Sent* d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2; *De veritate*, q. 13, a. 4, ad 2.



received, constituted, and exercised its act of existence are no longer able to do so, and the horse ceases to exist.

In human beings, by contrast, the soul first exists, both in that it is that by which (*quo*) the human being receives its act of existence, and in that it is what (*quod*) first exists in the order of nature. Unlike in nonhuman material things, the human soul is complete in the order of being before being complete in the order of essence.<sup>67</sup> The human body exists only because it shares in the soul's act of existence. We can know that the soul receives and exercises the act of existence prior in the order of nature to the body, because it can operate on its own. One thing is prior to another in this sense just in case the former can exist without the latter and the latter is substantially united to the former but is dependent for existence on the former; the former "communicates" existence to the latter. The soul does not temporally preexist the body, but is created in its natural condition of informing and "communicating" existence to the body.<sup>68</sup> It is individual because it receives existence in individual matter, but once it has individuality, it does not need to stay in matter to remain individual, though it always is oriented to matter.<sup>69</sup>

The soul's perfection and nobility exceeds that of the body, though the perfections of both soul and body belong to the whole human per-

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<sup>67</sup> *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 8; SCG II, c. 68; ST I, q. 76, a. 1; I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 2. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 5, 211; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 2.3, 442; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 437–43; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 1, ad 2, dub 5 sol, 154, 161–62; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 457; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 159.

<sup>68</sup> *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 1, 16–18; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2–3; SCG II, c. 68. Cf. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 24, ad 5; n. 30, 213, 214; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 6.3, 444; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 4, concl 2, 159; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 2, 110; vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, 428–30; a. 2, 441; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 35; Stephen Hipp, *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence* (Fribourg: Studia Friburgensia, 2012), 219–20; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 360.

<sup>69</sup> *De ente*, c. 4; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 2: "unumquodque secundum idem habet esse et individuationem"; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 3; ST I, q. 50, a. 5; q. 76, a. 2, ad 1. Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, ad 2, 435; James Lehrberger, "The Anthropology of Aquinas's 'De ente et essential,'" *Review of Metaphysics* 51 (1998): 839; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 36; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 103; Stump, *Aquinas*, 208.



son,<sup>70</sup> because the soul has an infinite potency for existence and for operation, so that it can know and love all things, and so has the highest degree of dignity that a created substance can have.<sup>71</sup> The body can share in this potency, as it will after the resurrection, but it does not have it in itself.<sup>72</sup> Since the soul is more perfect than the composite, it more perfectly exercises the human act of existence than does the composite; the human act of existence is a spiritual actuality, in which the body imperfectly shares.<sup>73</sup>

This account of the human act of existence points to the need for a deeper account of the human essence, which will be important for my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution* and responding to the *Argument from Nature*. The human person is essentially a “rational animal.” Our genus, “animal,” refers to our essence as undetermined, and our specific difference, “rational,” refers to the species’ determination of that essence. Animality and rationality are not two things; rather, the whole human person is an animal wholly determined in a rational way.<sup>74</sup> Genera are ascribed to species analogously; there is no univocal content that all animals share, for the animality of different animal spe-

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<sup>70</sup> *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, *resp.*, ad 4; *Quaestiones de anima* a. 1, ad 17–18; SCG II, c. 65.

<sup>71</sup> Not all created persons have the same value. Although human persons have infinite value in the ways described here, they have less value than angels, who have more actuality and so more value; the Thomistic view is thus committed to different “degrees” of infinite value. Cf. *Super librum de causis*, lec. 4–5; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 18. Another source of the dignity of persons is their obediencial potency to receive grace and the supernatural end of union with God; cf. *ST* I-II, q. 113, a. 10; Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria: Sapientia Press, 2010), 159.

<sup>72</sup> SCG IV, c. 81, c. 89; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 177; *Supplement*, q. 6, a. 2, ad 3. Cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 81, n. 2.1.

<sup>73</sup> *In II Sent* d. 17, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2, *resp.*, ad 4; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 2.1–2, n. 7.2, n. 8.1, 441–45; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 1, 429; a. 2, 441. Since, on this view, there is just one act of existence in the human person, which is properly the spiritual soul’s, this act is itself spiritual; on a view like Suárez’s, the soul’s existence is spiritual, but that of the composite person is material; cf. *In libros de anima* vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 13; vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 3; *DM* d. 31, s. 11, n. 15; d. 34, s. 5, n. 7–8.

<sup>74</sup> *De ente*, c. 1–2; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis* a. 3, ad 3, ad 15. Cf. *Expositio libri posteriorum analyticorum* 2, lec. 2, lec. 4, lec. 7, lec. 20; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 30.

cies is determined differently by each species' difference.<sup>75</sup> Humans are essentially animals, requiring matter, but the human soul either is or potentially is the lowest member of the genus of spiritual substances; it can exist and act like the spiritual substances, but in this life it is just in potential to such a state, because it is naturally a form of a body.<sup>76</sup> The human animal exists in a spiritual manner, since it receives its existence from a spiritual substance, which is a part of the composite and which communicates itself to the material composite. Indeed, as Francis Sylvester of Ferrara says, the act of existence is in the soul according to its proper nature, but the composite human body just exists as drawn to the soul, raised to a higher level of existence than the normal way of existing for a material thing.<sup>77</sup>

But Aquinas also says that the soul is “reductively” and incompletely in the genus “animal” because it is our form.<sup>78</sup> The actuality and po-

<sup>75</sup> *In I Sent* d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 2, a. 9, ad 16; *ST I*, q. 88, a. 2, ad 4. Cf. Armand Maurer, “St. Thomas and the Analogy of Genus,” *New Scholasticism* 29 (1955): 127–44; Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 44–45.

<sup>76</sup> The human soul either is or potentially is in the lowest species of spiritual substance, or is of the same genus as the angels at: *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2; *In II Sent* d. 3, q. 1, a. 6, ad 2; *SCG II*, c. 68, c. 91; *IV*, c. 11; *ST I*, q. 55, a. 1; q. 55, a. 2; q. 87, a. 1; q. 88, a. 2, ad 4; q. 89, a. 1; q. 90, a. 4, ad 2; *III*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 1; *In librum beati Dionysii de divinis nominibus expositio* 7, lec. 4. Because of this, and because our act of existence first belongs to the soul, James Lehrberger argues that the human person could be defined as an “incarnate spirit.” He cautions that we cannot understand this definition in this life since we cannot, in our current life, understand what a “spirit” is; see Lehrberger, “Anthropology of Aquinas’s,” 842–44. However, if Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, trans. Kurt Reinhardt (Washington, DC: ICS, 2002), 298, 396, is correct that we can grasp in this life what spirit is, then such a definition might be available to us. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 32–34, 40–41, defines “human person” as “embodied spirit,” and Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 168–69, says the human person shares a genus with the angels (though this is not quite in accord with Aquinas). Such a definition might problematically imply either that we must always be embodied, or the possibility of the soul preexisting the body, or not being united to the body as its form; cf. Alexis Lépecier, *Dello Stato e Della Operazione Dell’ Anima Umana Separata Dal Corpo* (Rome: A. Befani, 1895), 95–96, cited in Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 69.

<sup>77</sup> Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG II*, c. 68, n. 2.2, 442.

<sup>78</sup> *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2, ad 16; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 4; a. 2, ad 10; *ST I*, q. 90 a. 4 ad 2. Domingo Bañez and Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, eds., *Comentarios ineditos a la tercera parte de santo Tomas*, vol. 1 (Matrita, 1951), q. 2, a. 2, n. 14, 84, explains that although the soul raises the body above every sensible genus, it always remains limited to the animal genus, since it is the form of an animal.

tentiality that constitute a being are in the same categories as that being not *simpliciter* but by “reduction,” that is, in virtue of their ordering to constituting a being of that category. The soul is not an animal *simpliciter* but, as the form of an animal, it is an animal “reductively.” The human soul is not, on Aquinas’s view, a substance in the fullest sense of the term, because it is also naturally the form of the body and so lacks complete human nature, but it is a substance in that it is a “this something” (*hoc aliquid*), is subsistent, and is able to underlie accidents. We are the kind of animals that we are because of our form, which is a spiritual substance; we exist as animals through a spiritual act of existence. Aquinas’s guiding principle here is that the highest of each substantial genus participates in the perfections of the lowest of a higher genus.<sup>79</sup> The human soul, and the whole human person in virtue of the soul, is on the “border” and “horizon” between the spiritual and the corporeal.<sup>80</sup>

It seems that what primarily exists is the soul, but that human nature includes both soul and matter, and so the composite only exists derivatively upon the existence of the soul.<sup>81</sup> There seems to be a problem of too many existing things here, similar to the too many thinkers problem: where there should be one existing thing, the person, there seem to be two, the soul and the person. Answering this requires that we now examine Thomistic views on personhood.

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<sup>79</sup> *In librum de divinis nominibus*, 7, lec. 4; SCG II, c. 68: “infimum supremi generis contingere supremum inferioris generis.” cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 8.1, 445. We are metaphysical “amphibians,” both spiritual and material; cf. Stump, “Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism,” 514; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 38; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 19.

<sup>80</sup> *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1; *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 9; *In III Sent* pr.; *In IV Sent* d. 50, q. 1, a. 1; SCG II, c. 68: “anima intellectualis dicitur esse quasi quidam horizon et confinium corporeorum et incorporeorum”; SCG II, c. 80: “anima humana . . . in confinio corporum et incorporearum substantiarum, quasi in horizonte existens aeternitatis et temporis, recedens ab infimo, appropinquat ad summum”; *ST I*, q. 77, a. 2; *Super librum de causis*, lec. 9. Aquinas defines “horizon” at *Super librum de causis*, lec. 2: “circulus terminans visum, et est infimus terminus superioris hemispherii, principium autem inferioris”; it is applied by analogy to the person; cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 8.1, 445; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 38; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 167.

<sup>81</sup> Other things belong properly to the soul, and only by communication to the composite: the image of God (*ST I*, q. 93, a. 6), grace (*ST I-II*, q. 110, a. 2), and beatific vision (*ST I-II*, q. 4, a. 5).

### Thomism on Personhood

Most Thomists have held that something must be added to human nature to constitute a human person.<sup>82</sup> Discovering what this constitutive principle is will help to answer Toner's *Arguments from Parthood* and *from Nature*, and to expand on the *Argument from Constitution*.

Aristotle argued that acts are attributed to singulars, not common natures. But accidents, and substantial parts, forms, and matter are all singular, but cannot act on their own, so singularity is insufficient for a thing to be an agent. *Suppositis* or *hypostases*, not mere singulars, exist and act. A supposit or hypostasis is something subsistent, that is, exists *per se* not through another, that has or "subsists in" its nature, and that is capable of acting *per se*.<sup>83</sup>

Thomists argue for a distinction between person and individual nature primarily because of the Incarnation. Christ has a human nature, but is not a human person, so personhood must be constituted by some-

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<sup>82</sup> Aquinas is not always clear on this issue. In *III Sent* d. 5, q. 1, a. 3; SCG IV, c. 55; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 1; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 5, ad 9, say that nature and personhood differ in human persons, in which a principle of individuation is added to the nature, but not in angels. *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 2, a. 2, a passage taken by many later Thomists to be decisive, says that in all created persons, personhood really adds to individual nature; *ST* III, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3, implies this by saying that one of the divine persons could hypostatistically unite Himself to an angelic nature but not an angelic person. On reconciling these, see Capreolus, *Defensiones*, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 4 Aureolus, 110; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 3, n. 5–8, 43; vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 4, ad 1, 26–27; Thomas Mullaney, "Created Personality: The Unity of Thomistic Tradition," *New Scholasticism* 29 (1955): 369–402; James Reichmann, "St. Thomas, Capreolus, Cajetan, and the Created Person," *New Scholasticism* 33 (1959): 1–31, 202–30; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 240–52. They are reconciled by saying that person and individual nature name the same thing, according to intrinsic essential content, but that they do so by different formalities: person adds to individual nature a formal constitutive principle that is not part of the nature.

<sup>83</sup> *ST* I, q. 29, a. 2; III, q. 2, a. 2; a. 3, ad 2; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 9, q. 2, a. 1; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl 2, 228–29; Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 1, 25–26; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 2, 109–10; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 200–201. Suárez, *DM* d. 34, s. 7, n. 6–12, distinguishes "being a supposit" from "being subsistent"; actions belong to suppositis, but subsistence is a necessary condition for being a supposit. The separated soul, though not a supposit, can act because it is a "principle of life."

thing more than nature. It cannot be constituted by matter or form,<sup>84</sup> or by biological life.<sup>85</sup> It cannot be constituted morally, as if what constituted it were free will or responsibility; or religiously, as if what constituted it were the ability to make religious acts, or have religious experiences; or by consciousness or personal character.<sup>86</sup> Christ has all these, but He is not a human person, so none of these constitutes personhood. Since any individual nature can be assumed by a divine Person, no nature alone constitutes personhood.<sup>87</sup>

Persons cannot be “assumed” by other persons, and still remain persons.<sup>88</sup> Christ’s human nature is not a person because it has been “assumed” by a divine Person, Who gives existence to the nature and

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<sup>84</sup> George Duggan, “The Teaching of St. Thomas Regarding the Formal Constitutive of Human Personality,” *New Scholasticism* 15 (1941): 327–28, following Casper Freit-hoff, *De mysterio incarnationis* (Rome, 1939), argues that individual essence ordered to existence constitutes personhood, but this is rejected by other Thomists because Christ too has a human essence ordered to existence; cf. Mullaney, “Created Personality,” 370–77. Similar views, which hold that created personhood is constituted by an individual nature connoting or ordered to the act of existence or accidents, without any positive addition, are rejected by Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 3, views 2, 3, 5, who finds them in Hervaeus Natalis and Capreolus. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1 Scotus, where Capreolus says that personality adds to individual nature a “connotation” of existence, though this is generally taken not to be his considered view.

<sup>85</sup> Toner, “Hylemorphic Animalism,” 77–78, says that life on the Thomistic view is having certain powers and a certain sort of essence, not a biological phenomenon. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 17, a. 2, n. 17, 227, argues that life is having a certain sort of essence (*esse essentiae*), not of existence (*esse existentiae*), with an animating form in matter, which is lost at death, and is not present in the separated soul. But, as Wingell, “*Vivere viventibus est esse*,” 100, 108–9, emphasizes, Aquinas sometimes speaks of life as the existence of the living thing, which remains in the separated soul; cf. Gredt, *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, vol. 1, 423. On life, cf. *De veritate*, q. 4, a. 8; SCG I, c. 98; ST I, q. 18, a. 2; III, q. 50, a. 4–5; the former three support Wingell’s view, the last supports Cajetan’s. Aquinas says that the soul has life at *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, ad 6.

<sup>86</sup> Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Trinity and God the Creator*, trans. Frederic Eckhoff, Introduction p. 3; c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, n. 302 (available at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/theology/trinity.htm>); Billot, *De verbo incarnati*, 87–88; Alexis-Henri-Marie Lépiciér, *Dell’anima umana separata dal corpo, suo stato, sua operazione*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Rome: Libreria pontificia Federico Pustet, 1901), 103–4; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 113.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. ST III, q. 4, a. 2.

<sup>88</sup> Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 1, concl 2, 86–87; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 1, 74; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 1, 551.

operates its powers. Capreolus likens this to a branch that is grafted onto a tree: the branch continues to produce leaves and fruit according to its nature, but its powers are now exercised by the supposit, the tree, by which it has been assumed.<sup>89</sup> Stump likens this union to the situation in Robert Heinlein's novel *The Puppet Masters*, in which aliens take over humans and thereby experience their consciousness and direct their actions.<sup>90</sup> To be a person is not only to have free will, but to be the one who can autonomously exercise it; it is not only to have an intellect, but to be the one who can experience and exercise it, and thus to have "interiority" or "subjectivity."<sup>91</sup> Nature, act of existence, intrinsic accidents, and acts are all united in a person and are the person's own.<sup>92</sup> Personhood requires "incommunicability" (*incommunicabilitas*), that is, being a complete totality, not existing in or being apt to exist in another.<sup>93</sup>

Aquinas presents at least five definitions of "person," since, as

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<sup>89</sup> Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 4 Aureolus, 110. For the image, see Aquinas, *In I Sent* d. 18, q. 1, a. 5; d. 19, q. 3, a. 2; *In III Sent* d. 1, q. 1, a. 1; *Super epistolam beati Pauli ad Romano lectura* 6, lec. 1; c. 11, lec. 3.

<sup>90</sup> Stump, *Aquinas*, 420–21.

<sup>91</sup> An inquiry into the nature or phenomenological character of this interiority or subjectivity is beyond the scope of this essay. But it should not be taken from what is said here that persons are necessarily conscious or always able to exercise or experience their intellects or wills; no claim is being made here as to whether, for example, human fetuses or those in persistent vegetative states are persons. The key Thomistic point is that to be a person requires that one, in one's metaphysical constitution, possesses one's intellect and will as one's own. Some persons, such as human fetuses, may not be able currently to exercise or experience these powers, but, if they are persons, then they have them as their own and not as belonging to another, and this is sufficient to say that they have autonomy and interiority or subjectivity. The subjective experience of self-possession follows upon the metaphysical constitution of self-possession, not vice versa. I am grateful to Matthews Grant for calling this point to my attention. Cf. *SCG* III, c. 112–13.

<sup>92</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 6, 27.

<sup>93</sup> *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6, ad 8; *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2; *ST* I, q. 29, a. 3, ad 4; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl 2, 228–29; a. 3, ad 9 Aureolus, 237; vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2 Aureolus, 108; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 3, n. 1, 40; vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 11, 76–77; Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 2, a. 2, n. 12, 83; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 2, 552; a. 2, n. 5, 569 Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 1; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 204–9.

he says, we do not know the specific difference of “person” as such:<sup>94</sup> Boethius’s definition, according to which a person is an “individual substance of a rational nature”;<sup>95</sup> Richard of St. Victor’s definition according to which a person is an “incommunicable existent of a rational nature”;<sup>96</sup> “a hypostasis distinguished by a proper characteristic pertaining to nobility” (or “dignity”);<sup>97</sup> “what is complete in intellectual nature”;<sup>98</sup> and “what has existence subsisting *per se* in an intellectual nature.”<sup>99</sup> Aquinas considers these to be equivalent.<sup>100</sup> On Aquinas’s

<sup>94</sup> *De potentia* q. 9, a. 2, ad 5.

<sup>95</sup> *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 3; d. 25, q. 1, a. 1; *In II Sent* d. 3, q. 1, a. 2; *In III Sent* d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, qq. 1; SCG IV, c. 38; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 1; q. 34, a. 3; q. 40, a. 3; III, q. 2, a. 2: *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*, from Boethius, *Contra Eutychem*, c. 3–4: *naturae rationalis individua substantia* (available at [http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/resources/boethius/Contra\\_Eutychem.txt](http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/resources/boethius/Contra_Eutychem.txt)).

<sup>96</sup> *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6, ad 8; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 3, ad 4: *rationalis naturae incommunicabilis existentia*, from Richard of St. Victor, “*De Trinitate IV*, c. 23–24,” in *Opera Omnia, Patrologia Latina*, vol. 196 (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1855), 945–47. Hugon, “*Si l’âme*,” 592, defines the person as “an individual substance of a rational nature completely and entirely incommunicable.”

<sup>97</sup> *In I Sent* d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 8; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 3, ad 2: *hypostasis distincta proprietate ad nobilitatem pertinente*; *In I Sent* d. 10, q. 1, a. 5: “oportet ad hoc quod constituatur persona, quod determinetur per speciale modum ad dignitatem pertinentem.” Cf. *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 1. This definition is attributed to Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in IV Libros Sententiarum* (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventura, 1957), I, q. 23, a. 9, 225–26: “*persona est hypostasis distincta proprietate ad dignitatem pertinente*”; *Summa Fratris Alexandri* (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventura, 1948), I, 387, 9, 570, by Walter Principe, *Alexander of Hales’s Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (Toronto: PIMS, 1967), 66–68, though Principe says some features of the definition are found in Alan of Lille’s *Theologicae regulae*. Alexander takes dignity to be what distinguishes persons from other hypostates. Alexander and Aquinas attribute the definition to unnamed *magistri*. The definition is attributed to Peter Lombard by Michael Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good in the Aristotelian-Thomistic Tradition* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon, 1995), 49–51.

<sup>98</sup> *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2: *quid completum in natura intellectuali*.

<sup>99</sup> *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2: “quod habet esse per se subsistens in natura intellectuali.”

<sup>100</sup> *In I Sent* d. 23, q. 1, a. 1–2; d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6, ad 8; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 3, ad 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 29, a. 1, n. 14. Some medieval philosophers, like Scotus, *Quaestiones in I Sententiarum, Opera Omnia*, vol. 10 (Paris: Vives, 1893), d. 23, q.un., 261, and some contemporary philosophers, like John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington: CUA Press, 1996), 59–60, have taken the second to be superior to the first because they did not equate them like Aquinas, as Cajetan notes in the case of Scotus. Richard (*De Trinitate IV* c. 21) rejects Boethius’s definition as not fitting the divine persons, since it refers to “substance,” which is one in God. Previous to Aquinas, Alexander of Hales took the first three to be equivalent; see texts from



view, “incommunicable existent” is what is meant by “individual substance” in Boethius’s definition, rather than “something that underlies accidents”; otherwise, Boethius’s definition would not apply to the divine Persons, who are not each substances, but are incommunicable.<sup>101</sup> Having nobility follows from being incommunicable and having the existence pertinent to a rational nature, since the act of existence is the foundation of nobility. Thus the definition based on nobility reduces to Boethius and Richard’s definitions. To be incommunicable is to be maximally complete, unable to be assumed by others, and to exist and subsist of oneself, and so the last two definitions reduce to the others.

Personal incommunicability requires being complete, not a part, since parts communicate themselves to wholes. Integral parts like organs, essential parts like forms, and logical parts like rationality, cannot be persons. Personal incommunicability requires being a particular, not a universal, which communicates what it is to particulars. Personal incommunicability requires self-possession, not being assumed by another.<sup>102</sup> But persons are not incommunicable in every way: Francisco

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his *Glossa* cited in Principe, *Alexander of Hales’s Theology*, 66–69. Cf. Smith, *Human Dignity*, 49–51. Carolus Billuart, *Cursus theologiae juxta mentem divi Thomae*, vol. 2, *Tractatus de Incarnatione* (Paris: Mellier, 1847), diss 4, a. 1, a. 2, a. 1, 362, defines the person by combining these definitions as *intellectualis naturae individual et incommunicabilis substantia*.

<sup>101</sup> Aquinas follows Albert the Great, *Commentaria in Sententiarum, Opera Omnia* (Paris: Vives, 1893), vol. 25, I, d. 23, a. 2, ad 4, 586; and William of Auxerre, in the texts from his *Summa aurea* cited in Walter Henry Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (Toronto: PIMS, 1963), 44. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 99–102. I am grateful to Stephen Hipp for calling these texts to my attention.

<sup>102</sup> For these three sorts of incommunicability, see *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2: “triplex incommunicabilitas est de ratione personae: scilicet partis, secundum quod est completum; et universalis, secundum quod est subsistens; et assumptibilis secundum quod id quod assumitur transit in personalitatem alterius et non habet personalitatem propriam. Non est autem contra rationem personae communicabilitas assumentis.” Aquinas draws these from Albert the Great, *In I Sent*, vol. 25, d. 23, a. 6, ad 2, 599, and they have roots in earlier writers who held that the person is *per se una* and so the soul is not the person, e.g., William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, cited in Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology*, 46–47; Gilbert of Poitiers, cited in Principe, *William of Auxerre’s Theology*, 190; Alan of Lille, *Theologicae regulae, Opera omnia, Patrologia latina*, vol. 210 (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1855), r. 32, 637. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 51–54, 101. Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 3, a. 3, n. 1, 40, lists five necessary marks of suppositis: substantiality, completion, individuality, subsistence, incommunicability. Cf. Suárez, *DM*, d. 34, s. 7, n. 1; Garrigou-Lagrange,



Suárez shows that they communicate existence as efficient and final causes, and by giving existence to accidents.<sup>103</sup> Persons can give existence to other beings, but not their own proper existence; they cannot communicate themselves such that they cease to be their own.

Some, like Scotus, consider incommunicability to be a set of negations: to be a human person is to be an individual human nature that has not been assumed by another person, and that is not apt or able to be assumed by another.<sup>104</sup> Thomists allow that these negations follow from being incommunicable, but that incommunicability itself, because of the nobility or dignity that it confers, requires a positive perfection over and above perfections of essence.<sup>105</sup> The formal constituent of incommunicability must be a real addition to the nature of created persons, but not so as to add a new part or essential principle, that is, not so as to alter the individual nature.<sup>106</sup> There are two main Thomistic theories as to what this constitutive principle is. On either view, and on a combination of them, one can hold that the separated soul constitutes the person.

The first theory is that what constitutes human personhood is the act of existence;<sup>107</sup> when a “this something” (*hoc aliquid*) that has a com-

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*Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 1; Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 251; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 239.

<sup>103</sup> Suárez, *DM*, d. 34, s. 5, n. 54–57. Cf. Albert, *Commentaria*, vol. 28, III, d. 5, a. 3, 100.

<sup>104</sup> Scotus, *Quaestiones*, vol. 10, I, d. 23, q.un., 261–62. Some Thomists—e.g., O. Schweitzer, *Person und hypostatische Union bei Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg, 1957), 114–17, cited in Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 252—defend this view of incommunicability.

<sup>105</sup> We frequently refer to simple things negatively, when they are really positive things, since we cannot conceive of them insofar as they are, but just as they are not; see *ST* I, q. 10, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>106</sup> Theologically, it must also not be the sort of thing that Christ would have had to assume in order to redeem us, given that what He did not assume, He did not redeem.

<sup>107</sup> Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, s. 1, q. 2, 69–75; Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 38–41; Reichmann, “St. Thomas, Capreolus, Cajetan, and the Created Person,” 229; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 27, 29: a person is “an actual existent (i.e., with its own act of existence) [*sic*], distinct from all others, possessing an intellectual nature, so that it can be the self-conscious, responsible source of its own actions”; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 101–2. This view is often attributed to Capreolus (e.g., by Dhavamany and Reichmann), *Defensiones*, vol. 5, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1 Scotus, ad 4 Aureolus, 105, 110; d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 8 Scotus, ad 1 aliorum, 118–19. These thinkers draw on Aquinas, *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 1, a. 3; *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 2, q. 3–4; 9, q. 3, ad 2; *ST* III, q. 19, a. 1, ad 4: *esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae*. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 147–50.

plete individualized nature has been actualized by an act of existence, it is incommunicable and is a supposit or person.<sup>108</sup> When actualized, a human subsists in its nature, with personal dignity, able to perform actions proper to persons.<sup>109</sup> Once the act of existence is received by a nature, it can never be given to anyone else; to be a person is to possess an act of existence proportioned to one's nature. The act of existence is not a part of the person, but is added to a nature by composition of actuality and potentiality.<sup>110</sup>

The second theory is that a "mode" of subsistence or personality constitutes a person prior to its reception of the act of existence.<sup>111</sup> This

<sup>108</sup> Thomas Sutton, *De principio individuationis* (available at [www.corpusthomicum.org](http://www.corpusthomicum.org)), cited in Capreolus (where it is wrongly attributed to Aquinas), *Defensiones*, vol. 3, II, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, concl 2, 201; cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1 Scoti, ad 4 Scoti, 105–6. Cajetan argues for the second theory, but he admits this much about the unification in existence, at *Expositio*, vol. 11, II, q. 17, a. 2, n. 23, 229.

<sup>109</sup> *In III Sent* d. 15, q. 1, a. 3; *ST* III, q. 17, a. 2; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, c. 2, s. 1, q. 2, 72, 75.

<sup>110</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 3, view 4, and Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, rightly object to the idea that existence constitutes the person by adding a part, but this is not the view endorsed here. I endorsed that view in my "A Reexamination of the Thomistic Theory of Death," *Review of Metaphysics* 63 (2010): 852, but I now reject it for the reasons given here.

<sup>111</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 10–12, 76–77; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 7.3, 445; vol. 15, IV, c. 43, n. 3.1, 146; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, concl 2, 222; *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 4, a. 2, n. 2, 144; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 10, 556; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 3, t. 6, d. 9 dub 1, 343; vol. 14, d. 9 dub 1, 147–51; Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 1, a. 2, a. 1, 362; Vincent Louis Gotti, *Theologia Scholastico-Dogmatica*, vol. 3 (Bologna, 1786), t. 1, q. 6, d. 2, s. 1, 58; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 454–55; Mullaney, "Created Personality," 398–402; Peter Coffey, *Ontology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1914), 270–71. This view is attributed to Capreolus (by Mullaney), *Defensiones*, III, d. 5, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2 Aureolus, 108. Cf. Aquinas, *In III Sent* d. 5, q. 3, a. 3; *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 6, ad 5; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 2, ad 6. *In I Sent* d. 10, q. 5, a. 5 says that persons are constituted through a special mode pertaining to dignity. It is helpful to contrast this view to that of Suárez, *DM* d. 34, s. 4, n. 20, n. 23, who holds that the mode is posterior to existence, since an entity is its existence on his view; if existence differed from an entity, it would render it incommunicable, but as things are on his view, existence requires a completing mode to be incommunicable. Billot, *De verbo incarnati*, 81, argues that this makes the mode an accident, since it is posterior to substantial existence; this is problematic because this makes an accident constitute substantial incommunicability. Suárez, *DM* d. 34, s. 5, n. 59–62, distinguishes the modes of subsistence and of suppositality. The former renders a thing unable to inhere in another as an accident, but it can belong to a part, like the soul. Suppositality renders a thing entirely incom-

is priority in the order of essence, not in the order of being: an essence first receives the mode, and only then the act of existence, though the latter still is prior in that it is the actuality of both the mode and the essence. The act of existence can only be received and exercised by an individual essence that is already incommunicable. A mode is a way of being a kind of thing, or a determination or limitation of some actuality; it is not a part or form, and it could not exist on its own, apart from that of which it is the mode.<sup>112</sup> The mode of personality is the “completion” or “termination” of an essence; it is having one’s essence as one’s own, capable of receiving and exercising *per se* existence.<sup>113</sup> The composition of mode and essence is not a composition of parts; rather, the mode is added by a composition of what can be determined or completed, and its determination or completion. Cajetan likens this mode to the point that ends a line; such a point is not anything separable from the line, and does not add any new essential content to the line but is what completes the line. Likewise, the mode completes an essence “in the order of essence,” and renders it capable of being completed in the order of being.<sup>114</sup> When a human person is generated, this mode immediately follows upon the composition of the essential parts and the principle of individuation, unless some other person, such as a divine Person, inter-

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municable, and only belongs to something with a complete nature, like a person. By this distinction, Suárez precludes the possibility of the separated soul being a person. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 150–64.

<sup>112</sup> *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 6, ad 5; *ST I*, q. 5, a. 5; q. 49, a. 2; I-II, q. 85, a. 4; *Cursus*, vol. 1, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 22, 560; Mullaney, “Created Personality,” 392–96. Other examples of modes include: the compatibility that a subject has for an accidental form such that it is able to receive it, the possibility that an accidental form has for being succeeded by a contrary form, the impossibility of a subject receiving incompatible accidental forms simultaneously, and the possibility of a subject receiving such forms successively; cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 1, *Ars Logica*, I, c. 20, 40–41.

<sup>113</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 10, n. 13–14, 571, 573–74, who cites SCG IV, c. 49; *ST I*, q. 29, a. 1, ad 2; a. 2. cf. Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 2, a. 2, n. 2, 79; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 462–63. Bañez says the mode adds a determination of the nature such that it has existence of a specific kind through which it subsists; *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 2, a. 2, n. 6: *tale esse existentiae per quod natura subsistat*.

<sup>114</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 4, a. 2, n. 10, 76; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 43, n. 3.1, 145; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 14, d. 9, dub 1, 148–51. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 4, dub 3, ad 6, likens existence to a point that ends a line as well.

venes and assumes that nature; the mode is intrinsic to the person, not requiring divine causality as existence does.<sup>115</sup> The mode is a perfection over the nature, as it is that whereby the nature is a separate whole, able to develop through acts, virtue, and grace.<sup>116</sup>

I contend that both the act of existence and the mode of subsistence are necessary for personhood, though I think that on either theory, the separated soul constitutes a person; thus, for the remainder of the paper, I will incorporate aspects of both theories into my argument.<sup>117</sup> I follow John Crosby in holding that, since to be a person is to be wholly incommunicable and complete, to be a person is to possess fully both one's essence and existence in a unique and personal way, since it is in virtue of principles of incommunicability that we are autonomous subjective agents.<sup>118</sup> There is a difference between incommunicably possessing one's essence, that is, all that one definably is, and incommunicably existing, that is, being a complete being and agent; it is fitting to ascribe the two sorts of incommunicability to two different principles, the mode and the act of existence.<sup>119</sup> Dignity is a defining mark of personhood, corresponding to

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<sup>115</sup> Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 43, n. 3.1, 145; Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 4, a. 2, n. 3.3, n. 8, 145, 148; q. 35, a. 5, n. 4, 351; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 34, 564; Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 3, cor 2, ad 1, 375.

<sup>116</sup> Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 3 cor1, 375; Hugon, "Si l'ame," 596.

<sup>117</sup> One person is a being (*ens*) by its act of existence, a thing (*res*) by its nature, a "this" (*hoc*) by its individuation, and a "something" (*aliquid*) complete in itself and separate from all others by its mode, its existence, or both; cf. *De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV c. 43, n. 2, 145. Supposit is related to the transcendental *aliquid* by Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 201–2; cf. Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 225–26; Wipfel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 239, 241.

<sup>118</sup> Crosby, *Selfhood of the Human Person*, 44–48, 50–51, 59–65. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 462–63; *Person and the Common Good*, 41; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 3, d. 9 dub 1, 341; Anton Pegis, *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 58; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 163–71. Cf. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 31–32, on the definition of a person as *ens autonomum intellectuale* from Umberto degl'Innocenti, *Il Problema della persona nel pensiero di San Tommaso* (Rome: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1967).

<sup>119</sup> Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 204–9, says existence *completes* a person, but he wrongly thinks that it does not render a person *incommunicable*, since existence is communicable to everything. But a person does not receive *existence as such*, but existence proportioned to its species (*Quaestiones de anima*, a. 1, ad 16), which is incommunicable to others and renders the being incommunicable as a being.

one's degree of existence, and a creature has its degree of existence from its essence, which must be incommunicably its own. Both incommunicable essence and existence constitute a person as a person, and render it the most complete and perfect sort of substance there is.<sup>120</sup>

### Thomism on the Separated Soul

Having seen how the Thomistic tradition understands personhood, we must now consider how the Thomistic tradition understood the relation between the separated soul and personhood. This will aid my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*, and my response to the *Arguments from Nature, Parthood, and Death and Resurrection*.

Although Thomists typically deny that the separated soul is a person, they allow that it retains characteristics typically associated with personhood.<sup>121</sup> The human composite is subsistent by sharing the mode of subsistence of the soul, just as it exists by sharing the soul's act of existence. There can be only one mode of subsistence in the soul and the composite, because this mode is indivisible, and is that by which the person is able to receive its proper act of existence. This mode must belong primarily to the soul, so that the soul can first receive existence, and can remain a unified agent, capable of intellectual acts

<sup>120</sup> Thomism allows multiple sources of incommunicability; e.g., matter renders form incommunicable, and the act of existence renders a being incommunicable. Cf. *In II Sent* d. 3, q. 1, a. 2; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 3, II, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, concl 3, 203; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 1, n. 34, 564; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 3; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 463; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 37–43; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 40. Bañez, *Comentarios a la tercera parte*, vol. 1, q. 17, a. 2, n. 1, distinguishes having complete essence (*esse essentiae*), being a complete supposit (*esse subsistentiae*), and complete being (*esse existentiae*), each of which confers a different sort of incommunicability; cf. Suárez, *DM* d. 31, s. 1, n. 2. Albert distinguishes individuality and incommunicability at *Commentaria* vol. 28, III, d. 5, a. 15, 115, though he says human incommunicability is from matter at vol. 25, I, d. 19, a. 14, 535.

<sup>121</sup> Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl 2, 229; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 2, 98; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 68, n. 7.2, 444; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 3, concl 2, 160; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 574–75; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, 128; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 463; Hugon, “Si l’âme,” 594; Gredt, *philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, 423–44; A.D. Sertillanges, O.P., *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy*, trans. Godfrey Anstruther, O.P., (St. Louis: Herder, 1931), 226.

and relationships, in its separated state, with the same existence as the composite.<sup>122</sup> The separated soul retains “in root” every essential feature of the person, as Ferrara explains, including its corporeality, the forms of “mixed bodies,” vegetative nature, sensitive nature, and humanity in general.<sup>123</sup> Alexis Lépecier contends that the same “stream of consciousness” as was in the composite is in the separated soul, though without any of our current sensitive consciousness, so the separated soul can call itself “I,” with the same sense of “I” as the composite used prior to death.<sup>124</sup>

But the separated soul is unable to implement most of the powers that it contains “in root.” For a substance to have the actual perfection of its nature, all that is contained in the nature must be able to be “explicated”; that is, the nature must be able to cause all of the powers and properties that it is naturally oriented to cause. The separated soul cannot explicate its whole nature because it lacks matter, which is required for many of the powers that it is oriented to cause.<sup>125</sup> Proper accidents (*propria*) follow necessarily from a nature; humans have proper accidents that require matter, so the separated soul can be known to lack human nature, and not be a person, because it lacks

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<sup>122</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 2–3, 98; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 3, concl 2, 160; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 41; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 2, 110; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 574–75. Relationality is a key feature of personhood according to some Thomists; e.g., Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 29, a. 4, concl 2, 930, argues that since created persons are persons by analogy to the divine persons, divine persons are constituted by relations, and personhood is constituted by incommunicability, which involves a relation to others, then created personhood mediately and inadequately signifies relationality. Cf. Mullaney, “Created Personality,” 399–401; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 14, 64–65, 69–70, which cites Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983), 83; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 47; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 189; Matthew Walz, “What Is a Power of the Soul? Aquinas’ Answer,” *Sapientia* 60 (2006): 344.

<sup>123</sup> Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 15, IV, c. 81, n. 6.1–5, 256–57.

<sup>124</sup> Lépecier, *Anima Humana*, 103–4, cited in Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 113.

<sup>125</sup> *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 2, ad 5: “Non est autem aliquid perfectum in sua natura, nisi actu explicari possit quod in eo virtute continetur.” Cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 575; Salmanticenses, *Cursus*, vol. 14, d. 9, dub 2, 161. “Nature” here is said analogically, since in Aquinas’s view the soul does not, strictly speaking, have a nature, as it is a mere part.

some human proper accidents.<sup>126</sup> The separate soul does not subsist as a complete substance because it is oriented toward communicating its subsistence to matter.<sup>127</sup> Human personhood is spiritual, but this spirituality is oriented toward matter.<sup>128</sup> Likewise, the separated soul has the existence of a human person, but as communicable to matter, not as its own complete act of existence, and so its existence in the separated state cannot be called “the existence (*esse*) of a human being.”<sup>129</sup> The separated soul is capable of actions, even the most satisfying action, contemplating God, but even during that action, it longs to be joined to matter and so to be a complete substance.<sup>130</sup> Human persons lose existence when soul and matter, which naturally constitute the human act of existence, come apart, even though this act of existence continues, constituted by the soul.<sup>131</sup> If the human person did not essentially have matter, then it would be false to say that the human person is mortal, corruptible, or composite.<sup>132</sup> Traditional Thomism supports the corruptionist *Arguments from Nature and Death and Resurrection*.

The most decisive reason why most Thomists think that the separated soul is not a person is that the separated soul is not incommunicable, since it is by nature a part, and so does not fulfill the definition of “person”; I refer to this as the *Argument from Incommunicability*.<sup>133</sup> The soul

<sup>126</sup> ST I, q. 29, a. 4. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 1, 567. Cf. Ferrara, *Commentary on ScG*, II c. 68 n. 13 reply; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, q. 3, a. 4, *resp.*; Coffey, *Ontology*, 264; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 107.

<sup>127</sup> Coffey, *Ontology*, 263; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 109.

<sup>128</sup> Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 43.

<sup>129</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 3, 114; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 575; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 4, ad 6, 161; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 457; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 203–4.

<sup>130</sup> SCG II, c. 79; ST I-II, q. 4, a. 4, ad 4; ST I-II, q. 4, a. 5, ad 2. Cf. Coffey, *Ontology*, 264; Hugon, “Si l’âme,” 592–93; T. L. Cardinal Mercier, *A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy*, trans. S. A. Parker, vol. 2 (London: Kegan Paul, 1932), 485; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 111–12; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 457.

<sup>131</sup> *In II Sent* d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2; *De veritate*, q. 13, a. 4, ad 2; ST III, q. 50, aa. 4–5. Cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 4, ad 4, ad 6, 161; Wingell, “*Vivere viventibus est esse*,” 112; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 597.

<sup>132</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 437.

<sup>133</sup> ST I, q. 50, a. 4; Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 1, I, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, concl 2, 229; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 438; Garrigou-La-grange, *Trinity and God the Creator*, c. 3, q. 29, a. 1, corollary, n. 1.



is independent in existence and subsistence, but dependent by its orientation to matter.<sup>134</sup> Though conscious, its consciousness is of a different experiential character from ours, since it lacks sensible powers.<sup>135</sup> Persons cannot be assumed by other persons, but the soul can be assumed by the composite; that is, it can be substantially united to the complete person, revealing its incompleteness.<sup>136</sup> According to some Thomists, the fact that the soul continues to bear the composite's act of existence is what prevents it from being a complete person. When any other part of any other subsistent thing, such as an integral part like the heart, is detached from the whole of which it was a part, it takes on a new mode of subsistence and a new act of existence, and becomes a new supposit, and is no longer the mere part that it was. But because the soul continues to bear the composite's act of existence, it retains its parthood, because it retains its orientation to communicating its act to the composite.<sup>137</sup> All of this supports the corruptionist objections to the *Argument from Constitution*, since it provides further reasons for thinking that the soul, being communicable, could not constitute or be identical to a person. But the Thomistic tradition also provides a basis for building on the survivalist *Arguments from Acts* and *from Constitution*, and for responding to the corruptionist *Argument from Weakness*, by considering the new perfections that the soul attains in its separated state.

The separated state is not the soul's "natural" state, informing matter. But most Thomists contend that the state of separation is not "violent" or "contrary" to the soul's nature (*contra naturam*). A state is violent to a thing when that thing cannot, when in that state, exercise its

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<sup>134</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, ad 2, 435. Cf. Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, 119–20.

<sup>135</sup> Sertillanges, *Foundations*, 199, 227. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 40–41 emphasizes that human action must unfold on both the material and the spiritual "levels." Pegis, *At the Origins*, 34–58, argues that the structure of human existence reveals that, experientially, a human person is an intellectual being that lives out its intellectuality in the composite and so is characterized by history and the drama of engagement in the world. To lose the "lived experience" of "incarnated intelligence" is to lose something essential to human personhood; cf. Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto: PIMS, 1978), 152–56.

<sup>136</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 2, 98.

<sup>137</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 2, a. 2, n. 10, 27; q. 4, a. 2, n. 28, 90; q. 6, a. 3, n. 4, 98; Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 29, a. 1, *resp.*, 918; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, n. 18, 575.



powers or attain its proper end. But the separated soul can exercise its highest powers, and attain its ends, knowledge of and union with God. The separated state is a “preternatural” state (*praeter naturam*), that is, a state of existing and attaining knowledge higher than its natural state.<sup>138</sup> It participates in the intellectual way of life proper to the separate intellectual substances.<sup>139</sup> The soul is potentially in the genus of intellectual substances, and this potentiality is actualized in its separated state.<sup>140</sup> The soul has the potential for subsisting forever separate from the composite. Although actions are attributed to supposit, supposit exercise actions in virtue of their subsistence, and the soul is subsistent, so the soul can act even if always separated.<sup>141</sup>

On the Thomistic view, the soul attains a new perfection in its separated state, though it also loses a perfection in being separated from the body.<sup>142</sup> When in the composite, the soul is naturally, immediately, and substantially united to matter. In virtue of being united, the soul has a special mode; John of St. Thomas calls it the mode of “being *in se* applied (*applicata*) and communicated” to the body.<sup>143</sup> Because the soul exists as communicated to the body, it is properly the composite as a whole that exists. Ferrara argues that although the human soul first receives and exercises the act of existence, it does not do so as a person, but only in such a way that it immediately communicates this act to the

<sup>138</sup> SCG IV, c. 81; *ST* I, q. 50, a. 4; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 13, 373; Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 1, d. 2, q. 4, n. 26, ad 9; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 2, 438. Ferrara, *Commentary on ScG*, vol. 13, II, c. 83 n. 7–9, 526–27, contends that it is contrary to the nature of the soul, which is oriented to matter. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 1, q. 76, a. 1, dub 5, concl 1, n. 2, ad 4 notes that these positions are reconcilable: separation is contrary to the soul’s nature in one sense, but not in another.

<sup>139</sup> The separated state is not “supernatural”; i.e., it is not unattainable by any creature without divine assistance, since the soul is raised to the natural level of higher creatures.

<sup>140</sup> Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 7, IV, d. 50, q. 1, a. 1, concl 5, 262.

<sup>141</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 2, 440–41; Hugon, “Si l’âme,” 592–93; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 111.

<sup>142</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 33, ad 2 Scotus, 214; vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 3, 98; John of St. Thomas, *Expositio*, vol. 4, I, q. 55, d. 21, a. 2, n. 13, 721. *ST* I, q. 89, a. 1, says the soul has one mode in the body and one when separated. Contrast to Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 2–3; *DM* d. 34, s. 5, n. 28–29, 32–34, who says it just loses a perfective mode of union, though it retains its subsistence.

<sup>143</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 2, 442. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones*, vol. 5, II, d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 Scotus, 117.

whole composite person.<sup>144</sup> Because of this mode, when in the composite, the soul only thinks by turning to phantasms. But, in the composite, the soul, because of its subsistence, also potentially exists as a separate substance, subsistent in itself, not as communicating subsistence and existence to the composite.<sup>145</sup>

When the soul is separated, a new mode of separate existence is actualized, but the old mode of being communicated to the body is lost. The soul always has the same mode of subsistence, but it changes another mode when it leaves the composite.<sup>146</sup> The new mode of “being separate” renders the soul capable of acting in new ways. It can understand without turning to phantasms, perfectly understand itself, and intuit the existence of things.<sup>147</sup> In many ways the separated soul’s cognition is diminished, but in other ways it is enhanced. Though the soul is naturally in the body, in some respects the separated state is better for it.<sup>148</sup>

Cajetan holds that this new mode constitutes the separated soul as

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<sup>144</sup> Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 6.3, 444; II, c. 69, n. 4, 448–49, argues that the soul is not, while in the body, properly speaking subsistent and abstracted from the body, but rather subsists with the mode of subsistence that belongs properly to the composite; II, c. 68, n. 6.3, 444, argues that although the act of existence belongs to the soul and by communication to the composite, the mode of subsistence, whereby the person formally is a person, just belongs to the composite. But this view is rejected by later commentators in favor of Cajetan’s view, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 23, 213, that the soul, even while in the body, subsists; i.e., it has the capability to receive existence per se, prior to the composite (and thus, though he does not say it in that passage, has the mode of subsistence prior to the body); cf. Bañez, *Commentaria in primam partem*, vol. 2, q. 76, a. 1, dub 3, ad 4, 157.

<sup>145</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 2, q. 7, a. 3, 114; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 1, I, q. 3, d. 4, a. 2, 571. Cf. Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 195–96; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 72–73. Henri-Dominique Gardeil, *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. John Otto, vol. 3, *Psychology* (St. Louis: Herder, 1956), 231: the human person has a “dual nature,” “body-dependent” and “body-transcendent.”

<sup>146</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 76, a. 1, n. 33, ad 1 Scotus, 214; vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 4, 98.

<sup>147</sup> *Sentencia libri De anima*, II, lect 6, n. 301; *ST I*, q. 89, a. 1; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 13, 373; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9 a. 2, 440; *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 4, I, q. 55, d. 21, a. 2, n. 13, 721; Billot, *De verbo incarnato*, 237; Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, trans. M. Timothea Doyle (available at [www.christianperfection.info](http://www.christianperfection.info)), part 3, c. 31, n. 38; Sertillanges, *Foundations*, 230; Gardeil, *Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 3, 230–31.

<sup>148</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 13, 373; Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, vol. 13, II, c. 79, n. 1.2, 500; Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 9, n. 6.

a “semiperson,” having everything necessary for personhood except a complete nature. The semiperson subsists, but it has its act of existence “inadequately,” because its existence is the actuality of a whole composite person.<sup>149</sup> In virtue of this new mode, the soul’s essence is immediately present to its intellect, and it knows itself fully. In order to understand why this is, we must consider the nature of self-cognition, according to Aquinas; this will aid my revision of the *Argument from Acts*. In the composite state, one is capable of acts of intellectual self-cognition, such as perceiving that one exists, only when one is aware of oneself understanding other things, because in the composite, the intellect is directed toward forms received through the senses, and can only self-cognize by reflection on outward directed acts of understanding. But actual self-cognition is possible because the soul has “habitual self-cognition,” the potential to become aware of oneself. This “habitual self-cognition” is not literally a habit, but is like a habit insofar as it is a tendency to perform certain sorts of acts, acts of self-cognition. Rather, this habitual self-cognition is identical to the soul. The soul is an immaterial spiritual substance, and so its nature is to understand and to be capable of acts of self-cognition through the intellectual power.<sup>150</sup> Immaterial substanc-

<sup>149</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 11, III, q. 6, a. 3, n. 3, 98. Inadequate exercise of existence is not partial existence, in the manner described by Suárez or Pasnau. Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 5, calls the soul a “semiperson” both when separate and when in the composite; he denies, contrary to Cajetan, that the soul has more personal characteristics when separated than in the composite.

<sup>150</sup> *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 8, *resp.*, ad 1, esp. ad 14: “quod notitia qua anima seipsam novit, non est in genere accidentis quantum ad id quo habitualiter cognoscitur, sed solum quantum ad actum cognitionis qui est accidens quoddam; unde etiam Augustinus dicit quod notitia substantialiter inest menti, in IX de Trinitate, secundum quod mens novit se ipsam.” *In I Sent* d. 3, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1: “ipsa essentia animae, prout est mota a seipsa, habet rationem habitus.” *In I Sent* d. 3, q. 5, a. 1, ad 2: “habitus isti erunt consubstantiales, cum sint in ipsa substantia animae, nec sunt ibi alii habitus.” *SCG* IV, c. 11; *ST* I, q. 87, a. 1. The soul is likened to a habitual rather than an operative actuality at *Sentencia libri De anima* II, lec. 1, n. 227. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 470–71; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 76; R. T. Lambert, “Habitual Knowledge of the Soul in Thomas Aquinas,” *Modern Schoolman* 60 (1982): 1–19. Dhavamany, *Subjectivity and Knowledge*, 67–74, argues that habitual self-cognition is not identical to the soul but to the power of the intellect, though he thinks it is rooted in the “ontological self-presence” of the soul, and so is “consubstantial” with the substance of the soul, since self-knowledge is “proper to every spirit”; my argument based on the identity of habitual self-cognition and the soul works just as well, *mutatis mutandis*, if Dhavamany’s view is correct.

es understand themselves immediately insofar as they are actual and thereby intelligible, and their essence is to understand.<sup>151</sup> Here again we see the status of the human person on the “border” between the material and the immaterial: the composite human person is composed of matter formed by a soul that is essentially habitual self-cognition or subjectivity.

After death, the soul is immediately aware of itself, because the soul is its own habitual self-cognition, and, when separated, it is not impeded from understanding itself immediately by its immersion in the body and consequent orientation toward the senses. To be known adds a perfection to a thing, and to know is a perfection for the soul and involves formally becoming that which is known; in knowing itself and being known by itself, the soul is more intimately united to itself and more perfected than it was in the composite.<sup>152</sup> As John of St. Thomas says, it is present to itself both insofar as it exists and gives rise to the intellect, as the subject underlying the intellect, and insofar as it immediately knows itself, as object of the intellect.<sup>153</sup> This semipersonal mode is a personal perfection, and thus, in the resurrected body, the soul will be present both semipersonally, with the consequent cognitive perfections, and as communicating existence to the body, such that it will also know by turning to phantasms. When resurrected, the human person will have all the modes of existence and action of which it is capable.

It must be noted that a philosopher influenced by Thomism prior to the contemporary debate, Edith Stein, held that the person survives in the separated soul. Her views will aid my expansion on the *Argument from Constitution*. Stein argues that a person is an incommunicable “bearer” or “carrier” of a rational nature.<sup>154</sup> To bear a rational nature is to have an interiorly experienced life “as one’s own,” and thus to understand

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<sup>151</sup> *Super librum de causis*, lec. 13; cf. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, ad 4, 436.

<sup>152</sup> cf. *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 2.

<sup>153</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 4, q. 55, d. 21, a. 2, n. 6, n. 13, 720–21. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Ages of the Interior Life*, part 3, c. 31 n. 38; Gardeil, *Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 3, 182–83, 230–31; Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 133–34; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 470.

<sup>154</sup> Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, trans. Kurt Reinhardt (Washington: ICS, 2002), 81, 343, 361. I leave aside the question here of how Thomistic she was; the important point is that she argued using Thomistic terms that the separated soul is the person.

oneself and have free control over oneself.<sup>155</sup> Self-possession arises from the soul because it is a spiritual substance, in virtue of which the person is a *self* and calls itself “I.” The way in which a person manifests him- or herself in actions “radiates” from the interiority of the soul, wherein is the image of God, and the body only exists through and is formed by the spiritual and personal existence of the soul. This foundation of personal interiority whereby the person bears his or her nature persists even in the separated soul.<sup>156</sup> Thus the person, the bearer of a rational nature, persists in the separated soul, albeit with a diminished nature.<sup>157</sup>

### Arguments for the Survivalist View

The contemporary arguments for the survivalist view need to be expanded in light of the foregoing exploration of the Thomistic tradition. First, I shall expand on the *Argument from Constitution*, and then on the *Argument from Acts*, while responding to the corruptionists. In order to expand on the *Argument from Constitution*, I first respond to the *Argument from Incommunicability*, so as to show that the separated soul has the sorts of incommunicability necessary for being a person. I contend that the Thomistic requirements regarding which kinds of incommunicability are necessary for personhood require revision. It is clear that a person must be an individual, but the other two requirements—that the person must be unassumable and cannot communicate as a part to a whole—require more exploration.

There is good reason to say that certain parts can constitute the person. For example, if I were to lose all of my integral parts except my brain, but this was sustained by a machine so that it was still capable of cognitive activity, then it seems plausible to say that I would be consti-

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 361–62.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 441–42, 448. However, Stein says that “the soul has neither its only nor its true being in the informing of the body”; such a claim may sound as though she denies that the soul is a form. But she says that the soul naturally forms the body at *ibid.*, 364. Her point is the Thomistic point that the soul’s existence and primary operations are not dependent on the body.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 597. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 543, makes a similar argument: the human form is spiritual and so retains its identity apart from matter. The human person has identity through its form, which makes a person intelligible as a person, and grounds one’s core personality; the person survives as long as this “core” survives.

tuted by that brain. The brain would retain my power to perform the intellectual activities that are indicative of the human species, and thus it would retain my act of existence and mode of subsistence. I would not thereby, strictly speaking, *be* a brain; rather, I would be *constituted by* a brain, because my brain, a composite of soul and matter, would be completed by my mode of subsistence and actualized by my act of existence. This mode and act would continue to constitute me as a person. It seems possible for me to be constituted by an integral part, although that part is communicable to a whole body, that is, as a part it does not possess itself but is oriented to giving its existence and nature to, and being possessed and controlled by, a whole body. This is contrary to the Thomistic view that no part can be or constitute a person, and suggests that the conditions for incommunicability require revision. It could be objected that the brain alone, or at least the cerebrum alone, cannot constitute the person, since it lacks animal sensory and vegetative powers; since it does not seem to be an animal, it cannot be a human person.<sup>158</sup> Later, I shall show how something that lacks these powers can still be an animal.

Furthermore, Aquinas's requirement that, for a thing to be a person, it must be able to "explicate" all of its powers, that is, actually have the powers that follow from its nature, is too stringent a requirement. Taking such a requirement strictly, it is questionable whether a person missing *any* organs or powers is a person. For example, a human that was blind because it lacked all the organs pertinent to sight—both the eyes and the entire neurological visual system—would thereby lack the visual power. Such a human would be unable to "explicate" some of human nature's powers and proper accidents. As Matthew Walz explains, bodily powers require their organs in order to be actual powers, since the matter of these organs is the proper potentiality for these powers. Without their organs, the powers remain only "virtually" or "in root" in and identical to the essence of the soul, not as actual powers rooted in a subject. But surely, just like the disembodied brain considered above, the blind human has the human nature that is the root of these powers, as well as the mode of subsistence and the act of existence, and thus is a person. Certain material conditions required for explicating all of

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<sup>158</sup>I owe this objection to Patrick Toner.

his or her powers are just lacking.<sup>159</sup> Aquinas probably did not mean for his claim about the explication of powers to be taken in so strict a sense. However, it seems that the claim can be opposed on even a looser interpretation: surely a person can lack most parts or powers, even all integral parts but the brain, and still be a person. This does not yet show that the human person could be constituted by a soul that wholly lacked matter, but it does show that a human person can lack powers and proper accidents proper to his or her nature and still be a human person. Contrary to what Aquinas seems to claim, a thing need not actually have all of the powers proper to a given nature in order to retain that nature, so long as other conditions remain.<sup>160</sup>

The requirement regarding explication must be modified: a creature is a person just in case it is an individual with a rational nature, a mode of subsistence, and an act of existence, and would immediately have its natural powers and proper accidents were it in the right conditions. In the case above, the brain would not, upon being rejoined to a whole body, communicate itself to *another* person with its own complete nature; rather, were the rest of the body to be restored, the same person would just have gained some parts, to which the one unifying act of existence and human nature would be communicated. The person can be constituted by what was a mere part, provided the act of existence, mode of subsistence, and individual nature remain in it, and provided that it cannot be assumed by *another* person, but can just be taken up into a fuller completion of the same person, a fuller explicating of one and the same complete nature. Aquinas's theory must be

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<sup>159</sup>Cf. *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 12; *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 11, ad 20; *ST* I, q. 77, a. 6, ad 1; Walz, "What Is a Power," 340–43.

<sup>160</sup>In a sense, the blind person, the disembodied brain, and the separated soul have all the human proper accidents; this allows a partial response to the part of the *Argument from Nature* that claims that the separated soul cannot have human nature because it lacks some human proper accidents. Ferrara, *Commentary on SCG*, II, c. 68, n. 13, 446, explains that a thing can have proper accidents according to "first act" or "second act": in the former, a thing has them in that it has a natural aptitude to take on these accidents; in the latter, it actually expresses them. For example, one can have risibility according to first act, without actually being able to express this in laughter—that is, exercise it according to second act—because one lacks the material structures necessary to laugh. Likewise, as I shall argue, the separated soul has all the proper accidents of the human person just according to first act, insofar as it has a nature capable of giving rise to them.



amended: there are degrees of explication of a nature, and a minimal degree, so long as the whole nature is present, is sufficient for the same person being present.

It will be objected that the case of the brain does not parallel the case of the separated soul. The brain is an integral part, which has its nature following upon the nature of the whole person. It is composed of soul and matter, and thus still has the essential principles of the human person. But the soul is an essential part, explanatorily prior to the person, and, in itself, lacks the other essential part of the human person, matter. The objector can maintain that even if a person could be constituted by a brain, it would not follow that one could be constituted just by the soul.

Such an objection, which builds on the corruptionist *Argument from Nature*, can be met by the defender of the *Argument from Constitution* by showing that the separated soul still has human nature. The separated soul retains the same act of existence, or actuality of the whole human person, as was had by the composite. Every actuality that is received in a potentiality is proportioned to that potentiality. My act of existence fits my essence and is *this* act of existence because it has been received by my essence. Once it has been received by my essence, it can never be communicated to another or be the actuality of another person than me. Since actuality is prior to potentiality, I am first a being (*ens*), and only on that basis a thing (*res*), that is, what has an essence. Since the act of existence remains in the separated soul, and is the same actuality as was in the composite, and acts of existence can only be received and exercised by a thing in proportion to its essence, then the separated soul must retain the human essence, so as to retain the same act of existence. Otherwise, my human act of existence could not remain in and actualize my separated soul. It is clear that a great deal is missing from the separated soul. But the separated soul retains corporeality, vegetability, and sensitivity “in root,” that is, in its essence; it does not retain these powers in actuality, and they are not present in it as in a subject, but it retains the essence that gives rise to them, as a potential whole capable of giving rise to many powers.<sup>161</sup> If it did not

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<sup>161</sup> *Quaestiones de quodlibet* 10, q. 3, a. 1. Cf. Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 278–80.



retain that essence, then it would be incapable of retaining my act of existence, for an act of existence is always proportioned to its proper essence. But if there is continuity of this essence, as well as of mode of subsistence and act of existence in the separated soul, then everything necessary for constituting a person is in the separated soul. And thus my separated soul, along with its mode of subsistence and its act of existence, will constitute me, an incommunicable person unassumable by another person, albeit in a defective state, that is, only imperfectly expressing my nature. The soul is like the brain in the above thought experiment; it lacks all actual human powers but the intellectual powers, yet it retains the nature that gives rise to all human powers, because only that nature is capable of receiving and exercising one's unique human act of existence. In this way, building on the Thomism's account of existence, personhood, and the separated soul, the *Argument from Constitution* can be defended.

This expansion on the *Argument from Constitution* can be given in another way, using Stein's terminology. The person is the bearer of human nature. But the person is a person, is unified, and can bear this nature in virtue of either the mode of subsistence or the act of existence or both. Having human nature renders one capable of having this mode and this act of existence, and only what has this nature is capable of so being completed and actualized. But the separated soul has the same mode and act of existence as the composite, and so the separated soul can bear this nature. Bearers of natures are suppositis, and suppositis with rational natures are persons; thus the separated soul is person. The separated soul cannot be another person besides me, because it has my mode of subsistence and act of existence, and thus it must be me.<sup>162</sup>

In order to give a full defense of the *Argument from Constitution*, a response must be given to the *Argument from Nature*. The *Argument from Constitution* does not lead to the conclusion that a human person is always just a soul. Rather, a human person is what receives, exercises, and is actualized and unified by its act of existence. In the composite, this is both soul and matter. After death, this is the soul, and so then the

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<sup>162</sup>We can see now the sense in which Moreland and Rae's position (see note 22 above) is true: the human soul is the primary bearer of human nature and is a necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity. But their position is false in that it identifies the human person just with the soul.

person is constituted by just the soul, because by itself the soul has the formal constitutive principles of personhood. It is true that in the composite, the soul receives and exercises the act of existence in a way that is prior to and nobler than the way that it is received and exercised by the composite. This does not make the person to be constituted by just the soul then because the whole composite receives and exercises that act. The survivalist view does not turn Thomistic hylomorphism into substance dualism. There is only one substance and one nature for each human person. In the natural state, the one substance is constituted by soul and matter, though its substantiality comes from the spiritual substantiality of the soul; in the state of separation, the one substance is constituted by just the soul. The human person is incomplete without matter, since matter is needed for the complete explication of its nature; matter is substantially, not accidentally, united to the soul.

However—and this is an expansion on the Thomistic view of human nature to which the survivalist must be committed—the soul, both in the composite and when separated, has human nature; this ensures personal identity, but it is not to say that soul in the composite constitutes a person other than the composite. Rather, human nature, rational animality, belongs to the soul prior to belonging to the composite, just as the human act of existence belongs to the soul prior to belonging to the composite. Both human nature and the act of existence are communicated to the composite by the soul, which substantially unites matter to itself; human nature has, in itself, a structure unique among natures, belonging primarily to the soul, and by communication but naturally and substantially to the composite. The separated soul has human nature, but expresses it in a defective way, needing matter for the full explication of that nature. When the soul again informs a composite at the resurrection, it will not be assumed by another person, but it will just take matter to itself, and the same person that was constituted by the separated soul will resume the full explication of its nature, as a single substance.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. Stump, *Aquinas*, 409. The separated state is just a stage in the person's life wherein the person expresses its nature imperfectly; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 1, *Ars logica*, II, q. 14, a. 1, 427, contends that some stages, such as that of the embryo, express human nature "imperfectly" and so are "parts" of the human person, in that they tend to a further perfection; cf. Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3,

Since acts and existence are attributed primarily to suppositis, this response to the *Argument from Nature* provides a solution to the problems of too many thinkers and too many existing things. There is one and the same supposit or person, that is, one thinker and one existing thing, before and after death. Before death this person is constituted by soul and matter, and after death it is constituted by the soul, along with the mode and the act of existence in each case. If the separate soul did not constitute a person, then the problems would remain, because then the composite person would think and exist derivatively upon the nonpersonal soul. Such a person would be no person at all, but would lack substantial existence, unity, and thought in its own right. But since personhood is constituted by the mode of subsistence and the act of existence, then these problems are avoided: the person goes where these principles go, and the one thinking and existing person is whatever has these principles. Since these cannot be had without human nature, whatever has these also has human nature.

All this allows a response to the contention of the *Argument from Parthood* that there is nothing in the separated soul besides the soul that could constitute a person, and so it is unclear what the person is over and above the soul. Because being a person requires the mode of subsistence and the act of existence, the separated soul constitutes the person without being identical to the person; there are principles supplementing the soul. The supplementation is not by another part, but by other principles, which can constitute things differently than their essential parts constitute them.<sup>164</sup> Regardless of which principle constitutes personhood, the soul retains it, and so, with either principle, or both, constitutes a person. Although, strictly speaking, the person, not the separated soul, thinks, it is correct to say that the separated soul

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d. 14, q. 9, n. 6, *resp.*; Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 3. By “parts” here, John seems to mean something like the contemporary notion of “temporal part,” though he is not a four-dimensionalist; he means that certain temporal stages of a substance only imperfectly express that substance’s nature, though they still have that nature.

<sup>164</sup>On the importance of different kinds of composition besides the composition of parts, including composition of actuality and potentiality, and of terminating mode and terminated nature, see Billuart, *Cursus*, vol. 2, diss 4, a. 2, ad 2, 371. Cf. *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 1; *De substantiis separatis*, c. 6; *De ente*, c. 2; SCG II, c. 54; ST I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 4; Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 87; Sleva, *Separated Soul*, 80–83; Oderberg, “Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Mereology,” 13–23.

thinks, since the person and the separated soul differ not as two things, but as what is complete and what is able to be completed. This is a further response to the too many thinkers problem.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion of the *Argument from Constitution*, it can be concluded that the soul with its mode and existence alone is necessary and sufficient for continuity of human nature and personhood. This does not entail that we should define the human person through these constitutive principles, because they are not parts of the essence; the definition of the human person is still “rational animal.” Seeing how this can be allows the final step in my response to the *Argument from Nature*. The soul “bears” this nature not in the sense that it somehow includes matter, but in the sense that it bears the “core” of rational animality, the essence in virtue of which the human person can receive and exercise the human act of existence, and which is the “root” from which is “explicated” all actual human powers and corporeality. Essence should be primarily understood as the potential for an act of existence, and only on that basis should it be understood in terms of its principles, such as form and matter.

On my revision of Thomistic principles, the human person can be said to be “essentially” material in the sense that this is its natural state and is necessary for the human person’s ordinary and perfected life, but not in the sense that actually having matter is necessary to be a human person. Considered in the former sense of “essential,” the soul is a part of human nature; considered in the latter sense, it contains full human nature, albeit defectively expressed. To be able to receive and exercise, in its separated state, the act of existence of an animal and of a body, the soul must have an essence capable of receiving and exercising these sorts of existence. In the separated state, it is incapable of exercising them fully, because it lacks matter. But it does exercise these sorts of existence in a sense when separated because the human act of existence is one act, and the separated soul exercises that whole act. It must have human nature such that it can exercise this act of existence, which is the act of a bodily, vegetative, animal, and intellectual supposit. Since this human nature in the soul is the nature of a spiritual substance, and we cannot in this life fully understand the natures of spiritual substances, we cannot fully understand in this life what human nature, rational animality, is, or what it means for a spiritual substance to be an animal,

that is, have an animal essence, but we can know that this must be the case.

That the human person has such a curious sort of animality follows from its place in the hierarchy of being; considering the implications of our place in this hierarchy allows a response to the claims of the *Arguments from Death and Resurrection* that the survivalist view leads to a faulty view of human mortality, death, and resurrection. The human person is the highest of the animals, but is an animal just analogously to other animals, because its animality is determined by its rationality. The human person has this rationality through its form, the lowest of the spiritual substances. The human form is only a form analogously to material forms, in that, unlike them, it is subsistent and does not depend on its composite for existence.<sup>165</sup> Since it is through this soul that the human person is an animal, we should expect human animality to be different from the animality of other animals. The human animal has spiritual existence; other animals have material existence. The human person is an animal in that it senses, but it has sensation for the sake of the fulfillment of its soul. The highest animal exists for the sake of a spiritual substance, which is also the form by which it is an animal. Animality and spirituality are united in the one human essence, which persists in the separated soul. Just as the human body, unique among material things, exists by a spiritual act of existence, so human animality, unique among animal natures, continues to exist in the spiritual substance by which it is.<sup>166</sup>

Just as “form” and “animality” mean something different when applied to the human person than they do when applied to other animals, so do terms like “mortal” and “corruptible.” As in other cases, to say that the human person is “mortal” is to say that its soul and its matter are capable of coming apart, and to say that a human person “corrupts”

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<sup>165</sup>Cf. Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 197–99; Lehrberger, “Anthropology of Aquinas’s,” 838–39.

<sup>166</sup>Pegis (see note 135 above) is correct that the human person’s act of existence is oriented toward the body, and that the human person is thereby oriented toward living as a “pilgrim” in history and the drama of “incarnate intelligence,” but we also transcend history and embodiment. Indeed, because we transcend these, we can subjectively enter into history and embodiment without being entirely immersed in them. Our pilgrimage traverses the embodied and separated states, before being completed in the resurrected state. Cf. Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 168–71.

or “dies” is to say that its soul and its matter in fact come apart. But to say that a human person corrupts is not to say that he or she has gone out of existence, for the person survives constituted by the separated soul. As even Toner admits, human death is a *sui generis* kind of substantial change: it is a substantial change, because it is a loss of a substantial principle, matter, but a substantial change of a unique sort, because it does not produce a new substance.<sup>167</sup> It is not a complete going out of existence.<sup>168</sup> Human death is just the event of the soul ceasing to communicate its existence to the composite. The human person is corruptible and mortal because it is an animal, but immortal because it can be constituted by a spiritual substance; “mortal” and “immortal” here are analogous, not univocal, with their uses in other cases. This view does not mitigate the evil of death: death is still contrary to human nature, in that it separates what is naturally joined. The resurrection is no less wonderful on this view: it rejoins what could never be rejoined naturally, but only by divine intervention. But the survivalist view gives more reason to hope for personal immortality than does the corruptionist view, and it affirms the common belief that the souls of the dead are persons. It makes sense of the possibility that the soul could remain separated forever, without a resurrection, and that this would not be an injustice to the person.<sup>169</sup>

Finally, the above exploration of the Thomistic tradition allows an expansion on the *Argument from Acts* and a response to the claim of the *Argument from Weakness* that the soul’s powers are too weak to be

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<sup>167</sup> Cf. Suárez, *In libros de anima*, vol. 3, d. 14, q. 1, n. 6; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 593; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 372–73. Human generation is also *sui generis*: the human person comes to be, like other material things, when its form and matter come together. Unlike other material things, human parents just dispose the matter, but the soul that forms the matter is created by God; cf. *Quaestiones de spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 3, ad 12; SCG II, c. 87; ST I, q. 90, a. 2. From the joining of soul and matter in human generation a two-fold unity results, of nature and person, but I hold that both unities remain, at death, in the soul; cf. ST III, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. SCG IV, c. 81: death is “quasi-accidental” to the human person: “mors quasi per accidens superveniens homini per peccatum, considerata institutione humanae naturae”; *In II Sent* d. 19, q. 1, a. 2; *Quaestiones de anima*, a. 5. Cf. Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship*, 124; Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 198; Toner, “St. Thomas on Death,” 593.


<sup>169</sup> Cajetan, *Expositio*, vol. 5, I, q. 89, a. 1, n. 14, 373; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, vol. 3, *De anima*, q. 9, a. 1, 431.

those of a person. The separated soul can engage in acts that directly indicate its personhood, and its new mode and abilities indicate that it is not weak in the manner that would prevent it from constituting a person. The soul is “habitual self-cognition,” and this self-cognition will be fully actualized in the separated soul. My actual self-cognition arises from the same root both in the composite and in the separated state. Maritain contends that self-cognition is an awareness of one’s act of existence, in virtue of which we are aware of ourselves as selves.<sup>170</sup> In the separated state, this experience will be stronger and more certain than it was in the composite. But if this experience of the self persists in the separated soul, then if the separated soul were not the person, it would be deceived fundamentally about itself. The separated soul would be aware of itself as “I,” but would in fact be, as Toner put it, “nobody.” But to be a self, to be “somebody” with subjectivity, is to be a person. If this self-cognition is an infallible understanding of my existence as a person in the composite, then it must be likewise infallible in the separate state, since the experiences are the same and they arise from the same habitual self-cognition, which is the soul. If this experience of one’s own existence is ever to be trusted, and it is the most trustworthy of experiences, it must be able to be trusted in both cases, and the separated soul must constitute a person. Likewise, when separated souls know and love one another, they do so in virtue of the same act of existence by which they did these things in the composite state, and, because of that act of existence, it has the dignity that is a defining mark of personhood. The same basic experiences of knowing and loving another can thus be had with respect to other composite human persons and other separated souls. If we are to make sense of the relations among separated souls, then separated souls must constitute persons.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Maritain, *A Preface to Metaphysics* (London: Sheed and Ward), 43–48; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 470–71; *Challenges and Renewals* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 74–75; Clarke, *Person and Being*, 77. Cf. *De veritate*, q. 10 a. 8; Smith-Gilson, *Metaphysical Presuppositions*, 102.

<sup>171</sup> Loving another involves entering into the interiority of the other, and this, like self-love and knowledge of another’s interiority, will be possible more for the separated souls than for composite persons before death. Cf. Anthony Flood, “Aquinas on Subjectivity,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84 (2010): 69–83; *In III Sent d. 27*, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4; q. 2, a. 1; *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 1, ad 2; q. 28, a. 2; *II-II*, q. 25, a. 4. Cf. Maritain, *Challenges*, 74–75, cited and explicated in Clarke, *Person and Being*, 77; Maritain, *Person and the Common Good*, 39.

We can thus see that the separated soul, with its mode of subsistence and its act of existence, constitutes the same person as was constituted by form and matter. Interpreted in the way presented here, this follows from a consistent application of Thomistic principles. A Thomist can (and perhaps should) hold that the separated soul constitutes the person, that we shall survive our deaths constituted by separated soul, that we can know this by purely natural and rational means here and now, and that we can take comfort in this knowledge.<sup>172</sup> 

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## Natural Self-Transcending Love According to Thomas Aquinas

EZRA SULLIVAN, O.P.  
*Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas*  
*Rome, Italy*

HUMANS ARE ANIMALS that can think and love. Human love, inextricably united to rationality, has the potential to embrace all persons, all things it encounters, including God and the human self. The power and extent of love raises meaningful questions: how does self-love relate to the love of others? Is the love of others more altruistic, more detached, more “pure” than love of one’s self? These questions center on what I will call “self-transcending love,” that is, love that is centered on another and not oneself.<sup>1</sup> Modern French thinkers may deserve credit for describing self-transcending love as a “problem,” but they were not the first to notice that it is also a puzzle.<sup>2</sup> There is a long and venerable

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Schneider posits that one of the most fundamental questions about love is this: “As creatures, are we not too much related to ourselves and to what is of equal footing with us, so that we cannot transcend the way we are made?” *John Duns Scotus and the Question: Can I Love God above All? A Treatise in Four Languages and a Commentary* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1999), 83.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Rousselot gave a great impetus to this contemporary discussion with his work *Pour l'histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 6.6 (Münster: Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung, 1908), recently translated by Alan Vincelette as *The Problem of Pure Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution* (Milkwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001). The discussion was taken up in Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *L'Amour de Dieu et la Croix de Jésus* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1929). Chapter 2 of that work treated “Le Problème de L'Amour pur.” In translation: *The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Herder, 1947). Two years later, a more historical study was made in

conversation about self-love that spans Western thought and reaches a high point in the exposition of St. Thomas Aquinas.<sup>3</sup>

Many Thomistic scholars have noted that, in his various works, St. Thomas often unites the themes of self-love, love of the common good, and love of God. These scholars typically fall into one of two groups: those who focus on questions about self-love, and those who focus on questions about the common good.

The first strand of thought focuses primarily on the issue of love in the thought of Aquinas. For example, Stephen Pope, David Gallagher, Christopher Malloy, and Thomas Osborne discuss the common good as it is situation within a larger context of St. Thomas's conception of how self-love relates to love of God.<sup>4</sup> The second strand of Thomistic thought

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H.-D. Simonin, "Autour de la solution thomiste du problème de l'amour," *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 6 (1931): 174–275.

For Dominican rejections of Rousselot's position, see Louis-B. Geiger, *Le problème de l'amour chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Montreal: Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, 1952); Jean-Hervé Nicolas, "Amour de soi, amour de Dieu, amour des autres," *Revue Thomiste* 56 (1956): 5–42; Avital Wohlmann, "Amour du bien proper et amour de soi dans la doctrine Thomiste de l'amour," *Revue Thomiste* 81 (1981): 204–34. For an excellent discussion of related issues, see Peter A. Kwasniewski, "The Ecstasy of Love in Thomas Aquinas" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> For a thorough overview of the philosophical and theological optic within an historical framework, see Alan Roy Vincelette, "The Problem of Love: The Relationship between the Love of Self and the Love of Others, Self-Fulfillment and Self Denial" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 1999). See also Jan Österberg, *Self and Others: A Study of Ethical Egoism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1988); Robert Shaver, *Rational Egoism: A Selective and Critical History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Pope, "Expressive Individualism and True Self-Love: A Thomistic Perspective," *Journal of Religion* 71, no. 3 (1991): 384–99. David M. Gallagher's work is indispensable here; see his articles "Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas," *Acta Philosophica* 4 (1995): 51–71; "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1–47, esp. 34–39; and "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis of Love of Others," *Acta Philosophica* 8 (1999): 23–44. Important also is the work of Christopher J. Malloy, "Love of God for His Own Sake and Love of Beatitude: Heavenly Charity According to Thomas Aquinas" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2001), esp. 180–97. See also Dom Gregory Stevens, who insists on the centrality of the part-whole argument. Though he follows Aquinas's thought, Stevens relies heavily on the manuals of his day. See his thorough article: "The Disinterested Love of God According to St. Thomas and Some of His Modern Interpreters," *The Thomist* 16 (1953): 307–33, 497–541. Finally, see Thomas Osborne, *Love of God and Love of Self in Thirteenth-Century Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), esp. chap. 3.2, 87–94.

focuses on the common good in the realm of political philosophy and considers love within that realm. In this strand, we find the debate between Charles De Koninck and I. Th. Eschmann, which partly involved Jacques Maritain.<sup>5</sup> This debate is foundational to the contemporary articulation of a Thomistic understanding of the common good. Those who allude to this debate while recognizing its implications for self-love include such scholars as Michael Novak, Michael Sherwin, David Hollenbach, and Susanne M. DeCrane.<sup>6</sup>

Seeing that scholars who discuss connections among self-love, the common good, and God tend to concentrate either on the self or on the common good, that is, on human-centered reality, the present essay is devoted to addressing the primary subject: God who is the common good. I begin by establishing Thomas's position by examining three similar arguments he proposes in three different sections of the *Summa theologiae*. After this, I provide a synthetic presentation of Thomas's understanding of self-transcending love in light of God and the common good.

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<sup>5</sup> See I. Thomas Eschmann, "A Thomistic Glossary on the Principle of the Preeminence of the Common Good," *Medieval Studies* 5 (1943):123–65. In the same year came a controversial work by Charles De Koninck, *De la primauté du bien commun contre les personalistes; le principe de l'ordre nouveau* (Laval: Editions de l'Université Laval, 1943). In response was I. Thomas Eschmann's "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," *Modern Schoolman* 22, no. 4 (May 1945): 183–208. After this: Charles De Koninck, "In Defense of Saint Thomas: A Reply to Father Eschmann's Attack on the Primacy of the Common Good," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 1, no. 2 (1945): 8–109. All three of these works have been collected and, in the case of De Koninck, translated, in *The Writings of Charles De Koninck*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. Ralph McInerny (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), which is the source I will cite for both Eschmann and De Koninck works, hereafter "De Koninck, *Writings*, vol. 2." Jacques Maritain's key work in this regard is *La personne et le bien commun* (Desclée de Brouwer, 1947); in English: *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947).

<sup>6</sup> See Michael Novak, *Free Persons and the Common Good* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1989), 30–35. Michael Sherwin, "St. Thomas and the Common Good: The Theological Perspective: An Invitation to Dialogue," *Angelicum* 70 (1993): 307–28; the first section of this article (308–14) addresses how self-love relates to love of God and the common good. David Hollenbach, *The Common Good in Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4, 129–36. Susanne M. DeCrane, *Aquinas, Feminism, and the Common Good* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 52–69 *passim*.

### The Position of St. Thomas

In the course of reviewing the most significant scholarly literature that treats St. Thomas's understanding of self-love and love of others, Thomas Osborne notes that many scholars have neglected the Common Doctor's understanding of God as the common good.<sup>7</sup> For a number of French thinkers, this is largely a result of their rejection of the arguments of Pierre Rousselot.<sup>8</sup> Contrastingly, Osborne shows that Aquinas's understanding of God as the common good is central to his explanation of the natural love of God above self. Osborne provides a thorough and systematic treatment of Thomas's position, a position that employs a part/whole argument to show that man loves God as the common good more than himself. In emphasizing the importance of this argument, Osborne is in good company with Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange and Charles De Koninck. All three authors note the importance of three texts for establishing Thomas's position in his *Summa theologiae* (*ST*): I, q. 60, a. 5; I-II, q. 109, a. 3; and II-II, q. 26, a. 3.<sup>9</sup> We can establish Thomas's basic position by discussing these texts.

Angelic love, because it stems from the freedom of rationality and volition, teaches us about human love. In the *Prima Pars* of his *Summa theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas asks, "Whether an angel by natural love loves God more than itself?"<sup>10</sup> He begins by noting that some thinkers have maintained that, "absolutely speaking, out of the natural love he [i.e., an angel] loves himself more than he does God, because he naturally loves himself before God, and with greater intensity."<sup>11</sup> Though this was the opinion of his teacher, St. Albert the Great, Aquinas

<sup>7</sup> Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God*, 98.

<sup>8</sup> See note 1 above. Osborne summarizes the debate in *Love of Self and Love of God*, 94–98. See Rousselot, *Pour l'histoire*, ch. II.1, "la théorie du tout et de la partie," 23–32. For a historical addendum to Rosselot's position, see L.-B. Gillon, "L'argument du tout et de la partie après Saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Angelicum* 28 (1951): 205–23, 346–62.

<sup>9</sup> For their primary usages of these texts, see Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God*, 77–81; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Love of God and the Cross of Jesus*, 98; De Koninck, *Writings*, vol. 2, "Principle of the New Order," 132–39, and "In Defense of St. Thomas," 259–62.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 60, a. 5. My translation. All English quotations of the *Summa theologiae* (*ST*) are from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1947), unless otherwise noted.

<sup>11</sup> *ST I*, q. 60, a. 5, c.

frankly says, “The falsity of such an opinion is manifestly apparent if one but consider whither natural movement tends in the natural order of things.”<sup>12</sup> Aquinas’s argument can be summarized in the following syllogism:

1. A part is more principally and strongly inclined to a whole to which it belongs than to itself.
2. God is to the created will as a whole is to a part.
3. Therefore a creature with a rational will inclines to God more than to itself.

To prove the major premise (1), Thomas offers three examples: the hand will sacrifice itself for the sake of the body, the citizen will sacrifice himself for the city, and the individual will sacrifice himself for the preservation of the species.<sup>13</sup> An implicit assumption holds that whatever will sacrifice itself for the sake of another has a stronger and more principle inclination toward the other than toward itself. St. Thomas More’s willingness to die at the hands of Henry VIII’s headsman shows that More had a stronger inclination to defend the truth than to save his neck.

To prove the minor premise (2), Aquinas states that God is the most universal good. He explains that every created good “is contained” (*continetur*) under the universal or common good, because every creature, including the rational creature with a will, that is, an angel or man, is “of God” (*Dei est*).<sup>14</sup> Regarding this principle, Osborne explains, “Here Thomas is showing that the individual not only belongs to a natural whole like a species, but that its good belongs to the universal good, which is God.”<sup>15</sup> Because God is the source of being, he thereby pre-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, translation modified. See Albertus Magnus, *In Libros sententiarum*, lib. II, d. III, a. 18.

<sup>13</sup> See *ST I*, q. 60, a. 5, ad 1, 3: “each part naturally loves the whole more than itself: and each individual naturally loves the good of the species more than its own individual good”; “everything is inclined to preserve not merely its individuality, but likewise its species.”

<sup>14</sup> Aquinas’s reply to objection 3 shows that he equates the universal good with the most common good. See *ST I*, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3: “Nature’s operation is self-centered not merely as to certain particular details, but much more as to what is common; for everything is inclined to preserve not merely its individuality, but likewise its species. And much more has everything a natural inclination towards what is the absolutely universal good.”

<sup>15</sup> Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God*, 80.

serves and holds all creatures together in himself. According to John Capreolus, chief among Thomas's defenders, this means that "the cause of natural love is not merely union or unity of what is loved with the one loving, but rather the lover's being contained in being and goodness by the thing loved. In this way God contains every creature in being and goodness more than the creature is contained by itself or by its intrinsic principles."<sup>16</sup> Capreolus goes on to note that God is the cause of unity for all creatures, and of their union with each other. A creature is not the primary cause of the union it has with itself. Hence, as source of union, God is closer to the creature than it is to itself.<sup>17</sup> It follows that a creature's union with itself does not result in a lesser love for God. Consequently, the will is related to God as a particular being is related to something that somehow contains it. The relation is one of a part to a whole.

Moving to a consideration of human love in the *Prima Secundae*, Thomas asks, "Whether, by his own natural powers and without grace, man can love God above all things?"<sup>18</sup> In response, he distinguishes between the state of "perfect nature" and that of "corrupt nature." When humans were in a state of perfect, or integral, nature, they were able to love God above all things with God's moving help. But in the current state of corrupt nature, they need "the help of grace to heal his nature" and enable them to perform their natural operation of self-transcending love: "In the state of corrupt nature, man falls short of this in the appetite of his rational will, which, unless it is cured by God's grace, follows its private good, on account of the corruption of nature."<sup>19</sup> Similar to his exposition in the *Prima Pars*, Aquinas's argument here relies on an understanding of the common good. We can formulate it in the following way:

1. Everything naturally loves its own proper good on account of the common good of the whole universe.
2. God is the common good of the whole universe of which man is a part.

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<sup>16</sup> Capreolus, *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, vol. 5, lib. III, d. 27, ed. Paban-Pègues (Turin: Stumptibus Alfred Cattier, 1905); translated by Romanus Cessario and Kevin White as *On the Virtues* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2001), 196. All quotations of this work are from this translation.

<sup>17</sup> As Augustine said, "interior intimo meo et superior summo meo." *Confessions* III, 6.

<sup>18</sup> *ST* I-II, q. 109, a. 3.

<sup>19</sup> *ST* I-II, q. 109, a. 3, c.

3. Therefore man, in a state of uncorrupted nature, naturally loves himself on account of God. This is the same as naturally to love God more than himself.

To prove the major premise (1), Thomas discusses the relation of the whole to the part. He states, “it is manifest that the good of the part is for the good of the whole.” He demonstrated this premise in *ST I*, q. 60, a. 5, as we saw above. The implicit assumption here is that to exist for the good of the other is to love the other in some way. Because loving something means willing or tending toward the good of that thing, existing for the good of something is a love-like tendency. A mother loves her family when she wills the good of her family; analogously, a forest of trees have a love-like relation to the rest of the world insofar as the forest tends to assist the good of an ecosystem, even the entire world. In this line of reasoning, Thomas argues that the part naturally loves itself for the sake of the common good of the whole.

Thomas does not explicitly prove the minor premise (2), but we can uncover his implicit reasoning. He states, “everything, by its natural appetite and love, loves its own proper good on account of the common good of the whole universe, which is God. Hence, Dionysius says (*Div. Nom.* iv) that ‘God converts all things to love of himself.’”<sup>20</sup> Here we can note that the Dionysian principle is ambiguous. It could be pantheistic if it means that God “converts” and transmutes or dissolves all things into his very Being. In that case, God would be the common good of the universe because he and the universe would be of the same substance.<sup>21</sup> But Thomas’s theology as a whole makes this an impossible interpretation. The statement in fact means that God “converts” or turns and leads all things to love him. As he said to Israel, “I led them with cords of compassion, with the bands of love” (Hos 11:4). Just as a farmer can draw an ox to himself with a rope, so God can use our love of creatures as a cord to draw us to himself. As Dante recognized through his love for Beatrice, God can use all lower loves to bring us to the highest love, namely, friendship with God himself.

Finally, the conclusion (3) supposes that to love one thing on ac-

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, translation modified.

<sup>21</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach supposed that this is what Thomas meant. See Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christenthums* (The Essence of Christianity) (Leipzig: Wigand, 1849). Charles De Koninck raises this objection and refutes it in *Writings*, vol. 2, 133 ff.

count of another, or for the sake of another, is to love the other thing more than the first. If a person loves to read because it brings wisdom, then the love has an order: reading is subordinate to wisdom. A person loves wisdom more than reading because reading exists for the sake of wisdom, as a means to an end. In a different case, a person may love the face of his beloved primarily because it is *her* face; he loves the face on account of the person: the face is not a means to an end, but it is incorporated within the whole as a part of the person. In a similar way, when a person loves himself for the sake of God, he loves the fact that his life may be a means for giving God glory; when he loves himself on account of God, he loves himself with the same love with which God loves him. In both cases, the person is loving himself less than he loves God.

In the course of discussing the order of charity in the *Secunda Secundae*, St. Thomas continues his inquiry on self-love by asking, “Whether out of charity, man is bound to love God more than himself?”<sup>22</sup> Whereas in the *Prima Secundae* he distinguished between integral and corrupt nature, here the Angelic Doctor distinguishes between “the good of nature” and “the good of grace.” He makes the astonishing claim that everything loves God more than itself—“every single creature, each in its own way, i.e. either by an intellectual, or by a rational, or by an animal, or at least by a natural love.” Here Thomas is speaking of love analogously understood: clearly rocks do not have affections or volition. All things nevertheless have movement toward an end that is connatural to them: for rocks, this is the center of the earth, toward which they move when they fall; for man, the end is to know and love the absolute true and good.<sup>23</sup>

Once again Aquinas’s principal argument employs his understanding of the common good. Here Thomas explains further how God is the common good of the universe. First he says that natural love is founded on “the fellowship of natural goods bestowed on us by God.” As Creator, God is in some way the common good in the natural sphere, for he is the cause of natural goods that man shares with others. Second, Thomas says that “happiness is in God as in the universal and fountain-principle of all who are able to have a share of that happiness.” Consequently,

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<sup>22</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 26, a. 3.

<sup>23</sup> See *ST* I-II, q. 26, a. 1.



God is the common good in the sphere of grace, the source and goal by which humans have supernatural fellowship with him. God contains the fullness of happiness of which man shares a part through his union with God.

Upon analyzing three texts from different parts of the *Summa theologiae*, we have found that Aquinas retains a consistent vision throughout his work. He argues that humans are able to love God above all things, including themselves, because all individuals have a natural inclination to love the common good more than themselves. In the current order of things, humans can love God above all things only by the healing effects of grace, by which man shares in God's own happiness as a part shares in a greater whole. In sum, we can agree with Osborne that "throughout his writings, Thomas argues for the possibility of a natural love of God over self which is based on a natural inclination of the part for the whole."<sup>24</sup>

### A Thomistic Account of Self-Transcending Love and the Common Good

Having followed Thomas's arguments that man can love God with a self-transcending love, there are two tasks one could perform to develop his thought. The first would be a defensive maneuver: to show the intelligibility, or at least the coherency, of Thomas's position. This would largely be an answer to the objections of Duns Scotus, a work I will not undertake here. The second would be a constructive endeavor: to explain what Thomas means and to show its import. I will try to do that in summary fashion.

As we have seen, Thomas emphasizes that humans love God as part loves a whole. This love is not pantheistic, but entails an ordered relationship between the lover and the beloved such that the good of the greater is identified with the good of the lesser by way of participation: it is a common good that both enjoy in an ordered manner. It is possible to explain self-transcending love without reference to the common good, *pace* Scotus and others, but Thomas emphasizes the part-whole analogy to show

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<sup>24</sup> Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God*, 86. Thomas employs in other writings the part-whole argument to explain self-transcending love. See *In III Sent.* d. 29, a. 3; *In Librum Beati Dionysii de Divinis nominibus expositio*, 4, lects. 9–10; *De Spe*, a. 1, ad 9; *De Perfectione Vitae Spiritualis*, 13; *De Caritate*, a. 9; *Summa contra gentiles* (SCG) III, ch. 17.6.

that creatures exist in relationship with one and other and with their Creator. To see what this means, I will attempt to uncover the roots of Thomas's thought. First, I will consider Thomas's understanding of *how a part naturally loves a whole* with respect to creatures. After this, I will consider *human love* with respect to the universe, other humans, and God himself.

### *Love for the Common Good: Terminology*

The most basic meaning of “whole,” according to Aristotle, is “that from which nothing is wanting.”<sup>25</sup> Thomas explains that wholeness indicates completeness, “as we speak of a whole man, or a whole box, if they lack nothing which they ought to have.”<sup>26</sup> The correlative of “whole” is “part.” While “whole” fundamentally connotes completeness or perfection, “part” connotes incompleteness and imperfection with respect to the whole. Thomas not only says that a part is *related* to a whole as incomplete is to complete (and as imperfect is to perfect), he specifies the relation: the part is “ordered” (*ordinetur*) to the whole.<sup>27</sup> This indicates a “unity of order, whereby some things are ordered to one another,” and through that order they share “one end.”<sup>28</sup> There are three levels of order at work: the order of the individual part to its own intrinsic end; the order of one part to another; and the order of all the parts to the whole. Thomas explains:

Now if we wish to assign an end to any whole, and to the parts of that whole, we shall find, first, that each and every part exists for the sake of its proper act, as the eye for the act of seeing; secondly, that less honorable parts exist for the more honorable, as the senses for the intellect, the lungs for the heart; and, thirdly, that all parts are for the perfection of the whole, as the matter for the form, since the parts are, as it were, the matter of the whole.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Physics* III, ch. 6 (207a 9–10).

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, trans. Pierre Conway (Columbus, OH: College of St. Mary of the Springs, 1958), III, lec. 11, n. 385.

<sup>27</sup> *ST* I-II, q. 90, a. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *ST* I, q. 47, a. 3, c, and ad 1.

<sup>29</sup> *ST* I, q. 65, a. 2, c.

Aristotle points out that the last end, the end of the whole, ensures the proper ordering of the parts: "That for the sake of which other things are, is naturally the best and the end of the other things."<sup>30</sup> Commenting on this passage, Thomas relates his famous insight: "Moreover, it must be noted that, even though the end is the last thing to come into being in some cases, it is always prior in causality. Hence it is called the cause of causes, because it is the cause of the causality of all causes."<sup>31</sup> It follows that the end of whole is the highest end of the parts, and this is supremely good for the part. The end of the eye and its component parts is seeing. When I open my eyelids and look around, I engage muscles surrounding my eyes to perform that task. The engagement of these muscles is not tyranny over them; it lets them participate in the dignified act of seeing, and it can even save the eyes if I move to avoid a projectile flying toward my face. Similarly, the end of the human body is the furtherance of relationships of knowing, loving, and service. If a father sacrifices certain bodily pleasures to provide for his children, or if a mother willingly accepts particular sufferings to protect her children, the man and woman are not lessened by ordering their needs, feelings, and desires to the good of the family. In fact, they are dignified in their persons precisely because they are more greatly promoting their family of which they are integral members and for which they act. "As a being enters into greater communication with the whole," Oliva Blanchette explains, "it does not become less itself, but more so. This is made possible by the total transcendence of the final end in which they communicate."<sup>32</sup>

Another way to describe how a part is ordered to a whole is to say that *a part loves the whole more than itself*. Building upon Aristotle's de-

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<sup>30</sup> *Metaphysics* V, ch. 2 (1013b 25).

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1995) V, lec. 3, no. 782. Hereafter *On Aristotle's Metaphysics*.

<sup>32</sup> Oliva Blanchette, "The Perfection of the Universe in the Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas" (PhD diss., Laval University, 1965), 402. Blanchette later revised his dissertation, written under the direction of Charles De Koninck, and published it as *The Perfection of the Universe According to Aquinas* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992). Though compatible in their major conclusions, the works are distinct. Henceforth, I will refer to the first as "Blanchette, *Diss.*" and the second as "Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe.*"

scription of the good as “that at which all things aim,”<sup>33</sup> Thomas identifies “end” with “good” insofar as the good is a final cause.<sup>34</sup> Because the end of the whole is the end of the part, the good of the whole is the good of each part. Following its inherent drive toward the good, a part seeks the good of the whole so that, one can truly say that the part loves the whole. Thomas Gilby defines love in its broadest sense as “the inborn appetite of every power for its act and perfection, a gravitation to completion and rest. It is the foundation of all activity, the underlying principle of every movement, the striving of something imperfect for completion from without.”<sup>35</sup> Each part, in a manner befitting its nature, has this inborn appetite for the good of the whole. Rocks have natural love for the good order of the universe, to which they contribute by their existence and in following the motions of gravity; animals have a sensitive love for their species, manifested in their procreation and care for their young; and humans have rational love, seen especially in their care for the family and city.<sup>36</sup> The love that a part extends toward a whole is not self-centered, as if the part loves the whole solely because it derives good from the whole, or as if the whole existed for the sake of the part. Rather, the part seeks its own good for the sake of the good of the whole. Thus “the part does indeed love the good of the whole, as becomes a part, not however so as to refer the good of the whole to itself, but rather itself to the good of the whole.”<sup>37</sup> The chorister perfects her craft for the sake of a better choir; the mother reads and rests so that she can be a better caretaker; the soldier improves his agility and intelligence in order to help the military and his country.

For Thomas, to say that the part naturally prefers the good of the whole to its own good is to say that the part naturally is ordered to the common good more than to its own good. “The common good is the end of each individual member of a community,” he says, “just as the good of the whole is the end of each part.”<sup>38</sup> The import of this claim

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<sup>33</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* I, ch. 1 (1904a1).

<sup>34</sup> *ST* I, q. 5, a. 4, c: “Since goodness is that which all things desire, and since this has the aspect of an end, it is clear that goodness implies the aspect of an end.”

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Gilby, *Poetic Experience* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1934), 31.

<sup>36</sup> See *ST* I-II, q. 26, a. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 26, a. 3, ad 2.

<sup>38</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 58, a. 9, ad 3.

may be better grasped when one distinguishes between the proper good, the private good, and the common good. A *proper good* is one befitting nature in some respect. Since man is rational by nature, his proper good is the good of reason.<sup>39</sup> Proper goods can be private or common. A *private good* is, in Smith's words, "the good of the individual only," that is, what is mine and, as such, cannot be shared with anyone else.<sup>40</sup> On the animal level, food is a private good insofar as, once eaten, it preserves only the individual's being and not another's. Finally, there is a *common good*, namely, a good that is shared naturally; it is mine and yours simultaneously. De Koninck maintains that a good is common insofar as it is communicable: "communicability is the very reason of its perfection." Consequently, a common good is communicable to individuals as individuals. The good of an orchestra is something shared by each member in the orchestra and by the orchestra as a whole. Because it is naturally shareable, a good considered as "common" cannot be private at the same time and in the same respect. The good of the choir could never be identified with the good solely of the chief mezzo-soprano, which could not be shared with anyone else.

Not all common goods are shared in the same way. Hence, from within the general notion of the common good, Thomas distinguishes between two ways a thing can be said to be common: in predication (*in praedicando*) and in causation (*in causando*). "First," he says, "it is said to be common through effect or predication; that is, it is found in many things according to one intelligible character. . . . Second, a thing is said to be common after the manner of a cause; that is, it resembles a cause which, while remaining numerically one, extends to many effects."<sup>41</sup> Each meaning of "common" calls for an analysis.

Regarding the first distinction, the *common good in predication*, it is fairly easy to see how something can be held in common only nominally. Three things (e.g., a man, a toy, and a fishing tool) can share the

<sup>39</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, q. 2, a. 2, c.

<sup>40</sup> Michael A. Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good in the Aristotelian-Thomistic Tradition* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1995), 87. Thomas says that "the singular, from the fact that it is singular, is divided off from all others. Hence every name imposed to signify any singular thing is incommunicable both in reality and idea" (*ST I*, q. 13, a. 9, c.). Sometimes a private good is also called a "particular good."

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952), q. 7, a. 6, ad 7. Hereafter Aquinas, *On Truth*.

name “Bob” without essentially sharing anything else. Likewise, Thomas notes that genus and species are common by predication.<sup>42</sup> For instance, the species of humanity can be predicated of individual humans because all have the same human nature. Nevertheless, the essence of man, “humanity,” does not exist apart from distinct individuals; each individual is a separately existing instance of humanity. “We do not share the same human nature as we share a room or a friend,” Froelich explains. “It is not something numerically one of which each of us has a part. Any universality attributed to human nature comes solely from our ability to predicate ‘having a human nature’ or ‘man’ of all men, and not from anything intrinsic to it.”<sup>43</sup>

Goods common only by predication are, in the strictest sense, private goods. As such, they cannot be shared with another: “if the good aimed at by one person is a private good, it is impossible for it to be the private good of another, for the good in these two cases differs by a numerical distinction.” De Koninck notes: “a private good may indeed be spoken of as common to many persons, but we are then using the term ‘common’ in the sense of ‘common according to predication.’”<sup>44</sup> Thus, when a mound of food is called the common good of an army, each portion of food is numerically distinct. Two people cannot eat precisely the same portion: if one person eats a potato, another cannot eat the same potato (which is why some hungry people fight during a famine). Similarly, no one else can have my particular instance of human nature. My particular instance of human nature is mine and mine alone, for to “have” *my* human nature is to be me, and someone else cannot be me. In this way, goods common only in predication are not sharable.

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<sup>42</sup> See St. Thomas’s *Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics* VII, lec. 13, no. 6: “Animal as common or man as common is not some substance among natural things. But this commonality has the form of animal or of man according as it is in the intellect, which accepts one form as common of many, insofar as it abstracts it from all individuals.” Also, *ST I*, q. 39, a. 4, ad 3: “But unity or commonality of human nature is not according to the thing, but solely according to consideration.”

<sup>43</sup> Gregory Froelich, “The Equivocal Status of *Bonum Commune*” *New Scholasticism* 63 (Winter 1989): 45.

<sup>44</sup> In De Koninck, *Writings*, vol. 2, 255. In this quotation and in my own exposition I substitute Smith’s term “private” for De Koninck’s term “proper.” Smith distinguishes between “private” and “proper”—“private” refers to what is mine alone and cannot be shared; “proper” refers to what befits one’s nature. De Koninck does not employ this helpful distinction.

Goods common by predication “take on a universal character in the intellect”: they are common only insofar as the intellect grasps that many individuals have the same kind of good.<sup>45</sup> Precisely because the common good in predication is common *only in name*, its goodness is limited: “it is not more noble but more imperfect, as ‘animal’ is, which is more common than ‘man,’” for it does not convey goodness, but only gives a label to it.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, when Thomas says that the part is directed toward the common good of the whole, he cannot mean that the individual loves the common good in predication more than his own: the individual should not love “humanity” more than the individual human, he should not prefer “society” to his family—this would be to love the lesser above the greater.

There is no analogy between goods common in predication and goods common in causation, De Koninck insists.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to a good common in predication, a good common *in causation* is necessarily sharable with others. Different common goods can include ideas: the professor and the student can simultaneously ponder the idea of justice without removing that good from the other. In fact, pondering “justice” together could more deeply root the idea in both souls. Political order is also a good common in causation, as are peace and charity: they all depend on the existence of more than one person to share them.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the good of a community, such as a choir, is a common good that one can have only if it is shared by many. No matter how good a singer may be, he cannot sing the entire score of Mozart’s *Requiem* by himself. It is a good that can only be enjoyed by the individual when it is shared with other choir members. The sharable good is called a common good “in causation” because it is the formal cause of the good of all who share

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>46</sup> Aquinas, *On Truth*, q. 7, a. 6, ad 7.

<sup>47</sup> In De Koninck, *Writings*, vol. 2, 355n124: “The analogical notion of common good could not possibly comprise both *bonum commune in causando* and *bonum commune in praedicando*, since the latter is not formally a good. When used for the one and for the other, the expression ‘common good’ is equivocal, not analogical.”

<sup>48</sup> Thomas points out that a person cannot have justice only for himself: “justice by its name implies equality, it denotes essentially a relation to another, for a thing is equal, not to itself, but to another. . . . Hence justice properly speaking demands a distinction of suppositis, and consequently is only in one man towards another” (*ST II-II*, q. 58, a. 2).

in it: the *Requiem* causes joy to each singer insofar as he sings well along with the rest of the choir. In this context we can note that another common good is love itself: “True happiness is found in unselfish love,” Thomas Merton observed, “a love which increases in proportion as it is shared. . . . Selfless love consents to be loved selflessly for the sake of the beloved. In doing so, it perfects itself.”<sup>49</sup> Insofar as the common good in causation is the cause of goodness for more than an individual, it can be shared with others and therefore is “more noble” and more loveable than the individual good and the common good in predication.<sup>50</sup>

### *Love for the Common Good and Self-Love*

Having established the distinctions among the private good, the proper good, the common good in predication, and the common good in causation, we are equipped to understand how self-love may transcend itself and incline more toward another good than to its own. In the course of discussing the gift of fear, Thomas notes that “self-love may stand in a threefold relationship with charity.”<sup>51</sup> David Gallagher helpfully observes that, though Thomas focuses on the relation between fear and an infused virtue, “it seems that what he says there can be applied more broadly to a person’s self-love within any community of which he is a part,” so that one can speak of three kinds of natural self-love with respect to the common good.<sup>52</sup> Thus a discussion of these loves will prove quite helpful.

With the first kind of love, “a man places his end in the love of his own good”; this is a wicked sort of love.<sup>53</sup> Adam sinned because he unduly loved his personal excellence, which he willed to be his final end; this was pride.<sup>54</sup> The effect of this sin is that every man without grace pursues his own good to the exclusion of the good of others.<sup>55</sup> For example, a person

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<sup>49</sup> Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island in A Thomas Merton Reader*, ed. Thomas P. McDonnell (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1962), 282.

<sup>50</sup> Aquinas, *On Truth*, q. 7, a. 6, ad 7.

<sup>51</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 19, a. 7, c.

<sup>52</sup> Gallagher, “Self-Love as the Basis of Love for Others,” 40. Here I am omitting Gallagher’s discussion of the love of God, saving it for the next section of this study.

<sup>53</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 19, a. 7, c.

<sup>54</sup> See *ST II-II*, q. 163, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>55</sup> See *ST I-II*, 109, a. 3, c.



singing with a choir may sing a solo piece so elaborately and with such flamboyant emotion that he ruins the mood of his fellow choristers and makes it impossible for them to sing as a whole. Such an inverted self-love, Gallagher notes, is “opposed to and corruptive of friendship and community. It is a selfish or egotistical self-love, one that seeks for oneself precisely those goods which cannot be shared.”<sup>56</sup> Gallagher’s assessment confirms our observation above, that those who seek private goods, or goods common only in predication, often enter into competition with each other, for those things that cannot be shared by many at the same time (e.g., food, money) are finite quantities.<sup>57</sup> This self-seeking love in no way transcends the self: it is clearly contrary to the love of friendship, which wills another’s good for his own sake, and to the love of the common good, which seeks the good in which many can share.

The second kind of self-love is inclined to the good of the individual—but only insofar as it is compatible with the common good. The person seeks his private good with a mind to the good of others, so that it constitutes “the proper self-love of one who is dedicated to a common good.”<sup>58</sup> With this love, the individual subordinates his good to that of the common good. He does so because, as we have seen, the individual is not in competition with the common good, rather he finds perfection by seeking the good that transcends that of his particular self. In this case, the soloist would love to sing very well, but in such a way as to promote the good singing of the entire choir. “To affirm the primacy of the common good,” Smith points out, “is to say my good which I share with others is more important than my good which I cannot share.”<sup>59</sup> As Thomas says, “No part separated from the whole has the perfection of nature.”<sup>60</sup>

But subordination is not obliteration. One’s concern for the common

<sup>56</sup> Gallagher, “Self-Love as the Basis of Love for Others,” 40.

<sup>57</sup> See *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 4, ad 2: “Through defect of goodness, it happens that certain small goods cannot, in their entirety, be possessed by many at the same time: and from the love of such things arises the zeal of envy. But it does not arise, properly speaking, in the case of those things which, in their entirety, can be possessed by many: for no one envies another the knowledge of truth, which can be known entirely by many; except perhaps one may envy another his superiority in the knowledge of it.”

<sup>58</sup> Gallagher, “Self-Love as the Basis of Love for Others,” 41.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good*, 87.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures*, trans. Mary C. Fitzpatrick and John J. Wellmuth (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1949), a. 2, ad 5.

good does not dissolve or damn one's concern for his private good. Rather, one's love for the private good gains a new character through its incorporation into a movement toward higher goods. Because the individual's good is contained within the common good of causation, "one of the things he will want for himself is precisely his ordination to the common good. . . . What the person wants *for himself* is to be a good part of the whole."<sup>61</sup> He considers himself to be more perfect when properly related to the common good than when ordered to himself alone.

The third kind of self-love can be called "total dedication" to the common good.<sup>62</sup> In this case, a person identifies his good with that of the common good: "His love of himself is an extension of his love for the whole; because he loves the whole he loves all that belongs to the whole including himself."<sup>63</sup> This love is distinct from the second kind, for the object of the second is the good of the self *as related to* the common good, whereas the object of the third kind is *the common good as such*. The distinct loves are compatible, however, for the love of self is subordinated to love of the common good: "To love oneself as ordered to the common good presupposes a prior act by which one determined oneself to be ordered to the common good."<sup>64</sup> Taking up the singing example again, with this love, the soloist would be practically without an ego: she sings well solely for the good of the whole group. Proper self-love, then, is ordered to love of the common good. If it were not, and one refused the primacy of the common good, one would fall back into the wicked sort of self-love, "a disordered love of singularity [by which] one rejects the common good practically as an alien good and one judges it incompatible with the excellence of our singular condition."<sup>65</sup> It follows that one loves the common good as such above all other goods but without excluding a love of one's own good.

### *Love of Created Persons*

Given that the common good naturally has primacy in the order of love, some goods are more common than others. Additionally, the more

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<sup>61</sup> Gallagher, "Self-Love as the Basis of Love for Others," 41.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> De Koninck, *Writings*, vol. 2, 86.

common and the more universal a good is, the more it calls for our love. Aristotle laid bare the foundations of this truth in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he states, “Even though the good be the same for one man and for the whole state, it seems much better and more perfect to procure and preserve the good of the whole state. It is admirable, indeed, to preserve the good of an individual but it is better still and more divine to do this for a nation and for cities.”<sup>66</sup> Developing this insight, Thomas continually insists that the good of the individual is directed to the good of the universe: “the greatest good in created things is the perfection of the universe, consisting in the order of distinct things; for always the perfection of the whole has precedence of the perfection of the individual parts.”<sup>67</sup> And again: “the good of the order of the universe is more noble than any part of the universe, since the individual parts are ordered, as to an end, to the good of the order that is in the whole.”<sup>68</sup> This theme winds its way through much of Thomas’s works, but it is no easier to grasp for being so abundantly present.<sup>69</sup>

On the surface, it may seem that, when Thomas asserts that the part is subordinated to the whole, he is claiming that humans are subordinated to a faceless universe, that persons ought to love an abstract, impersonal good more than themselves or other persons. This would seem to pave the way for a pagan exultation of the cosmos above the person, or a totalitarian promotion of the state with little thought for human dignity. De Koninck voices the objection against the primacy of the common good in this way: Does not Thomas say that “intellectual creatures are so controlled by God, as objects of care for their own sakes; while other creatures are subordinated, as it were, to the rational creatures”?<sup>70</sup> That is, “man is naturally free and exists for his own sake,” while the entire universe was made on account of him? How, then, can the individual be subordinated to the common good?<sup>71</sup>

In response, Thomas distinguishes: in one way, the universe as a

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<sup>66</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I, ch. 2 (1094b 8–14).

<sup>67</sup> SCG II, ch. 44.2.

<sup>68</sup> SCG I, ch. 70.4.

<sup>69</sup> See, among many instances, *ST* I, q. 15, a. 2; q. 22, a. 4; q. 47, a. 1; *SCG* III, ch. 64.9–10; Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures*, q. 1, a. 8.

<sup>70</sup> *SCG* III, ch. 112.1.

<sup>71</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 64, a. 2, ad 3.

whole has primacy over persons; in another way, persons have primacy over impersonal things: “The universe is more perfect in goodness than the intellectual creature as regards *extension* and *diffusion*; but *intensively* and *collectively* the likeness to the Divine goodness is found rather in the intellectual creature, which has a capacity for the highest good.”<sup>72</sup> The part is not in competition with the whole; the proper good is not divided against the common good; only the private good and the common good in predication alone is not sharable as such. Blanchette draws out the implications of this passage: “The universe is more perfect [than the individual human] in that it extends and embraces more than just intellectual creatures, for, besides the intellectual creatures themselves, it also includes the various species of material nature.” Furthermore, “each individual intellectual creature itself constitutes only a part of the universe.”<sup>73</sup> This is the meaning of *extensive* and *diffusive*: extensively and diffusively, the universe is higher than man for it contains more goods than man. But *intensively* and *collectively*: “intellectual creatures are themselves more perfect in that they sum up the perfection of the universe intensively in themselves through their knowing, and draw its multiplicity and diversity into a greater unity,” and in that way they transcend “the differences that could otherwise keep the parts of the universe from communication within the whole, and bringing them together into what can most properly be called a universe.”<sup>74</sup>

The ability to unite all things together as in an ordered whole comes from the rational creature’s capability of reaching God, the highest good, who holds all things together within himself. “The human soul is in some ways all things”: reason makes man a “principle part” of the universe, for he is more noble and, as rational animal, contains the principles of the other parts within him.<sup>75</sup> “Intellectual natures have a closer relationship to a whole than do other natures,” Thomas elucidates, “indeed, each intellectual substance is, in a way, all things. For it may comprehend the entirety of being through its intellect; on the other hand, every other substance has only a particular share in being.”<sup>76</sup> With these ideas in mind,

<sup>72</sup> *ST I*, q. 93, a. 2, ad 3. Italics added.

<sup>73</sup> Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 298.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>75</sup> *ST I*, q. 65, a. 2; *SCG III*, ch. 112.4.

<sup>76</sup> *SCG III*, ch. 112.5.

he argues: “we can say that the universe is in the image of God according to a part of it, that is, its principal or intellectual part, while some parts of it are not in the image of God,” namely, subrational material things.<sup>77</sup> Therefore the good of the human is in a certain respect *the* natural common good in causation, and thus to be loved above other goods.

All things naturally love the common good more than themselves, as we have seen, according to their capacities. Subrational creatures cannot directly turn themselves toward God, the most common good. They do not know and love him as such; their “love” extends only to his perfections existing in creatures toward which they are directed. Thus, without the rational activity of man, without acts by which man perfects his own human nature, the universe itself would be imperfect. In light of Thomas’s principle that the part is ordered to the whole as material is ordered to form and imperfect to the perfect, Blanchette says, “If we admit a distinction between corruptible and incorruptible parts of the universe, we shall have to say that they are ordered to one another, not *per accidens*, but *per se*.”<sup>78</sup> Hence man’s body is ordered to his soul, and the material universe is also ordered to man’s soul by being ordered to the good of his body. This order highlights how the parts exist for the sake of the whole in the universe: the soul is in some ways all things, and thus the material things in the universe are parts of it insofar as they are contained in it by knowledge and love. “Among the perfections of things, the greatest is that something is intellectual, because through this it is somehow everything, having within itself the perfection of all things.”<sup>79</sup> The human soul is, in principle, superior to all material creatures, even the entire material universe.<sup>80</sup> Blanchette explains: “This superiority is based on something that is particular to intelligence, the ability to encompass, to contain, be in a certain fashion all things. . . . There is nothing above the intelligence, because intelligence can have

<sup>77</sup> *ST I*, q. 93, a. 2, ad 3.

<sup>78</sup> Blanchette, *Diss.*, 405.

<sup>79</sup> *SCG I*, ch. 44.6.

<sup>80</sup> See *SCG II*, ch. 68.6, 8–12; *III*, ch. 22.7: “Elements exist for the sake of mixed bodies; these latter exist for the sake of living bodies, among which plants exist for animals, and animals for men. Therefore, man is the end of the whole order of generation.”

in itself the perfection of all things.”<sup>81</sup> Thus the rational creature has a special role to play in the perfection of the universe.

A created thing can be perfect in two ways, according to Thomas. In one way, something is perfect according to its species, its particular nature, its proper being. This is true perfection with respect to the individual, but it is imperfect with respect to the universe that contains an aggregate of many species, whose perfections are distinct from each other. In a second way, a thing is perfect “according to which the perfection proper to one thing is found in another thing. And this is the perfection of one who knows inasmuch as he knows, because something is known inasmuch as the known itself is somehow in the knower.”<sup>82</sup> Among material creatures, only humans have this sort of perfection. Only human nature constitutes the horizon of being: only humans are simultaneously corporeal and spiritual. This natural, hylomorphic unity entails that humans retain, in their very ontological structure, communion with all things: “there is contained, as a principle, in the good of the universe, the rational nature which is capable of beatitude, and to which all other creatures are ordered.”<sup>83</sup> This is a “sort of remedy or compensation for the imperfection of the first mode,” Blanchette notes, for the created universe would not have a proper cohesion of its parts without a created knower grasping their natures and holding them together in his mind.<sup>84</sup> Because of this special place in the order of the cosmos, the human being “has an irreplaceable part to play toward the perfection of the universe; if all lower, infrarational beings are ordered to it, it is also through it, as well as in it, that they attain their perfection as parts of the universe.”<sup>85</sup> Nature, therefore, calls for man to exercise his rationality.

By perfecting himself as human, the human person thereby perfects not only the highest part of the universe, but also the entire or-

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<sup>81</sup> Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 269.

<sup>82</sup> Aquinas, *On Truth*, q. 2, a. 2, c.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Charity*, trans. Lottie H. Kendzierski (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1960), q. un., a. 7, ad 5. This partly explains why it was more fitting for God, in saving creatures, to take the nature of a man than of an angel. See SCG IV, ch. 55.4: “Man, since he is the term of creatures, presupposing, so to say, all other creatures in the order of generation, is suitably united to the first principle of things to finish a kind of cycle in the perfection of things.”

<sup>84</sup> Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 271.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

der of creation insofar as the human soul is in some way all things. It follows that the perfection of the love of the common good of the universe is the love of persons, for, “In loving the good of the universe, we shall be loving the persons with whom this good has become identified.”<sup>86</sup> The perfection of the universe toward which man is directed is not some external utopia, some perfect arrangement of natural things, like well-ordered gardens in nineteenth-century France. Nor is it some external arrangement of peoples, such as a political order per se—the “perfect society.” Rather, it is the perfect order of his soul, in his acts of knowing and loving persons. In other words, the perfection of the universe, the active love the common good, consists in human friendship and the contemplation of truth.

Higher than natural and sensitive love (*amor*), humans have a love proper to their rationality: Thomas calls it “chosen love” (*dilectio electiva*), which is a movement of the will. He argues that “since nature is first in everything, what belongs to nature must be a principle in everything,” so that “natural love is the principle of their love of choice.”<sup>87</sup> David Gallagher explains: “Whether or not a person takes complaisance in an object, can result from a free choice”; that is, through habitually chosen action a person chooses to shape himself to be pleased by an object and to experience it as good. At the same time, “one chooses to take the object as one’s good to be pursued, or one chooses to pursue the good of one person and not another.”<sup>88</sup> Precisely because he is rational, man can choose a spiritual object as the focus of his love. Hence naturally elicited love, which arises from the senses, does not comprise the whole of human love.

In Thomas’s view, there are two kinds of rationally elicited or chosen love: the “love of concupiscence” and the “love of friendship.”<sup>89</sup> Love of concupiscence is ordered to the love of friendship: “Now the members of this division are related as primary and secondary: since that which is loved with the love of friendship is loved simply and for itself; whereas that which is loved with the love of concupiscence, is loved, not sim-

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<sup>86</sup> Blanchette, *Diss.*, 409.

<sup>87</sup> *ST I*, q. 60, a. 2, c.

<sup>88</sup> Gallagher, “Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas,” 56.

<sup>89</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 26, a. 4, c.

ply and for itself, but for something else.”<sup>90</sup> Love of friendship is only for other persons, for “we have no friendship with wine and suchlike things,” even though we desire wine as good.<sup>91</sup> In the love of friendship, the object is the person who is the seat of the goodness. There may be lesser reasons that moved us to love a person in himself, certain qualities that attracted us and moved us to love him with friendship: he is courteous, a good conversationalist, humble; he loves us; he has done good for us, etc. Clearly, when we love a person, our love is primarily directed to him, even if our love arose because of his looks or personality. We love the substance primarily, the accidents and what relates to the substance secondarily. Consequently, our love of impersonal things is naturally ordered to our love of persons. Gallagher is firm on this point: “when a person loves what is not a person with a love of concupiscence, he must have a corresponding love of friendship, either for himself or for another person; if I love wine, I love it for someone.”<sup>92</sup> The miser loves gold not for itself, but for himself, as George Eliot poignantly illustrated in *Silas Marner*. Even if a miser sits on piles of gold, when he no longer loves himself, he is tempted to commit suicide: there is nothing else to live for. Thomas’s conception of love, therefore, is personal in two senses: only persons can have this nobler love, and it is directed only toward persons.

The primacy of the person-centered love of friendship, the only sort of love that loves another for his own sake, clarifies man’s love of the common good. When a person loves the common good of the universe considered as an abstract, impersonal order, he loves with the *love of concupiscence*. He loves it for the sake of one or more persons. The love of concupiscence is ordered to the love of persons, and so the love of the common good in this case would be “based on a love of friendship for the persons who make up the community.”<sup>93</sup> The common good would not be loved for its own sake, but for the sake of those who share in it. But when the universe is considered as residing in its principal part, in a rational soul, one’s love for the common good terminates in persons toward whom one is inclined with the *love of friendship*.

Given that the created universe contains all created persons, this

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., *sed contra*.

<sup>92</sup> Gallagher, “Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas,” 57.

<sup>93</sup> Gallagher, “Desire for Beatitude,” 35n94.



means that, naturally speaking, one's love is perfected when one loves all peoples with the love of friendship. That is not to say that one is friends with everyone. Gallagher explicates this important distinction: "for Thomas, *amor amicitiae* and *amicitia* are related but not identical. The love of friendship, as the love of the person for himself, is found wherever a person is loved for his own sake," and consequently one wills goods toward him with benevolence, "while *amicitia* or friendship requires reciprocal and mutually recognized loves of friendship on the part of the two persons for one another."<sup>94</sup> The love of friendship toward another means, fundamentally, to know another's intrinsic goodness and to will him good for his own sake. Such an act of knowing and loving perfects not only other persons but even the one who wills it, the lover.

The cosmological import of the love of friendship provides the key to grasping Thomas's explanation of self-transcending love. Taking a cosmological perspective, Blanchette rightly observes: "Without the human being's knowing activity, nature remains essentially incomplete. But the intellectual creature's own perfection is not actualized merely in the use and exploitation of nature, but rather in the love shown to other intellectual creatures."<sup>95</sup> It follows that to love another person with the love of friendship, to love another for the other's sake, is a perfective natural human act. This is the case for many reasons.

First, the love of friendship engages the lover's highest faculties, his intellect and his will, in performing the greatest operation the will can perform: loving another person. Second, it is directed toward the greatest created object, that is, the common good insofar as it exists in the souls of persons, which are in principle able to encompass all beings. Because his love is directed toward the common good of which the lover is a part, he is simultaneously willing good toward himself

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<sup>94</sup> Gallagher, "Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas," 61. See *ST II-II*, q. 23, a. 1, c: "Not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with benevolence, when, to wit, we love someone so as to wish good to him. If, however, we do not wish good to what we love, but wish its good for ourselves (thus we are said to love wine, or a horse, or the like), it is love not of friendship, but of a kind of concupiscence. For it would be absurd to speak of having friendship for wine or for a horse. Yet neither does well-wishing suffice for friendship, for a certain mutual love is requisite, since friendship is between friend and friend: and this well-wishing is founded on some kind of communication."

<sup>95</sup> Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 300.

along with the entire community of persons within the universe. Additionally, because the act of friendship-love is perfective of the principal part of the universe, we can rightly say that the good of friendship is a common good—not only for the lover and the one for whom he wills good, but also for the created universe as a whole. When one’s love extends to others who themselves are friends with each other and when one wills that they have friendship for each other, one thereby proffers the love of friendship toward them: one wills a good for their sakes. And because the highest friendship is concerned, not only with the good for individuals, but for the common good, this friendship turns outward and extends itself to others for whom they will good. Authentic friendship inclines friends to extend the love of friendship toward others. Hence the friendship of two can be the source of the love of friendship for all, and thus a perfection of the universe both formally and extensively. A community of friends, then, would be *the* common good of the created universe.<sup>96</sup>

### Love of God as the Supreme Common Good

Lofty as the created common good of the universe is, it does not constitute the greatest good that exists. Thomas, commenting on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, says that *bonum*, understood as “the end or the goal of a thing,” is twofold, either as intrinsic good or extrinsic good: “For an end is extrinsic to the thing ordained to it, as when we say that a place is the end of something that is moved locally. Or it is intrinsic, as a form is the end of the process of generation or alteration; and a form already acquired is a kind of intrinsic good of the thing whose form it is.”<sup>97</sup> To explain the difference between these two goods, Thomas discusses Aristotle’s classic example of the good of an army as a good common in causation.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Blanchette hints at the centrality of common friendship for the perfection of the universe when he says, “For him [Thomas], the universe is ultimately a community of intellectual beings, each intelligent and free, all capable of the highest good, moving toward completion through an activity in which this community expresses and perfects itself. . . . Thus, for Saint Thomas, the universe opens up to ethical community” (*Perfection of the Universe*, 300).

<sup>97</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Aristotle’s Metaphysics* XII, lec. 12, no. 2627.

<sup>98</sup> See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, ch. 10 (1075a 11-1076a 4).

The good of an army is a good for each warrior in it, but it is a good greater than the individual particular good, for it involves a coordination of goods that contribute to a larger whole: the good of the archers indirectly aids the good of the foot soldiers, which aids the good of the horsemen, and so on. Aristotle and Thomas distinguish between the intrinsic and the extrinsic good of the whole and its parts.<sup>99</sup> The *intrinsic* good of an army is its formal character, the internal order and arrangement among the various parts: the way a foot soldier relates to a sergeant and a sergeant to a captain, and a captain to a general, for example. The *extrinsic* good of an army is its end—that to which it is directed. Thomas says, “Now the order of an army exists for the purpose of achieving the good of its commander, namely, his will to attain victory.”<sup>100</sup> Additionally, the good of the army depends on the commander’s intellect, which is the source of the plan of victory and which arranges the army suitably to his plan, and on his will, which causes the plan to be put into action.

Though a warrior may not grasp how his particular victory is related to the overall victory, his fighting would be ultimately senseless if it were not directed by the higher end that is known to the commander. Without the commander’s wisdom, which sees and directs particular ends to a single higher end, individuals would fight battles, but they would not contribute to an overarching strategic war. The commander is the primary cause of the overall good and the formal cause of that good, namely, the strategy. Because the strategy exists in the commander’s mind, the extrinsic good of victory is truly *his* good, but it is good for the army as a whole as well as for each member of the army.<sup>101</sup> Victory won by strategy is not a private good, nor it is a proper good; it is a good common by causation. In contrast, the immediate victory, the proximate final end of a warrior or detachment, is directed toward the overall victory of the army. Indeed, the overall victory could not come about except by the particular, but the

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<sup>99</sup> See Aquinas, *On Aristotle’s Metaphysics* XII, lec. 12, nos. 2627 ff.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 2630.

<sup>101</sup> It is his because, as the scholastic principle says, *omne agens agit sibi simile*: every agent makes its effect like itself. According to Thomas, “The agent is said to be the end of the effect inasmuch as the effect tends toward a similitude of the agent: hence the form of the thing generating is the end of the process of generation” (SCG III, ch. 19). The commander, who had the form of victory in his mind, extend that form to the concrete reality of his army and thus makes it like himself.

overall victory is something greater than the sum of the particular victories precisely because it can be shared in by all, whereas the particulars cannot. The overall victory is good for each and all.<sup>102</sup> This good is commonly shared: it is caused by the general primarily and caused secondarily by the soldiers who fight with him and under his guidance; therefore it is called the common good in *causation*.

The example of intrinsic and extrinsic goods of an army leads to a more precise consideration of the First Mover. Thomas draws together the notions of the good in causation and the good in being, demonstrating that the first mover is God, the only good in being (*in essendo*). Thomas compares the order of the army with the order of the universe. Just as the intrinsic good of the army exists for the sake of the commander, to whom belongs victory as the army's final cause and as the army's good in causation, so too the universe exists for God, the First Mover: "the whole order of the universe exists for the sake of the first mover inasmuch as the things contained in the mind and will of the first mover are realized in the ordered universe. Hence the whole order of the universe must depend on the first mover."<sup>103</sup> With the biblical narrative of creation in mind, Thomas explains that, in this analogy, the intrinsic good of the army corresponds to the common good of the created universe, whereas the extrinsic good of the army corresponds to the supreme common good, God himself:

For it is clear that good has the nature of an end; wherefore, a particular end of anything consists in some particular good; while the universal end of all things is the Universal Good, Which is good of Itself by virtue of Its very Essence, Which is the very essence of goodness; whereas a particular good is good by participation. Now it is manifest that in the whole created universe there is not a good which is not such by participation. Wherefore that good which is the end of the whole universe must be a good outside of the universe.<sup>104</sup>

Smith summarizes the argument: "God, as our highest good, is our

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<sup>102</sup> See the discussion in Froelich, "Equivocal Status of *Bonum Commune*," 48–49.

<sup>103</sup> Aquinas, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics* XII, lec. 12, no. 2631.

<sup>104</sup> *ST* I, q. 103, a. 2, c.

*uncreated* common good, but our highest *created* common good is the order of the universe.<sup>105</sup> This distinction is founded on distinction between Goodness itself and participated goodness.

A consideration of God's substantial goodness, his absolute perfection, leads us back to the part-whole analogy. While the notion of wholeness applies to individual created substances, Thomas says, even more does this notion hold "in regard to what is truly and perfectly whole, namely, that outside of which there is absolutely nothing."<sup>106</sup> The supreme analogue of wholeness is God himself, the supreme substance, whose unity and completeness are perfect. As a result, God can analogously be called a "whole." Strictly speaking, God is not an organic or natural whole, for he is completely simple and without composition or parts.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, he is truly a *virtual* whole, a whole in which "a form is the principle of [the] operation" of its parts.<sup>108</sup> The primary meaning of "form" is "that which is in act," so God, as complete actuality and Being itself, is "therefore of His essence a form."<sup>109</sup> In his very Being, God is the principle of the operation of the parts of the universe, which stand in relation to him as imperfect to perfect. Stevens explains: "God himself is the 'whole'—the plenitude of goodness, the 'universal good.' God thus 'contains' the limited good of each creature . . . and 'part' refers to participated being."<sup>110</sup> Consequently, both the creature as a whole and the creature's good, whether private or proper, "is then a participation of the Supreme Good. . . . The creature is not identified with God, nor wholly separate and disparate, but is rather a participation in God."<sup>111</sup> As we saw Capreolus argue, the part-whole and the hand-body analogies

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<sup>105</sup> Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good*, 93.

<sup>106</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* III, lec. 11, n. 385. In this vein, Thomas develops Aristotle's observation, "Whole and complete are either quite identical or closely akin," saying, "'whole' is not found in simple things which have no parts; in which things, nevertheless, we use the word 'perfect.' This shows that the perfect is 'that which has nothing outside of it.'"

<sup>107</sup> See *ST I*, q. 3, aa. 1–8. Also, *ST I*, q. 10, a. 1, ad 3: "Eternity is called 'whole,' not because it has parts, but because it is wanting in nothing"; that is, it is complete and perfect.

<sup>108</sup> *ST I*, q. 76, a. 8, c. Above we discussed virtual wholes, such as communities and armies, but God also is a virtual whole, although in an infinitely more eminent way.

<sup>109</sup> *ST I*, q. 3, a. 2, c.

<sup>110</sup> Stevens, "Disinterested Love of God," 527. Footnotes omitted.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

are meant to illustrate the fact that creatures, including humans, exist in a natural, ordered relationship with their Creator. God is the supreme common good because he is the Good in itself, which is eminently participatable. Hence God is not just a common good in *predication*; he is the common good in *causation*, as the exemplary and final cause of good in the subjects that incline toward him. This is what prompted Cajetan to assert that, while a creature loves the universe more than itself, it loves God even more, as “the universal good, the good of all.”<sup>112</sup>

In continuity with Stevens, De Koninck explains the part-whole relationship with respect to human beings and shows its implications for love:

Because the human person is in his very being of [or from] another, he is radically dependent, he is radically, *primo et per se*, a part. Consequently, he is principally and more inclined toward that from which he participates his very being. It is this principle, observed first of all in nature and in political virtues imitating nature, which serves as a basis for the conclusion that we love God according to natural love more than ourselves.<sup>113</sup>

Accordingly, Thomas asserts with Augustinian overtones: “nothing is able to satisfy the will of man except the universal good, which is not found in anything created, but solely in God, because all creatures have goodness by participation.”<sup>114</sup> In other words, *man naturally loves God as the common good more than himself*. This can only be the case because, as we have seen Capreolus point out, “the good of a creature is more powerfully preserved in God than in the creature itself. . . . Nor can one be opposed to the other, any more than the good of a species can be opposed to the good of one of its individuals, or vice-versa.”<sup>115</sup> To love God more than oneself is to love the One in whom all good is contained, including our own.

Just as the part loves the whole more than itself, so man naturally

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<sup>112</sup> See note 67.

<sup>113</sup> De Koninck, *Writings*, vol. 2, 99.

<sup>114</sup> *ST* I-II, q. 2, a. 8.

<sup>115</sup> Capreolus, *On the Virtues*, 194.

loves the created common good above himself—and even more does he naturally love God, the uncreated common good, above himself. Furthermore, just as the love of common good above the self entails friendship with others, so love of the supreme common good entails friendship with God. In an early text, Thomas writes: “The good of the lover himself, however, is more to be found where it exists more perfectly. . . . Since, then, our good is perfect in God as in the first, universal, and perfect cause of goods, so it is naturally more pleasing that the good exist in him than it exist in us. Consequently, God is naturally loved by men more than self even with the love of friendship.”<sup>116</sup> Later on, Thomas confirms this doctrine in his commentary on St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians. Noting that “love is a unitive force and all love consists in some union,” Thomas argues that “we have a twofold union with God: one refers to the goods of nature, which we partake of here from Him; the other refers to beatitude.”<sup>117</sup> With regard to the first union, based on nature, Thomas says: “According to the first communication with God there is a natural friendship, according to which each one, inasmuch as he is, seeks and desires as his end God as first cause and supreme being.”<sup>118</sup> Here we find Thomas’s doctrine of self-transcending love in its full flowering: *man is naturally a friend of God*.

When a man recognizes his place in the universe, his intrinsic being as a rational animal and a principle part of the universe, coming from God and going to God, his love is able both to transcend the self and to include the self. The love of God unifies within the lover an ordered series of desires contained in a single act: (1) to love God for his own sake with the love of friendship; (2) to perform the act of loving God with the love of friendship, which man knows will perfect himself; (3) to perfect a principle part of the universe in perfecting oneself by loving God more than oneself. God is good for the individual, but not in the way that one person’s good health is good for the self alone. Rather, God is good for each precisely because he is good for all others. Only supreme goodness can be the complete good of distinct creatures. His intrinsic goodness,

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<sup>116</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 29, a. 3, c. Quoted and translated in Gallagher, “Self-Love as the Basis of Love for Others,” 37.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. Fabian Larcher (unpublished), ch. 13, lect 4, no. 806.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

because it is essential goodness, is desirable by all, and thus the end of all, and thus the good shareable by all: the common good.

Because man is made in the image of God, he is able to be ordered by knowledge and love to the highest Good in himself. Because man is not passive with respect to his highest faculties, he is therefore “the principle of order in nature, inasmuch as all inferior bodies are ordered to him; and he can, by his own initiative, introduce a new dimension of order.”<sup>119</sup> By virtue of his will, man, aside from the ravaging effects of sin, naturally is able to order himself to God by love. Stevens describes the structure of this act of love: “in the integral state of nature [it] would be a free moral act produced without grace or any supernatural aid, and directed to God the author of nature. The act would be natural both from the point of view of efficient causality and from that of formal causality. Furthermore, it would be natural as being based on a natural likeness or similitude of God, and not in the participation of the life of the Trinity granted in sanctifying grace.”<sup>120</sup> With such a capacity, man should love God, not only with the love of concupiscence, so that he may receive goods from the Creator, but with a love of friendship, so that he desires that all things turn to God as their final end and ultimate, common good.

God is, absolutely speaking, the principle of order, but God orders nature from *outside* of nature, insofar as God is not a part of nature, whereas man orders nature from within nature as a part of it. At the same time, God orders nature from *within* insofar as God conserves all things within his own being and insofar as he moves nature to its end, which is himself. God does no violence when he creates things such that they are moved to love him, for he is the greatest good and the perfection of all. In his love, God moves humans to follow their natural inclinations and become friends with him. Thus a fully aware, loving man knows that when he loves God for God’s sake, his love paradoxically transcends himself without leaving himself behind. Self-love perfects itself in giving itself away to the one most worthy of love. By loving God more than himself, man perfects himself and the whole universe—his friendship with God is a common good that he wills for God and for

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<sup>119</sup> Blanchette, *Diss.*, 396.

<sup>120</sup> Stevens, “The Disinterested Love of God,” 534.



God's creatures, including himself, each and all of whom God loves with an infinite love.

### Summary and Conclusion

When Aristotle discusses self-love, his perspective is not limited to the love of individuals for each other. Instead, he sees that self-love is directly related to the love of a society of persons and the common good. Love of self and love of the common good are not intrinsically competitive, the Greek philosopher insists: "if *all* were to strive towards what is noble . . . everything would be as it should be for the common good, and every one would secure for himself the goods that are greatest."<sup>121</sup> In discussing whether an individual naturally loves himself above all things, Thomas takes the same perspective, seeing self-love in light of the common good. He frequently argues that, just as a part loves a whole more than itself, so man naturally loves the common good more than himself, and, in the state of uncorrupted nature, he loves God more than himself. For Thomas, this shows that the human being's love naturally extends above and beyond itself: natural, created love is self-transcending.

To grasp the significance of Thomas's part-whole analogy, to see why he employed that argument when he could have argued on other grounds, one must see how, for him, the individual is related to the cosmological and the transcendental. The part is related to the whole as imperfect is to perfect, and the imperfect loves the more perfect to which it is related. Rocks, trees, animals, and human beings all love a good greater than themselves, a good in which they share: the common good. This is the good common in *causation*, that is, the good that formally perfects those who share in it. When the individual loves the common good, he orders his self-love to it; he does not forsake his own good, though it does not have primacy of place as his final end. For the human, as a rational creature, his love of the common good is a free choice. As rational, he is the principal part of the created universe. The perfection of a human soul, and the perfection of other rational souls, constitutes the common good in a special way. Because the perfection of the rational soul consists especially in acts of knowledge and love of persons for persons, friendship is the principal common good of the

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<sup>121</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* IX, ch. 8 (1169a 8–11). Emphasis added.

created universe and thus the goal of self-transcending love. As substantial goodness, and as the exemplar of all rationality, God in himself is the supreme common good of all things. Hence human love especially transcends itself and finds its ultimate perfection when man loves God with the love of friendship. By loving God with the love of friendship, man fulfills himself as the image of God, not least because God first extended such a love toward him.

Given Thomas Aquinas's well-known emphasis on nature and his love for unity of thought and exposition, it should be no surprise that his part-whole analogy was not chosen at random from among Aristotle's metaphysical works. Although Thomas could have demonstrated on other grounds that the human person naturally loves God more than himself, he consistently employed the part-whole analogy in a variety of contexts. By doing so, by showing that the object of self-transcending love is God as the common good, the Common Doctor accomplished many tasks at the same time. He showed that humans and all creatures love God more than themselves, that this self-transcending love is natural, that it is a "cosmological" love insofar as it has a direct impact on the perfection of the universe, that human love perfects the individual and the whole, and that our love consists especially in friendship between persons. With the part-whole analogy, Thomas manifests his concern to show the metaphysical and moral possibility of man to fulfill the commandment to love God more than oneself. Furthermore, he demonstrates the deep truth of the principle that grace perfects nature, and that nature is in no way in competition with itself or with God: he defines charity as man's *supernatural* friendship for God. Therefore, in showing what integral nature is capable of aside from the effects of sin, Thomas gives us a glimpse into the greatness of human love once nature is purified and elevated by divine grace. St. Francis de Sales ably sums up the Thomistic doctrine: "Man is the perfection of the universe; the spirit is the perfection of man; love, that of the spirit; and charity, that of love. Wherefore the love of God is the end, the perfection, and the excellence of the universe."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. Henry Benedict Mackey (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1949), X, ch. 1, 410.

**The Doctrine of God and the Liturgical Res  
in John's Gospel:  
Reading John 8:12–20  
with the Theology of Disclosure**

WILLIAM M. WRIGHT IV  
*Duquesne University  
Pittsburgh, PA*

THE FOURTH GOSPEL presents Jesus in relation to a number of Jewish liturgies. The first action of Jesus's public ministry in John's Gospel, the Temple incident, takes place near Passover (2:13) and the last action of his mortal life, the crucifixion, takes place on the eve of Passover (19:14, 31). Passover also provides the setting for Jesus's feeding miracle and the accompanying Bread of Life discourse (6:4). Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for the festivals of Sukkot (7:2, 10), Dedication (10:22), as well as another unspecified feast (5:1). On several occasions, Jesus's actions on the Sabbath generate controversy (5:16, 18; 7:23; 9:14, 16). It has also been argued that the Wedding at Cana (2:1–12) reflects traditions associated with Pentecost and its commemoration of the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.<sup>1</sup> Johannine scholars have studied the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish liturgies from different methodological vantage points (e.g., historical inquiry as to what role John's use of

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<sup>1</sup> So Joseph A. Grassi, "The Wedding at Cana (John II 1–11): A Pentecostal Meditation?" *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1972): 131–36; Francis Martin, "Mary in Sacred Scripture: An Ecumenical Reflection," *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 530–42; Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading John 1–4* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 77–92.

Jewish liturgies might have played in intercommunity polemic with non-Christ-confessing Jews; literary study of how this relationship appears in the Gospel considered as a narrative whole) and have reached different conclusions as to how best interpret it.<sup>2</sup>

This essay will consider a specific instance of the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish liturgies in John—Jesus’s claim to be “the Light of the World” (Jn 8:12) and its relationship with the Jewish festival of Sukkot—from a viewpoint under which it has not previously been considered: the theology of disclosure set forth by Robert Sokolowski.<sup>3</sup> A resource very much underexplored by biblical interpreters, the theology of disclosure

<sup>2</sup> An illustrative example of these differences in scholarly approaches and interpretations appears in Raymond Brown’s *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 2003). As in his previous works, Brown classifies the relationship between Jesus and Jewish liturgical institutions in John as “replacement: Jesus takes the place of many of the institutions of Judaism” (76). Brown’s characterization of this relationship as replacement is deeply informed by his reconstruction of the Johannine community’s history in which the expulsion of some Johannine Christians from their synagogue in connection with their faith in Jesus plays a critical role. Francis Moloney, the editor of Brown’s posthumous *Introduction* and more of a literary-critical scholar than Brown, critiques Brown’s preference for “replacement” language, arguing that “fulfillment” is a more appropriate classification. Moloney writes the following: “There is a real sense of the Johannine Christology bringing to perfection what took place in the great festive ‘memories’ of God’s saving actions. However, the memory of the God of Israel, and the Jewish symbols used . . . retain their place in the Johannine theology” (76n73). Moloney elsewhere acknowledges some kind of separation of Johannine Christians from a synagogue community, but it has less hermeneutical influence on him than it does on Brown. See Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina 4 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 2–3, 294; *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 5–12* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 1–2.

<sup>3</sup> See Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982); *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993); *Christian Faith and Human Understanding: Studies on the Eucharist, Trinity, and the Human Person* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006); “God the Father: The Human Expression of the Holy Trinity,” *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 33–56. For secondary treatments of Sokolowski’s theological works, see Peter Casarella, “Questioning the Primacy of Method: On Sokolowski’s *Eucharistic Presence*,” *Communio* 22 (1995): 668–701; Guy Mansini, O.S.B. and James G. Hart, eds., *Ethical and Theological Disclosures: The Thought of Robert Sokolowski* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003); Brian J. Shanley, O.P., “*Sacra Doctrina* and the Theology of Disclosure,” *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 163–87; William M. Wright IV, “The Theology of Disclosure and Biblical Exegesis,” *The Thomist* 70 (2006): 395–419.

is a mode of theological thinking that attends to the ways in which sacred things, especially divine realities, appear to the faithful. Informed by Husserlian phenomenology, the theology of disclosure takes the appearances of realities not as purely subjective or psychological apprehensions, but as objective means of disclosure by which things give themselves to a conscious subject. Sokolowski offers the theology of disclosure as both distinct from and complementary to systematic theology and historical theology.<sup>4</sup> Whereas systematic theology treats theological things in themselves and in relation to other realities, the theology of disclosure focuses on the ways in which theological things appear, how they are distinguished from worldly things, what appearances reveal about identities, and the contexts in which those appearances are given. Whereas historical disciplines, like biblical exegesis, treat theological things in specific historical times and settings, the theology of disclosure discerns those things' essential structures of manifestation, which transcend particular historical circumstances. In this way, the theology of disclosure offers the positive theological disciplines some assistance for resisting historicist reduction and relativism.<sup>5</sup>

With regard to John 8:12–20, I will argue that the theology of disclosure highlights the need to register the relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy in light of the new understanding of who the God of Israel is, which the Incarnation provides.<sup>6</sup> The theology of disclosure calls for careful attention to the theological context, especially the understanding of God, within which sacred things appear. It invites readers of the Fourth Gospel to attend to the new theological context—the new understanding of the God of Israel—which the Incarnation establishes and which Jesus's interlocutors (the Pharisees, in the case of 8:12–20) do not entirely share. The new understanding of the God of Israel furnished by the Incarna-

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<sup>4</sup> Sokolowski discusses these distinctions between the theology of disclosure, systematic (or “ontological”) and historical (or “positive”) theology in a number of places; e.g., *God of Faith and Reason*, 92–100; *Eucharistic Presence*, 5–12, 174–79; “The Revelation of the Holy Trinity: A Study in Personal Pronouns,” in *Christian Faith and Human Understanding*, 131–33.

<sup>5</sup> Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, 99; *Eucharistic Presence*, 7–8, 177–78.

<sup>6</sup> This framing of the matter in terms of “who the God of Israel is” is indebted to Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

tion necessitates certain modifications in how the liturgies offered to this God are understood. Moreover, through his phenomenological analysis of words, things, and identity in manifolds, Sokolowski provides a way for parsing the relationship between Jesus and a biblical reality (*res*), such as the festival liturgy, in a manner consistent with the continuity and discontinuity in the understanding of God across the two biblical testaments. As the Incarnation provides a new understanding of the God of Israel, it also causes new aspects of the festival liturgy to appear; that is, the festival liturgy comes to light as anticipating Jesus's revelation of the Father to the world and thereby participating in that revelation. But since the Incarnation is a more profound revelation of the same God of Israel, these newly revealed aspects of the festival liturgy do not displace those that have already come to light in the history, Scriptures, and religious practices of Israel. The theology of disclosure thus helps shed light on the importance of John's doctrine of God for understanding how a reality like the Sukkot liturgy can appear in the Gospel as an "anticipated participation" in the mission of the incarnate Word.<sup>7</sup>

### Important Contributions of the Theology of Disclosure

There are two ways in which the theology of disclosure is especially helpful for this study of Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy in John 8:12–20: first, its attention to the importance of the uniquely Christian understanding of God and how that understanding comes to light in salvation history; second, its articulation of how biblical realities appear within this emergent theological horizon.

First, the theology of disclosure attends very carefully to the theological context in which divine realities appear. Of tremendous importance for Christian theological thinking is what Sokolowski calls "the Christian distinction between God and the world."<sup>8</sup> The Christian distinction is crucially important because it provides the indispensable context in

<sup>7</sup> The phrase "anticipated participation" is that of Francis Martin as found in his "Election, Covenant, and Law," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 4 (2006): 888.

<sup>8</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 11. Sokolowski discusses the Christian distinction throughout his theological writings, and I summarize his major points here—see *God of Faith and Reason*, 1–30; *Eucharistic Presence*, 34–54; "Creation and Christian Understanding" in *Christian Faith and Human Understanding*, 38–50.

which all Christian theological thinking must necessarily take place. As the free Creator of all things, God exists independently of the world (i.e., the whole of creation). Being thus distinct from the world, God cannot be reckoned as a thing among other things in the world. God exists in absolute perfection and goodness apart from the world, and the existence of creation does not add anything to God's complete perfection and goodness. Accordingly, God is not defined by his relationship to the world. The Christian distinction reveals the whole of creation to be radically contingent and as possibly not having been at all. Since God does not create out of any necessity and creation need not be, creation exists only by virtue of God's selfless generosity. As Sokolowski summarizes it, "In Christian belief, we understand the world as that which might not have been, and correlatively we understand God as capable of existing, in undiminished goodness and greatness, even if the world had not been."<sup>9</sup> The Christian distinction, therefore, imparts particular understandings of both God and the whole of creation.

The distinction between God and the world is a divinely revealed truth and not a conclusion that human beings can discover by means of natural reasoning. Sokolowski articulates the Christian distinction through a series of contrasts as to how the divine is understood in biblical and non-biblical religions.<sup>10</sup> In philosophy or religions that develop out of the natural human religious impulse, the gods or the divine are reckoned among things in the world or are defined in relation to the world. Whether in a religious register (e.g., Zeus, Hera, and Apollo) or a philosophical register (e.g., Plato's the One or Aristotle's Prime Mover), the divine is considered the best or highest parts of the whole of things, or they are defined by their relation to the world. In non-biblical religion, Sokolowski writes, "the divine, even in its most ultimate form, is never conceived as capable of being without the world. It is divine by being differentiated from what is not divine and by having an influence on what is not divine."<sup>11</sup>

The biblical understanding of God as the free Creator, who exists in complete goodness and perfection apart from the world, emerges over the course of biblical revelation and in contrast to pagan understandings

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<sup>9</sup> Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–19.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

of the divine. Over the course of Israel's history, the identity of the God of Israel comes to light against the background of various pagan religions. Theologically, Sokolowski writes, "If God can do the things he is said to do in the Old Testament, he is divine in a way different from the way the god of Aristotle, Plato, or the Stoics is divine, and his relationship to the world is different."<sup>12</sup> God freely enters into a covenant with the people Israel and reveals to them how they are to live in relation with this God who is radically transcendent and other. Israel is to be the people of God and unlike the nations because YHWH is other to the world and unlike the gods of the nations (cf. Lv 20:26; Dt 7:6-7).<sup>13</sup>

According to Sokolowski, the biblical understanding of God undergoes a shift with the Incarnation. Jesus appears within the context of Old Testament revelation and its understanding of God, but the reality of the Incarnation also modifies this theological context. Whereas the Old Testament understanding of the one God would seem to preclude any possibility of the Creator being identified with a creature, in the Incarnation, Sokolowski writes, "God is revealed to be so transcendent that he can enter into his creation without suffering limitation in his divinity. His divinity is such that he can become man without ceasing to be God."<sup>14</sup> The reality of the Incarnation and the revelation of the God of Israel as Trinity "deepens" or is an "intensification" of the understanding of God revealed in the Old Testament.<sup>15</sup>

The second major way in which the theology of disclosure is helpful to this study is its articulation of how biblical realities appear within this theological horizon. Drawing upon the phenomenological doctrine of intentionality, Sokolowski observes that when we read any written text, including Scripture, we must be very attentive to the referential nature of language and the kinds of "intending" that occur in reading.<sup>16</sup> When a person reads written words, he or she is conscious not only of the written markings on a page, but also whatever the words present to one's con-

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>13</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 145.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> I use the verb "intend" here in the phenomenological sense as "the conscious relationship we have to an object"; cited from Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8.



sciousness. Sokolowski writes the following: "when the words stand out, we no longer intend just what is before us. A new kind of intending comes into play, one that makes these perceived marks into words and at the same time makes us intend not just the marks that are present, but the [thing], which is absent."<sup>17</sup> Words are a means by which things, even absent things, are presented to an individual as a dative of manifestation. Words are a kind of appearance, a means of disclosure. As Sokolowski puts it, "Words, whether spoken or written, presents things. We never have 'just' words: words are vehicles to articulate and disclose things."<sup>18</sup>

Recognition that language is a means of presenting *things* is crucial because it makes the reality or state of affairs presented by the words the project object of consciousness—not the words, texts, or the authors' ideas *per se*. These are all means *by which* a reality is presented to a subject. To use the classic Augustinian and Thomistic terminology, it is the *res* presented by the *verba* or *signa* of the biblical text that one properly intends when reading Scripture.<sup>19</sup> To regard the biblical text as an end, rather than a means by which things are presented, would be to commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Treating the written text as an end resembles, according to Sokolowski, "rationalism, historicism, and psychologism . . . In each case a form of manifestation—a text, a thought, a situated appearance, a perception—is taken to replace the thing manifested."<sup>20</sup> Such a detachment of appearances from things and the reduction of appearances to purely subjective matters, which are in turn regarded as the objects of human knowing, characterize what Sokolowski calls the "egocentric predicament" of modern epistemology.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 78.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 141–42.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (ST) I, q. 1, a. 10, resp.

<sup>20</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 143.

<sup>21</sup> Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 9–11. *Ibid.*, 9, thus describes the egocentric predicament: "Consciousness is taken to be like a bubble or an enclosed cabinet; the mind comes in a box. Impressions and concepts occur in this enclosed space . . . and our awareness is directed toward them, not directly toward the things 'outside.' We can try to get outside by making inferences . . . but we are not in any direct contact with [really existing things]." The end result of this egocentric predicament is epistemological and moral relativism: "If we are bereft of intentionality . . . then we do not enter into a life of reason, evidence, and truth. Each of us turns to his own private world, and in the practical order we do our own thing; the truth does not make any demands on us" (*ibid.*, 10). See also Casarella, "Questioning the Primacy of Method,"

Coupling this theological attention to the *res* presented by the biblical texts with the shift in the understanding of God between the testaments, Sokolowski argues that the realities given in Old Testament Scripture have abiding value for Christian readers in two basic ways. First, the Old Testament, its realities, and prescribed ways of life are received as having abiding value in their own right. Through the realities given in the Old Testament, the one God, who is distinct from the world, reveals himself and the ways in which his covenant people are to live in response to him.<sup>22</sup> Receiving Old Testament realities on their own terms and in relation to the revelation of God in the history of Israel (i.e., their plain sense), Sokolowski writes, is “an exercise by which our spontaneous reverence for the divine is trained and adjusted into patterns appropriate to reverence for the biblical God.”<sup>23</sup> Natural human religious instincts are thus formed into human responses appropriate to God, who is not part of the world. In addition to this way of reading the Old Testament, the Christian reader “must also read it as an anticipation of the New Covenant.”<sup>24</sup> The Incarnation brings about a shift in how the God of Israel is understood, and consequently all other biblical realities come to appear somewhat differently in this new theological horizon. Namely, they now come to appear as anticipating the fullness of God’s self-revelation in Christ, who accomplishes the work of salvation (i.e., their spiritual sense). Sokolowski thus summarizes the manifestation of different aspects of biblical realities in concert with the progressive revelation of the God of Israel: “the God who is acting in the Old Covenant is not as fully disclosed as he will be in the Incarnation, and the saving action he performs has dimensions that will be more fully brought out later on.”<sup>25</sup>

Sokolowski contrasts the disclosure of different aspects of the biblical *res* with the (now largely disregarded) theory of a *sensus plenior*, “a deeper meaning of the text, intended by God but not clearly expressed by the human author.”<sup>26</sup> The *sensus plenior* frames the more-than-literal senses of

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669–75.

<sup>22</sup> Sokolowski, *God of Faith and Reason*, 152.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>25</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 150.

<sup>26</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Boston: St. Paul, 1993), 87. On this point, see Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 149–50.

Scripture in terms of authorial ideas, one of which was intended by only God and not by the human author (or, at least, not fully intended by the human author). Noting that this theory has been criticized for its inadequate account of the divine and human authorship of the biblical books, Sokolowski proposes that instead of making texts and authors' psychology into the interpretive ends, the theological attention should be focused on the biblical *res*, presented in a manifold of appearances across the canon. As Sokolowski puts it, "It is not the case that there was one meaning in the mind of the human author and another meaning intended by God, but that the one *thing* intended by the human author had dimensions that had not yet come into view, dimensions that could not appear until more had happened."<sup>27</sup> When the focus shifts to the biblical *res* as presented in a manifold of textual appearances, rather than immanent textual meaning or the authors' ideas proper, biblical exegesis in the strict sense opens up into theological interpretation, for the objects of theological thinking become the realities presented in the biblical books, their identities, and the real relationships existing between them. So understood, biblical interpretation concerns both what the texts are saying (i.e., *verba*) and what the texts are about (i.e., *res*).<sup>28</sup>

With these considerations in place, I will now turn to John 8:12–20 and bring these insights of the theology of disclosure to bear on the relationship between Jesus's declaration "I am the Light of the World" and the Jewish liturgy of *Sukkot*.

### Jesus, the Liturgy, and the Doctrine of God in John 8:12–20

#### *The Light of the World and the Lights of Sukkot*

The connections between Jesus's pronouncement "I am the Light of the

<sup>27</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 149.

<sup>28</sup> Such an account of biblical interpretation strikes me as cohering with the challenge issued by Benedict XVI: "If scholarly exegesis is not to exhaust itself in constantly new hypotheses, becoming theologically irrelevant, it must take a methodological step forward and see itself once again as a theological discipline, without abandoning its historical character." Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), "Foreword," in *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two: Holy Week—From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* trans. provided by the Vatican Secretariat of State (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), xiv.

World” and the liturgy of Sukkot are subtle and suggestive. Jesus makes this pronouncement on two occasions in John’s Gospel (8:12; 9:5), both of which occur during his visit to Jerusalem for this liturgical festival (7:1–10:21).<sup>29</sup> Jesus’s pronouncement to be “the Light” resonates with certain, postbiblical components of the eight-day Sukkot liturgy as described in the Mishnah.<sup>30</sup>

In its description of the festival of Sukkot, *Mishnah Sukkah* (henceforth *m. Sukkah*) discusses prominent rites involving both water (which provide context for Jesus’s teaching about “rivers of living water” in Jn 7:38) and light. Indeed, *m. Sukkah* describes a nightly liturgical event on the temple grounds at the “Beth ha-She’ubah [‘The place ... of the Water-drawing’].”<sup>31</sup> According to *m. Sukkah* 5:1–3, starting on the evening after the first day of the festival, temple priests would process down the stairs from the Court of the Israelites into the Court of Women, where several very large lampstands had been set up. Atop of each lampstand were four gold bowls for oil. Young priests would ascend ladders, fill the bowls with oil, and proceed to light the wicks in them. After the lampstands were lit, there would be music, singing, and dancing with torches in front of the lampstands, and the priests and Levites would perform the Ascent Psalms (Ps 120–134) while stationed on the stairs between

<sup>29</sup> I take John 7:1–10:21 as a narrative unit because there is no indication of any change in setting prior to 10:22, where Jesus appears in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication and thus several months after Sukkot. Cf. Luc Devillers, O.P., *La Fête de L’Envoyé: La Section Johannique de la Fête des Tentes (Jean 7,1–10, 21) et la Christologie*, Études Bibliques 49 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 2002), 16–18. For secondary treatments of Sukkot in Jewish antiquity, see Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, Brown Judaic Studies 302 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); Håkan Ulfsgård, *The Story of Sukkot: The Setting, Shaping, and Sequel of the Biblical Feast of Tabernacles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); Devillers, *La Fête de L’Envoyé*, 29–76; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 B.C.E.–66 C.E.* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1992), 139–41; Gale A. Yee, *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989), 13–16, 21–27 (reprint, Wipf & Stock, 2007, 70–77).

<sup>30</sup> Using the Mishnah as a historical source for liturgical practices before the destruction of the Second Temple requires discernment, not only because the Mishnah’s redaction dates to about 200 but also because of the rabbis’ tendency to give an idealized version temple worship. Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 103–6, discusses these caveats in using *m. Sukkah* as a historical source for first-century Jewish liturgical practice.

<sup>31</sup> See *m. Sukkah* 5.1, cited from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954 [1933]), 179; the bracketed translation is Danby’s as found at 179n12.

the two temple courts. So (unbelievably) great was the light provided by these lampstands, "there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the [place of the water drawing]."<sup>32</sup> After the all-night celebration, priests processed out of the Court of Women toward the east and the rising sun. Upon reaching the exit, the priests would turn around toward the west, face the sanctuary, and declare, quoting Ezekiel 8:16: "Our fathers when they were in this place turned *with their backs toward the Temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east* [Ezek 8:16]; but as for us, our eyes are turned toward the Lord."<sup>33</sup> Citing their ancestors, who had turned away from YHWH by worshipping other gods, the priests would reaffirm Israel's dedication to YHWH while facing west toward the sanctuary.<sup>34</sup>

It has been argued that the theological symbolism of Jesus's pronouncement to be the Light of the World owes more to Isaianic texts, which speak of the Servant of YHWH as a "light to the nations" (e.g., Is 42:6; 49:6; cf. 42:18–19; 51:4–5) and which provide background for Jesus's use of "I AM" statements, rather than the Sukkot liturgy.<sup>35</sup> Without denying the Isaianic resonances, I maintain that the liturgical context and background of Sukkot suggest several other theological dimensions of the light symbolism. Celebrations during Sukkot involved the recitation of the Hallel Psalms (Ps 113–118), and Psalm 118:27 associates light with YHWH's presence and providential care: "YHWH is God, and he has given us light" (Ps 118:27).<sup>36</sup> Given that Sukkot commemorated YHWH's care for the Israelites in the wilderness, the lampstands also recall the pillar of fire by which YHWH led the Israelites at night

<sup>32</sup> See *m. Sukkah* 5:3 (Danby, 179–80). Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 135, regards this remark about the extent of the illumination as a case of rabbinic embellishment.

<sup>33</sup> See *m. Sukkah* 5:4 (Danby, 180); italics Danby's.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. Francis Noel Davey (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 220; David Mark Ball, "I Am" in *John's Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 124 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 215–24; Catrin H. Williams, *I Am He: The Interpretation of 'Ani Hû' in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 266–75.

<sup>36</sup> Devillers, *La Fête de l'Envoyé*, 358. He also cites Psalm 27:1 as making the same association of light and God's protective presence.

(Ex 13:21–22; Nm 14:14; Neh 9:12).<sup>37</sup> Another aspect of the light symbolism comes from Zechariah 14, which describes the Day of the Lord, when YHWH would come with eschatological salvation for Jerusalem, which has been besieged and overrun by Gentile enemies. YHWH will fight Israel's enemies, defeat them, and manifest his universal Lordship (14:9). On the Day of YHWH, the prophet also remarks, "there will be a single day (this is known to YHWH), not day and not night, and at evening time, there will be light" (Zec 14:7). In addition to the unending light of day, there would also be a constant flow of life-giving waters, released from the eschatological Zion to water the whole world all year round (Zec 14:8).<sup>38</sup> All the surviving Gentile nations, who had formerly opposed Israel, "will go up, year after year, to worship the King, YHWH of Hosts, and to celebrate the festival of Sukkot" (Zec 14:16). These eschatological expectations of life-giving waters and unending daylight likely inform the development of the postbiblical water and light rituals described in the Mishnah.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:18 references Rabbi 'Aqiba, who associates Zechariah 14:17–18 with the water drawing rituals described in *m. Sukkah*, and this association indicating that (at the very least) Zechariah 14 informed subsequent Jewish reflection on the Sukkot liturgy.<sup>40</sup>

The Fourth Gospel shows a subtle awareness of the light ceremonies at Sukkot described in the Mishnah. John locates Jesus's pro-

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<sup>37</sup> Jewish exegetical traditions identified the pillar of fire with the Torah (e.g., Wis 18:3–4), and an association between the pillar of fire and Jesus, who is elsewhere in John identified in terms of God's Word and Wisdom, would fit with such interpretive trends. See Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., Anchor Bible 29–29A (New York: Doubleday, 1966–70), 1.344; Devillers, *La Fête de l'Envoyé*, 358–59; Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 339; Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 141; Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 69, 94.

<sup>38</sup> The association of Zion with life-giving, paradisaical waters was a component in biblical temple theology. See Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 129–31, 159–61.

<sup>39</sup> On the connection of Zechariah 14 with the liturgical lights of Sukkot, see Dorit Felsch, *Die Feste im Johannesevangelium: Jüdische Tradition und christologische Deutung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 211–14.

<sup>40</sup> *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:18 in Jacob Neusner, *The Tosefta: Second Divisions—Moed (The Order of Appointed Times)* (New York: Ktav, 1981), 222–23.

nouncement to be the Light within the general context of the Sukkot liturgy. The association between Jesus's words about "rivers of living water" (7:38) and the daily water-drawing rituals in the Sukkot liturgy increases the probability that John also invites his audience to see a relationship between Jesus as the Light and the liturgical lights of Sukkot. Moreover, the narrator reports that Jesus's declaration to be the Light of the World and the ensuing exchange with the Pharisees (8:12–19) took place near "the temple treasury" (*gazophulakion*) (8:20). Josephus reports the presence of *gazophulakia* in the Court of Women—probably in the sense of containers into which offerings of money were put.<sup>41</sup> This assessment finds some support from *Mishnah Shekalim* 6:5, which mentions the presence of "thirteen Shofar-chests in the Temple" into which people deposited money for different purposes.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Mark 12:41–42 has Jesus sitting in view of the temple treasury and watching the crowds, including the poor widow, put money "into the treasury" (*gazophulakion*) (12:21). The woman's presence in the temple area, coupled with her donation of money into the *gazophulakion*, may point to a location in the Court of Women. If the mention of "the temple treasury" in John 8:20 is understood to mean such offering boxes in the Court of Women, then Jesus would be declaring himself to be the Light of the World in the same area where, according to the Mishnah, the lampstands for the Sukkot liturgy stood.<sup>43</sup>

### *Jesus and the Sukkot Liturgy in Light of the Theology of Disclosure*

The theology of disclosure helps draw out several aspects of this relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy. It directs our theological attention to the reality or state of affairs, which is given in a particular appearance—the appearance in this case is the Gospel text. When John

<sup>41</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 5.200. So too "[*gazophulakeion*]" in Walter Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 149.

<sup>42</sup> See *m. Shekalim* 6:5 (Danby, 159).

<sup>43</sup> So C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 340; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1.342; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, vol. 2, trans. Cecily Hastings et al. (New York: Crossroad, 1980 [1971]), 195–96.



situates Jesus in relation to the Sukkot liturgy, he is articulating a relationship between two realities, two *res*—the man Jesus and the liturgical practices of Sukkot—which he then presents through the Gospel text. The peculiarity of this relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy should not be overlooked. For instance, it can be distinguished from an explicit fulfillment citation of Scripture (e.g., Jn 19:24, 36–37), for in the case of the liturgy, it is not Scripture *per se* bearing witness to Jesus (cf. 5:39). Moreover, the relationship also differs from Jesus’s appropriation of biblical images (e.g., the manna and the vine) to present himself as the Bread of Life (6:48) and the True Vine (15:1), for the liturgies are *practices* contemporary to Jesus, not suggestive textual allusions (although both involve the appropriation of established theological symbolism).<sup>44</sup>

The theology of disclosure clarifies that the relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy is a relationship between two *res*, each of which is profiled against the other. On the one hand, Jesus appears against the background of the Sukkot liturgy. Different aspects of this liturgical *res* have been given in a manifold of appearances across the history, practices, and Scriptures of Israel. Given that Jesus appears in light of these many aspects in John 8:12, a brief review of them is in order.

Like other Jewish liturgies in Scripture, Sukkot originated as an agricultural feast and later came to be associated with a specific episode in salvation history. This feast, originally known as “ingathering (*asiph*)” (Ex 23:16–17; 34:22–23), took place at the fall harvest and came to involve a religious pilgrimage to YHWH’s sanctuary.<sup>45</sup> Deuteronomy 16:13–15 specifies that the festival was marked by great joy and took place over seven days, during which Israel praised YHWH for the blessings of the fall harvest. Legislation from the Holiness school defined this harvest festival as an eight-day commemoration of God’s providential care for the Israelites during their time in the wilderness (Lv 23:33–43). During the festival, worshippers would dwell in huts (*sukkot*), which they would construct out of different kinds of branches (Lv 23:39–43).

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<sup>44</sup> Carl Holladay observes that Jesus’s use of biblical images like the manna and the vine are a different kind of Scriptural fulfillment than that introduced by a fulfillment citation. See Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Message and Meaning of Jesus Christ*, 2 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 1.296.

<sup>45</sup> Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 13.



Sukkot also had prominent connections with the Jerusalem temple. 1 Kings 8 locates Solomon's dedication of the temple during this festival in the seventh month (1 Kgs 8:2, 65). After the return from Babylon, the high priest Joshua and Zerubbabel dedicated the altar of the Second Temple in conjunction with this festival (Ezr 3:1–6). Sukkot also provided a model for the celebration of the rededication of the Second Temple by the Maccabees (1 Mc 4:56–58; 2 Mc 10:5–7). As a pilgrimage festival, the Sukkot liturgies were centered in the Second Jerusalem Temple, and the festival was particularly joyous and popular.<sup>46</sup> And as mentioned above, Zechariah presented the Sukkot liturgy as having an eschatological dimension as the festival during which all the nations would make pilgrimage to worship YHWH.

These different dimensions of the liturgical *res*—a celebration of God's blessings of the harvest; a commemoration of God's providential care for the Israelites in the wilderness; occasion of future hope for the eschatological state to be brought about by YHWH—have all come to light within the theological horizon provided by the basic understanding of God revealed across the Old Testament. John invites his audience to see Jesus (to an extent) in relation to the Sukkot liturgy as given within this theological horizon. As a Jewish male, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to participate in the festival liturgy (Jn 7:10). By going up to the festival, Jesus places himself within the covenantal history of YHWH's dealings with Israel and Israel's worship of YHWH to commemorate his love and providential care.

The Sukkot liturgy thus provides Jesus with the context and the terms for his self-disclosure as the Light of the World. It enables Jesus to disclose himself in a particular manner. Accordingly, the already-revealed aspects of Sukkot as a liturgical festival are something of a "presentational necessity" (as Sokolowski puts it): Christian realities can only become manifest in light of the Old Testament; the Old Testament provides an indispensable context for the appearance of Christian realities, such that Christian realities cannot be understood adequately apart

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<sup>46</sup> Rubenstein, *History of Sukkot*, 100, concludes that during the Second Temple period, "Sukkot [was] . . . the main pilgrimage and primary temple festival." Ulfgard, *Story of Sukkot*, 241, 251, argues that the active role that Jewish laity had in its festivities contributed to the popularity of Sukkot near the end of the Second Temple period.

from it.<sup>47</sup> To have a robust understanding of Jesus as the Light, one must understand his declaration to be the Light in relation to these different aspects of the Sukkot liturgy as a liturgical *res*.

And yet Jesus's pronouncement "I am the Light of the World" also causes the Sukkot liturgy to appear in a new way. Like the other "I am + predicate" statements found throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus's self-identification as the Light of the World is revelatory. With such statements, Jesus reveals aspects of himself and saving work to those to whom he has been sent, and in doing so, Jesus reveals the Father. When Jesus says "I am the Light of the World. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12), he is disclosing a particular state of affairs. Grammatically, the phrase *tou kosmou* is an objective genitive, and Jesus's declaration can appropriately be translated as "the Light for the World." Jesus causes things to appear in such a way that he is the focal point in relation to which everything else—that is, the whole world—is situated. It is a revelatory claim on a cosmic scale.

Jesus presents a state of affairs in which he is the spiritual Light for a world, which is implied to be in spiritual darkness. As the Gospel sets forth elsewhere, this spiritual darkness threatens to "overcome" people (12:35). It leaves them lost, aimless, and ignorant of their proper ends (12:36; cf. 11:9–10). The darkness also has a moral dimension for, as John states, "people loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil" (3:19). By contrast, Jesus says that "the one who follows" him as the Light will be delivered from the spiritual darkness, much as he will later say, "I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me may not remain in the darkness" (12:46). Jesus also promises his disciples possession of "the light of life." Throughout the Gospel, Jesus promises eternal life to those who receive him and his revelation in faith (3:15–16, 36; 5:24; 6:47). This eternal life consists in a participatory share in his own divine relationship with the Father as the Son. Hence those who "believe in the light . . . become sons of the light" (12:36), much like those who believe in the Son become "children of God" (1:12).

Along with revealing a particular state of affairs, Jesus manifests his

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<sup>47</sup> Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence*, 145.

own person through the revelatory formula in 8:12. By inviting people to “follow” him as disciples (8:12) and later to “believe in the light” (12:36), Jesus manifests his identity as the Light in terms of his being revealer and teacher.<sup>48</sup> The invitation to follow Jesus and believe is not only an invitation to believe *what* Jesus says (i.e., the state of affairs that he presents) but also to believe *in him* as the one who makes these revelatory claims.<sup>49</sup> Jesus manifests himself as having an authority and status by which all things appear in relation to him and he can make definitive pronouncements on a cosmic scale. This combination of Jesus as revealer, life-giver, and spiritual light for the entire world on a cosmic scale recalls the most proximate context for Jesus's self-manifestation as the Light of the World: the Gospel's Prologue.

A number of lexical similarities invite the Gospel's audience to take passages in which Jesus is presented as the Light in terms of the Prologue. The Prologue associates the divine Word, through whom “everything came to be” (1:2) with “life” and “light” (1:4). Jesus has come into the world as the Light (12:46), and the Prologue speaks of the Word as “the true Light who comes into the world” (1:9; cf. 1:14). As Jesus declares himself to be the Light of the World (8:12), the Prologue speaks of the Word as “the true light, which illumines all people” (1:9). Jesus promises his disciples “the light of life” (8:12), and the Prologue sets forth the Word's life as “the light of human beings” (1:4). Whereas the darkness does not “overcome” (*katelaben*) the Light that is the Word (1:5), Jesus warns people to follow him as the Light lest the darkness “overcome” (*katalabē*) them (12:35).

When viewed from the perspective of the Prologue, Jesus's declaration to be the Light of the World is a manifestation of his own identity as the incarnate Word. Jesus speaks as man, but his declarative human speech reveals his divine identity.<sup>50</sup> The state of affairs that Jesus reveals has authority and calls for faith because of his identity as the one “who has come down from heaven” (3:13) and reveals “what [he] has seen in the Father's presence” (8:38). Jesus thus presents himself as the incarnate

<sup>48</sup> Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1.344.

<sup>49</sup> On this structure of the act of faith, see Robert Sokolowski, “Philosophy and the Christian Act of Faith,” in *Christian Faith and Human Understanding*, 28–29.

<sup>50</sup> See Sokolowski, “Revelation of the Holy Trinity,” 140–41.

Word, whose life is “the light of all people” (1:4), and on the basis of his divine authority, this revealed state of affairs has a normativity, which, like his own person, calls for a response of faith.

The Incarnation of the divine Word introduces a new understanding of who the God of Israel is.<sup>51</sup> As the incarnate Word and Son, who was with the Father “before the world existed” (17:5), the only one who has seen the Father and made him known (1:18), Jesus reveals the identity of God in the most profound and intimate terms and thus introduces a new understanding of who God is. Jesus speaks within the horizon of this new understanding of God, which his interlocutors in the Gospel do not share.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the different understandings of who the God of Israel is account for much of the misunderstanding between Jesus and his interlocutors and opponents in the Fourth Gospel.

For instance, these differences in the understanding of God appear vividly in the exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees, which immediately follows his declaration to be the Light of the World (8:13–19).<sup>53</sup> After Jesus declares himself to be the Light, some Pharisees object that Jesus’s claim is illegitimate because he makes this claim by himself and without corroborating witnesses (8:13). The Pharisees’ objection rests on the basis of biblical texts such as Numbers 35:30 and Deuteronomy 17:6, which forbid self-testimony and call for the testimony of multiple witnesses.<sup>54</sup> Jesus accepts this legal standard, thus placing himself in continuity with Torah (Jn 8:17). But he meets its requirements on the terms provided by his revelation of the Father and himself as the Son. He offers himself and the Father as the two witnesses who testify

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<sup>51</sup> Discussing the presentation of the Logos in John’s Prologue, much of which he reads as quite congruent with contemporary Jewish speculation about God’s Word, Daniel Boyarin remarks, “what marks the Fourth Gospel as a new departure in the history of Judaism is not to be found in its Logos theology at all but in its incarnational Christology.” “The Gospel of the *Memra*: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John,” *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001): 261.

<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 208–9.

<sup>53</sup> Williams, *I Am He*, 266–75, tracks out the debate over who God is in the remainder of John 8 in light of Jesus’s use of *egō eimi*, derived from its application to YHWH in Isaiah 40–55.

<sup>54</sup> Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1.223, notes that *Mishnah Ketuboth* 2:9 provides similar halakah (in the context of marriage laws): “none may be believed when he testifies of himself” (Danby, 247).

on his behalf: "I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies about me" (8:18).<sup>55</sup> The Pharisees' rejoinder "Where is your father?" (8:19) suggests that they expect Jesus to produce another human being (i.e., Joseph) as a witness. They do not realize that Jesus is speaking about God the Father because they do not share with Jesus the exact same understanding of who God is. There is theological continuity and overlap between Jesus and the Pharisees as evidenced in the fact that Jesus accepts the legal requirements of Torah. But there is also discontinuity and newness because the Torah, as used by Jesus in 8:12–20, is received in light of the new understanding of the God of Israel as revealed in the Incarnation.

Just as Jesus's self-disclosure as the Light of the World causes himself, his disciples, and the world to appear in a particular way and within a particular theological horizon, it also causes Sukkot to appear in a new way. While Jesus does not refer directly to Sukkot in his declaration, the liturgy is not wholly absent because it provides the context and terms for Jesus's disclosure. The state of affairs disclosed in 8:12 has in the foreground Jesus as the Light, his disciples, and the world in spiritual darkness, and Sukkot shows up in this disclosure as part of the background.

Jesus's self-presentation as the Light of the World makes him the focal point in relation to which all things (including the Sukkot liturgy) are situated. By making this declaration in the very location where the lampstands for Sukkot stood, Jesus causes the *res* that are the light rituals of Sukkot now to appear as setting up his revelation to the world. In setting up Jesus's revelation, the Sukkot liturgy appears as participating in it. When Jesus "sublates" these liturgical rites by incorporating them into his deeper revelation of the God of Israel, then new, previously unseen aspects of the liturgy become visible, that is, the ways in which the liturgy participates in Jesus's mission.<sup>56</sup> These

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<sup>55</sup> As Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 333, succinctly puts it, Jesus "is inseparable from the Father, and their combined witness ought to be acknowledged as valid by those who accept the Jewish law."

<sup>56</sup> My use of "sublation" here is owed to Francis Martin, who employs this term according to the definition given by Bernard Lonergan: "What sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, in-

Christological dimensions of a biblical reality like Sukkot remain hidden until they are revealed in light of Christ and the explanatory activity of the Holy Spirit in the disciples.<sup>57</sup> The newly revealed Christological dimensions do not negate the already visible ones, but the liturgy does appear differently when put into this new theological setting.

While John does not use “testimony” or “witness” language for the Jewish liturgies, it is helpful to consider their relationship with Jesus in the Fourth Gospel along these lines. Jesus’s revelatory declaration in 8:12 causes the light rituals of Sukkot to appear as setting up his revelatory and saving work and thus participating in it.<sup>58</sup> Seen in this way, the liturgy can be regarded as bearing witness to Jesus in a manner similar to Jesus’s own works, John the Baptist, the Scripture (5:32–39), and the evangelist’s own testimony in the Gospel (19:35; 21:24). They all relate to Jesus by pointing to him and serving his mission of revelation and salvation. Framed in this way, Jesus incorporates the light rituals of Sukkot into his revelation and thus showing them to having dimensions, which are anticipatory of himself. If the *res* that is the Sukkot liturgy bears a kind of witness to Jesus, it can be regarded as having a signitive function whereby it points to Jesus. To use the traditional terminology again, Jesus reveals himself as the *res* in relation to which the Sukkot liturgy constitutes a *res significans*, and this liturgical *res significans* participates in Jesus mission by anticipating it.<sup>59</sup> Without negating its already revealed aspects, the Sukkot liturgy appears in this new theological context as “an anticipated participation” in Jesus’s revelatory and saving work.<sup>60</sup>

The key point provided by the theology of disclosure in this regard

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cludes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.” From Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 241, as cited in Francis Martin, “The Contribution and Challenge of *Dei Verbum*,” in *Sacred Scripture: The Disclosure of the Word* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2006) 234.

<sup>57</sup> See Ignace de la Potterie, “The Truth in Saint John,” *Rivista biblica italiana* 11 (1963): 3–24; reprint, John Ashton, ed., *The Interpretation of John*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 67–82.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 219.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 1.2.2; 3.8.12; 3.9.13; Michael Cameron, “Sign,” in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 793–98.

<sup>60</sup> Martin, “Election, Covenant, and Law,” 888.

is that the new appearances of biblical realities—that is, that they now appear as having dimensions anticipatory of Christ—needs to be registered in terms of a more fundamental modification in the understanding of who God is. Just as the Incarnation modifies the understanding of the God of Israel, so too does it modify the understanding of the biblical realities in relation to this God. As Richard Bauckham has argued, monolatry was the practical expression of monotheism in Second Temple Judaism: “the exclusive worship of the God of Israel is precisely a recognition of and response to his unique identity.”<sup>61</sup> Since God is understood to be the transcendent Creator and Lord of all creation, he alone is to be given worship. But when the understanding of the identity of the God of Israel is modified by the Incarnation, the liturgical worship of that God must likewise be understood anew. The Jewish liturgies must be understood in a new way because the God, to whom the liturgies are directed, is understood in a new way. The continuity and newness in the relationship articulated between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy need to be registered in light of the continuity and newness between the understanding of God revealed in the Old Testament and that revealed in the Incarnation.

This correlation between shifts in the understanding of God and liturgy similarly appear in Jesus's words to the Samaritan woman about the worship of the Father in the messianic age. The Father seeks those who will worship him “in spirit and truth” (4:24), that is, in light of the revelation of the Son, who is “the truth” (14:6), and animated by the Holy Spirit, who imparts new spiritual life (3:5).<sup>62</sup> The Fourth Gospel thus prescribes a new form of worship, which is proper to this new understanding of the God of Israel: it is founded upon the revelation of the Father, which is given by the Son and vivified by the Spirit.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 12.

<sup>62</sup> See Ignace de la Potterie, S.J., *La Vérité dans Saint Jean*, 2 vols., *Analecta biblica* 73–74 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1999 [1977]), 2.673–706.

<sup>63</sup> Thus Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 217, writes that the Fourth Gospel “is not a ‘radical critic of traditional Jewish worship’ so much as it is a critic of the failure to recognize the eschatological hour and the way in which worship is appropriately offered in that hour.”


### Conclusion

This analysis of the relationship of Jesus as the Light of the World and the liturgy of Sukkot in light of Sokolowski's theology of disclosure suggests several things. First, the theology of disclosure helps clarify the relationship between Jesus and the Sukkot liturgy as existing between two *res*. The logic of this relationship suggests that the liturgies do not function simply as a foil or are devoid of meaning of their own. Rather, the liturgical *res* retains its integrity and meaning in relation to the revelation of God in the Old Testament, when Jesus appropriates them into his more profound revelation of the same God. The liturgies provide Jesus with the context and terms for his disclosure, and Jesus in turn reveals previously unseen dimensions by which they anticipate and participate in his revelatory and saving work.

Second, the theology of disclosure highlights the importance of John's doctrine of God for the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish liturgies. Through his revelatory speech as the incarnate Word, Jesus sets forth a new way of understanding the world, liturgy, and most profoundly the God of Israel. Jesus's revelation of the Father and himself as the Son provides the fundamental context in which biblical *res*, such as Sukkot, come to appear in the Fourth Gospel. The Incarnation reveals a new understanding of who the God of Israel is, and following from this shift in the understanding of the identity of God is a shift in how the Jewish liturgies are understood. The continuity and newness between Jesus and Sukkot in the Fourth Gospel should be appreciated in light of the more fundamental continuity and newness in the understanding of the identity of the God of Israel as revealed in the Old Testament and in the Incarnation.

Third, as suggested by the use of the Augustinian and Thomistic vocabulary (e.g., *res*, *signa*, and *res significans*), this analysis points to some correspondence between the relationship of Jesus and the liturgies (as two *res*) in the Fourth Gospel and classic accounts of the spiritual sense of Scripture. Thomas Aquinas programmatically defines the spiritual sense in the first question of the *Summa theologiae* along similar lines: "That signification whereby things signified by words have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based on



the literal, and presupposes it.”<sup>64</sup> The spiritual senses do not pertain to the words of Scripture as such but to the things, signified by the words, which themselves signify the mystery of Christ and the Church. Or, as Henri de Lubac plainly puts it, “to discover this allegory [i.e., spiritual sense], one will not find it properly speaking in the text, but in the realities of which the text speaks; not in history as recitation, but in history as event.”<sup>65</sup> Such points of convergence suggest further examination of the correspondence between a New Testament theology of history, such as John's, and premodern accounts of Scripture's spiritual senses whereby historical realities are seen to participate in the economy of the divine Word. Sokolowski's directing of our theological attention to the biblical *res* as presented by the *verba* also provides a contemporary register in which contemporary exegesis can reconnect with this premodern tradition. For, as Francis Martin has rightly observed, “The theory of the spiritual sense of Scripture is based, not on a theory of text, but on a theology of history.”<sup>66</sup> 

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<sup>64</sup> *ST* I, q. 1, a. 10, resp.; cited from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947–48). The Latin text reads, “Illa vero significatio qua res significatae per voces, iterum res alias significant, dicitur sensus spiritualis; qui super litteralem fundatur, et eum supponit.” Cited from <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/sth1001.html>.

<sup>65</sup> Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 2, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. E. M. Macierowski (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000 [1958]), 86.

<sup>66</sup> Martin, “Election, Covenant, and Law,” 867.

## The Importance of Steven A. Long's *Analogia Entis* within Contemporary Catholic Thought\*

ROMANUS CESSARIO, O.P.  
Saint John's Seminary  
Brighton, MA

The publications of Steven A. Long elicit deep admiration. Beyond the hosts of articles that have emerged from his study and teaching, his three books have particularly enriched contemporary Catholic philosophy and theology. First, *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act* (published in 2007).<sup>1</sup> Second, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* with its leading chapter (the heart of the book), titled "On the Loss, and the Recovery, of Nature as a Theonomic Principle" (published in 2010).<sup>2</sup> Finally, and most recently, *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (published in 2011). An impressive list of publications adorns Professor Long's curriculum vitae. Nonetheless, as is the case with the writings of Saint Paul, "there are some things in them hard to understand" (2 Pt 3:16). Indeed, if one had to propose words that best capture the essences of his books, no doubt they would include "teleology," "theonomy," and

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\* These remarks were originally delivered on October 11, 2012, at the American Maritain Association Conference book panel dedicated to Steven A. Long's *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).

<sup>1</sup> Steven A. Long, *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Steven A. Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

“analogy.” Three demanding words that, as we all realize, elude facile explanation.

To honor the considerable service of Professor Long to Catholic intellectual life, I propose that his writings share a common, sapiential aspect. They do not constitute a disparate collection of technical inquiries. Professor Long’s three books form an integral unity such as one finds in the twenty-four theses of Thomist philosophy issued on July 27, 1914, by the Sacred Congregation of Studies under the heading “Decree of Approval of some theses contained in the Doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas and proposed to the Teachers of Philosophy.” Moreover, I further suggest that his most recent book, *Analogia Entis*, offers us insight into the fundamental principle—indeed, one might say, the sapiential key—to an adequate appreciation of Long’s work vis-à-vis contemporary Catholic thought.

First, *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act*. During a 2008 symposium on Long’s first book, I made the following remarks:

Why does this book matter[?]: Let *Veritatis splendor* serve as a starting point: “The object of the act of willing is in fact a freely chosen kind of behaviour” [*Veritatis splendor*, §78]. Personal worth and dignity depends on our rightly discerning kinds of behavior. As *Veritatis splendor* §63 sets it forth, choosing a kind of behavior that conforms to the truth about the good of the human person affects an individual’s moral growth, the perfection of that human person, and the right disposition in a person for receiving the reward of eternal life. In short, happiness, now and forever.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, how one articulates the nature of the human act matters on both speculative and existential levels. No wonder Professor Long “argues eloquently that for Aquinas there is a basic ‘unit of act,’ and [that] this ‘unit’ is the case wherein the object is *per se* ordained to

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<sup>3</sup> Romanus Cessario, O.P., “Why This Book [*The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act*] Matters,” remarks presented at the 43rd International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 9, 2008. See also Romanus Cessario, O.P., “Human Action and the Foundations of the Natural Law,” *Nova et Vetera* 8 (English), no. 1 (2010): 185–89.

the end.”<sup>4</sup> The *teleology of act* matters for the human person. It matters for us.

Second, Cajetan Cuddy, O.P., one of my Dominican confreres, offered the following observation during the 2011 American Maritain Association Conference panel devoted to the book *Natura Pura*: “Professor Long—like a skilled physician—has been able to locate the ‘pulse’ of theology, diagnose the cause of certain noticeable irregularities in the ‘heart beat’ of the history of Catholic thought, and offer principles and suggestions to aid in a full and integral appropriation of the *depositum fidei*.”<sup>5</sup> What sorts of irregularities might these be and what are their causes? Cuddy summarizes Long’s diagnosis: contemporary Catholic theologians have neglected “the Thomistic understanding of obediential potency which is a *passive and specified potentiality*—grounded in the impressed sapientia of the theonomic order in human rational nature.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, the theonomic character of human nature and its obediential *potency* (like the teleology of moral *act*) matters greatly. And one recognizes this importance not just in speculative but also in existential—and, indeed, beatitudinal—considerations. If one errs on the level of obediential potency, one will err on the level of the theological act. Not a small (or insignificant!) error for the Catholic thinker who keeps the Highest Truth before his gaze.

Finally, Long’s most recent book on the analogy of being draws out the universal implications of Saint Thomas Aquinas’s teaching that “potentia et actus dividunt ens et quodlibet genus entis”—“potency and act divide being and every kind of being” (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 1). Attentiveness to potency and act is not optional within realist speculation. Indeed, Long argues assiduously—and, I might add, compellingly—that “the intrinsic analogicity of being as divided by act and potency” affords the philosopher and theologian a much surer foundation for their engaging life and contemplation than does “free-floating relation.”<sup>7</sup> As the twentieth-century Dominican commentator Reginald


<sup>4</sup> Cessario, “Why this Book.”

<sup>5</sup> Cajetan Cuddy, O.P., “*Natura Pura*, Obediential Potency, and *Sacra Doctrina*,” paper presented at the 35th Annual International Meeting of the American Maritain Association, Notre Dame, Indiana, October 14, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; emphasis original.

<sup>7</sup> Long, *Analogia Entis*, 1.

Garrigou-Lagrange was wont to remark, “the definition of potency [and act] determines the Thomistic synthesis.”<sup>8</sup> If one fails to formulate this vital distinction correctly, one abandons the sapiential key to the truth of reality.

Steven A. Long is a Thomist, pure and simple. His work manifests a mastery of the fundamental importance (and universal implications) of the real distinction between potency and act. Because of this mastery, Professor Long has been able to articulate the subtleties and nuances requisite to any adequate consideration of being—both natural and supernatural. Only if one understands potency and act’s real and proper division of being will one be able to apprehend the reality behind words like “teleology,” “theonomy,” and “analogy.” Moreover, without much exaggeration, I suggest that unless one understands Long’s *Analogia Entis*, one will not really appreciate the importance of his *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act*, nor that of his *Natura Pura*, which I and others have explored in more detail elsewhere. 

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<sup>8</sup> Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought* (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1950), 37.

## The Doctrine of Analogy among the Thomists: A Debate Renewed

CHRISTOPHER M. CULLEN, S.J.

*Fordham University*

*New York, NY*

KARL BARTH famously says in his *Church Dogmatics* that the analogy of being is an invention of the Antichrist.<sup>1</sup> Anyone who has tried to sort through the complex debates on this topic among Thomists in the second half of the twentieth century might well agree. Participants to the debates are generally agreed that analogy involves identifying similarity among difference and the predication of terms, somewhere between sheer equivocation and metaphor, on the one hand, and univocity, on the other. As to how exactly analogy functions beyond this though, there is little agreement even among many Thomists—not about (1) whether analogy is merely a logical and semantic doctrine, nor about (2) the different types of analogy, nor about (3) the type of analogy operative in metaphysics and natural theology, nor even about (4) the ontological foundation for analogy itself. Until the mid-twentieth century, the interpretation of Aquinas's famous commentator, Thomas de Vio, Cardinal Cajetan (1469–1534), held sway. But beginning with the work of various scholars in the mid-twentieth century, Cajetan's interpretation fell under attack. Since then, there has been no

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936–77), 1/1: x. For discussion of Barth and his followers on analogy, see Thomas Joseph White, O.P., ed., *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Anti-Christ or Wisdom of God?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

shortage of critics of Cajetan.<sup>2</sup> Cajetan came to be seen as an unreliable interpreter of Aquinas on the issue of analogy. In this revised assessment, Cajetan “misread” certain texts of Aquinas in his famous *De nominum analogia. De conceptu entis* (1498).<sup>3</sup> In his latest book, Steven A. Long has bravely advanced into this Thomistic battlefield, and in doing so, is clearly, to no small extent, attempting to issue a rallying call back to various crucial elements of the Cajetanian interpretation of Aquinas on analogy, in particular, (1) the unity of the historical doctrine of Aquinas on the matter and (2) the priority given to the analogy of proper proportionality.<sup>4</sup> The very title of Long’s book recalls Cajetan’s own view that the analogy of proportionality is the “analogy of being.”<sup>5</sup> Long argues that what is ultimately at stake in this debate is the very possibility of a philosophical theology that avoids the extremes of

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<sup>2</sup> H. Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World: An Investigation of Its Background and Interpretation of Its Use by Thomas Aquinas* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1952); George P. Klubertanz, S.J., *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon s. Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Louvain, 1961); Ralph McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy: An Interpretation of St. Thomas* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961); McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996); Bernard Montagnes, *The Doctrine of Analogy of Being According to Thomas Aquinas*, trans. E. C. Macierowski (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004; orig. publ. Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1963); John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), chaps. 3 and 13; Gregory P. Rocca, O.P., *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas de Vio Cajetan, O.P., *The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being*, trans. Edward A. Bushinski (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1953).

<sup>4</sup> Long is not alone in defending certain positions of Cajetan. Rocca lists a number of midcentury adherents and their publications: Antonin Sertillanges, O.P., Maurilio Penido, Gerald Phelan, Charles Journet, Eric Mascall, James Anderson, Jacques Maritain (Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 115n58). A more recent study of Cajetan is: Joshua P. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan’s De nominum analogia* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). Hochschild interprets Cajetan’s theory as focused on trying to respond to questions raised by John Duns Scotus, rather than on trying to provide an historical account of Aquinas’s theory.

<sup>5</sup> Long’s title also evokes the work of the same title by the twentieth-century Jesuit theologian Erich Przywara: Erich Przywara, S.J., *Analogia Entis: Metaphysik* (München: Josef Kösel & Friedrich Pustet) 1932.

either agnosticism (concerning the nature of God) or a sort of rationalism that would hold that our concepts apply univocally to God (apart from whether this univocity is overt or covert). In Long's view, only an analogy of proper proportionality avoids these extremes while also securing the important goal of justifying the ways that believers speak about God. And so, the many contemporary scholars who have cast aside this delicate tool, whether among various contemporary theological schools, or even among Thomists, have managed to "mislay many central doctrinal tenets of the Angelic Doctor."<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the first question in the debate has been, what is the teaching of Aquinas on this issue? The answer to this question is complicated by the facts that Aquinas never wrote a systematic treatise on analogy and that he may have changed his mind on analogy in fundamental ways, as many scholars now think, from his early teaching in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and in *De veritate*.<sup>7</sup> Long does not. He argues that Aquinas's position remained substantially unchanged throughout his career and that the way to perceive this unity of doctrine is through a systematic study of the issue in the light of the principles of the entire Thomistic synthesis. Long's method attempts to avoid getting lost in the details of a chronological consideration of individual texts, which are often addressing very specific and different issues. Long insists that Aquinas never abandons the doctrine of *De veritate* 2.11, and so argues that the analogy of proper proportionality is the analogy grounding metaphysics, as *De veritate* implies, and is thus "the analogy of being."

Long's book is divided into four chapters and an appendix: chapter one sets the metaphysical context for the consideration of analogy by discussing the challenge of Parmenidean monism and the first principle of being and thought; chapter two concerns the specific, important texts of Aquinas on the issue of analogy; chapter three takes up some of the more famous recent objections to the view that the analogy of proper proportionality is the analogy of metaphysics; chapter four discusses the importance of analogy for the act of faith; and finally, an appendix dis-

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<sup>6</sup> Long, 1.

<sup>7</sup> See Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, chaps. 3 and 11, for a detailed discussion of the relevant primary texts across the range of Aquinas's career on both the predicamental and transcendental levels.



cusses important issues concerning the epistemological starting point of Thomistic metaphysics.

According to Long, the two important primary texts for understanding the foundational role of the analogy of proper proportionality in Aquinas are *Scriptum super Sententiis* I, d. 19, q. 5, art. 2, ad 1, and *De veritate*, q. 2, a.11. In the former, Aquinas says that something is said according to analogy in three ways: according to the notion (*intentio*) only and not according to being; according to being and not according to the notion; and according to the notion and according to being. In the first way one notion is referred to several things but has being only in one, such as when we speak of “healthy” animals and “healthy” food. In Long’s (and Cajetan’s) view, this is the analogy of extrinsic attribution. In the second type (according to being but not according to the notion), Aquinas uses the example of “body” as predicated of heavenly and earthly bodies. This meaning would be univocal for the logician but merely analogical for the physicist or metaphysician, in that “body” refers to radically unequal substances, in one case to incorruptible bodies and in another to corruptible bodies. The third type is analogy according to the notion and according to being; the example given is when “being” is said of substance and accident, or when “truth” and “goodness” are said analogically of God and creatures. The notion and being are the same “proportionally.”

Aquinas’s presentation of analogy in the *Sentences* becomes the basis for Cajetan’s division. Cajetan calls the first type an analogy of attribution (and he regards it as strictly extrinsic);<sup>8</sup> the second type he calls an analogy of inequality, and is according to being only, “because the analogates are considered equal in the formality signified by the common name but are not held equal with respect to the ‘to be’ of this common formality”;<sup>9</sup> the third type he calls an analogy of proportionality. He distinguishes proportion from proportionality, the former being “a definite relation of one quantity to another,” the latter being a similitude of two proportions.<sup>10</sup> “This analogy excels above the others mentioned

<sup>8</sup> Cajetan, *Analogy of Names*, 16: “This analogy is according to extrinsic denomination only, so that only the primary analogate realizes the perfection formally, whereas the others have it only by extrinsic denomination.”

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–13.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

above both by dignity and name. By dignity, because it arises from the genus of inherent formal causality, for it predicates perfections that are inherent to each analogate whereas the other analogy arises from extrinsic denomination.”<sup>11</sup>

The second definitive text for analogy, according to Long, is from Aquinas’s *Disputed Questions on Truth (De veritate)*, q. 2, a. 11. This text, dated to the school year 1256–57, unambiguously rules out the univocal or equivocal predication of names for God and creatures: univocal because there is no common nature; equivocal, “for, unless there were at least some real agreement between creatures and God, His essence would not be the likeness of creatures, and so He could not know them by knowing His essence.”<sup>12</sup> In this text, Aquinas proceeds to distinguish two types of analogy: an analogy of proportion: “a certain agreement between things having a proportion to each other from the fact that they have determinate distance from each other or some other relation to each other;” and an analogy of proportionality: “the agreement is occasionally noted . . . between two related proportions—for example six has something in common with four because six is two times three, just as four is two times two.”<sup>13</sup>

Even though the analogy of proportion implicitly includes the likeness of effect to cause, Long argues that this analogy is not applicable to God and creatures because “the divine cause does not of itself contain any determinate order to the effect.” The reason there is no determinate order in the case of God is that “nothing about the divine cause is of itself determinately ordered or has real relation to the creature.”<sup>14</sup>

If we now turn to what is arguably the most important text of Aquinas that seems to run counter to Long’s interpretation, we find this one from the *prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae (ST)*:

Now names are thus used in two ways: either according as many things are proportionate to one, thus for example “healthy”

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Truth (De veritate)*, trans. Robert W. Mulligan, S.J. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1954), q. 2, a. 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Long, 58. See also, Mark G. Henninger, S.J., *Relations: Medieval Theories 1250-1325* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

predicated of medicine and urine in relation and in proportion to health of a body, of which the former is the sign and the latter the cause: or according as one thing is proportionate to another, thus “healthy” is said of medicine and animal, since medicine is the cause of health in the animal body. And in this way some things are said of God and creatures analogically, and not in a purely equivocal nor in a purely univocal sense. For we can name God only from creatures. Thus whatever is said of God and creatures, is said according to the relation of a creature to God as its principle and cause, wherein all perfections of things pre-exist excellently.<sup>15</sup>

This text distinguishes two types of analogy—many-to-one and one-to-another—and then seems to identify the latter as the analogy of natural theology. Furthermore, this one-to-another analogy is grounded in causal relation. Long wants still to interpret this text in light of Aquinas’s earlier texts and to understand the proportion of one to another and of effect to cause as “analogies of transferred proportion that are always as it were convertible into analogy of proper proportionality.”<sup>16</sup>

It is when we turn from individual texts to a consideration of the larger context of certain crucial insights of Aquinas’s synthesis that we can achieve considerable clarity about his doctrine of analogy. Long argues that in order to understand Aquinas on analogy, we ought to begin with the first principle of all thought and being, the principle of noncontradiction (PNC). In Long’s account, this principle is the key that unlocks the door of metaphysics and that eventually culminates in a natural theology that establishes the intelligibility of the act of faith. As Long puts it very clearly: that “act is not self-limiting is another form of the judgment that being is not nonbeing.”<sup>17</sup> Act is limited only by virtue of its relation to potency and not by virtue of anything absolutely necessary to act as such.<sup>18</sup> Thus implicit within the PNC there is a distinction between act and potency. The PNC prompts us to the insight that act

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 5, resp.

<sup>16</sup> Long, 59.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

itself is unlimited and that there is a principle that is not nonbeing, nor mere possibility, nor act. This principle is potency.<sup>19</sup> Potency is not act, because it is a real, subjective capacity founded on act but distinct from it; potency is not nonbeing, because it is a capacity; and it is not mere possibility, because it is always dependent on a prior act to which it is related. It is these insights that flow from a firm grasp of the principle of noncontradiction. Of course, the height of development for the act-potency distinction is then in the further insight that existence and essence are really distinct, that existence (*esse*) is the act of essence, and thus that existence is superformal and not self-limiting.<sup>20</sup> If I have understood Long correctly, the classic problem of “the one and the many” must be addressed before any analogy can be posited, for the simple reason that analogy involves identification of similarities among the many, which is a vain exercise if it is not clear how one can even first admit the existence of the many in any way at all. The fuller answer to the problem of the one and the many is found in the dual distinctions of act-potency and *esse*-essence. “The answer is the fundamental truth that created essence is to *esse* as potency to act. That is, when we ask formally for the cause of limit, manyness, and change, the answer is ‘potency,’ for to have a created essence is to have a potential principle vis-à-vis *esse*.”<sup>21</sup> This same principle then has crucial significance for natural theology, for “*esse* is truly act in both creature and God but in creature as proportional to the limit of potency and in God as proportional to the full perfection of act unlimited by potency.”<sup>22</sup>

Long is not disregarding Aquinas’s teaching on participation, nor is he denying that “potency limits the participation in being and establishes the degree of remotion from the first cause.”<sup>23</sup> But he is arguing that prior to the notion of participation are the notions that act is itself unlimited, that act is distinct from potency, and that potency is a cor-

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 26. Cf. W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “The Limitation of Act by Potency in St. Thomas: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?,” in *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being–God–Person* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 65–88. (Long cites this text but wishes not to enter fully into its argument; see Long, 26n13).

relative, limiting principle that determines the degree of being. Long argues that both the proofs for the existence of God and the doctrine of participation are preceded by the division of being by act and potency. “Hence the Aristotelian answer to Parmenides is the necessary condition for any ontologically pluralist doctrine of participation.”<sup>24</sup>

Long is rejecting the thesis that analogy is properly speaking merely a logical and semantic theory concerning the functioning of words or terms.<sup>25</sup> As such a theory, analogy involves a use of terms to speak about related realities, even though the realities and their relations themselves are not analogical—they simply are, or in other words, they are what they are. As Benedict Ashley, who follows Ralph McInerny on this issue in his recent textbook on Thomistic metaphysics, states, “It is only the processes of human thought and the inadequacy of human language in which we express thought that leads us to understand something we do not understand through what we know better, and consequently to express it by analogical terms.”<sup>26</sup> The crucial point, Ashley argues (making use of McInerny’s work), is to keep distinct the linguistic and logical question of how words are used univocally, equivocally, metaphorically, or analogically, from the ontological question of “how the realities named by such texts are related to each other.”<sup>27</sup> Analogy is a logical theory about the significance of terms, not an ontological theory about things and their properties.

In Ashley’s account of “one-to-one analogy,” a word is transferred “from its proper use for A to name something else B similar enough to A so that the knowledge of A helps to understand B in a way useful for critical thought, yet not similar enough to B for A and B to be reduced

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<sup>24</sup> Long, 28.

<sup>25</sup> See Ralph McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy: Studies in Analogy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968); “The Analogy of Names Is a Logical Doctrine,” in *Being and Predication* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986); also John Deely, “The Absence of Analogy,” *Review of Metaphysics* 55, no. 3 (2002): 521–50. Cf. Lawrence Dewan, O.P., “St Thomas and Analogy: Logician and the Metaphysician,” in *Laudemus viros gloriosos: Essays in Honor of Armand Maurer, C.S.B.*, ed. R. E. Houser (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 132–45.

<sup>26</sup> Benedict Ashley, O.P., *The Way toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 135.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

as species to a single univocal genus.”<sup>28</sup> In Ashley’s account, “many-to-one” analogy differs in that it transfers a word from its proper use for A to several other kinds of things with different relations to A but with the same name. Ashley says that Cajetan tried to distinguish analogies based on a single relation—that is, proportion—from those based on a comparison of the relations between two pairs of terms—that is, proportionality, or a similarity of one relation to another.<sup>29</sup> “But,” says Ashley, “this is not an essential difference, since any analogy can be displayed as a proportionality.”<sup>30</sup> Thus analogy is merely about determining how transferred uses are related to the one proper use. The proper sense of the word is the *res significata* and the differences are found in the *modus significandi*, which involve a relation of similarity.<sup>31</sup>

One of the other important issues that Long discusses concerns the foundational type of analogy for metaphysics and natural theology. A major alternative to the position Long takes on this issue is the view that would maintain that the analogy of one-to-another (*unius ad alterum*) (or what has been called “intrinsic attribution, based on the causal relation”) is the foundation for metaphysics and for our knowledge of God.<sup>32</sup> The defenders of this latter position appeal especially to the text already cited from *ST I*, q. 13, a. 5, where Aquinas says that “whatever is said of God and creatures is said according to the relation of creature to God as its principle and cause.”<sup>33</sup> According to this view, it is this type of analogy that is of value in natural theology because this is grounded in the similarity of effect to cause found in the causal relation.

These defenders of analogy of one-to-another (or intrinsic attribu-

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 287. Herbert McCabe also regards “analogy” as a way of using words: “Too much has been made of St. Thomas’s alleged teaching on analogy. For him analogy is not a way of getting to know about God, nor is it a theory of the structure of the universe, it is a comment on our use of certain words” (McCabe quoted in Brian Davies, O.P., “The Limits of Language and the Notion of Analogy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleanore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 397n8).

<sup>32</sup> Charles D. Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics: An Enquiry into the Act of Existing* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1959).

<sup>33</sup> *ST I*, q. 5, resp.

tion) claim that the analogy of proper proportionality is inadequate for the purposes of natural theology because there is no clear similarity between a conceivable being whose essence is to exist and the beings of our experience where the real relations pertain. Trying to build a natural theology on this analogy ends in agnosticism, especially since the notion of being in metaphysics, as a transcendental, must always include all conceivable, as well as all actually existing, beings. Thus some form of analogy not based merely on a four-term “proportionality”—that is, the similar proportion of relations—is needed if we are to escape this agnosticism. Montagnes, for example, complains of Cajetan that he has separated the conceptual order and the real order. In Cajetan’s theory, the property of the concept’s encompassing its inferiors pertains only to our representation. “The all-encompassing supreme instance within which all beings are unified and under which they all are like each other is none other than the idea of being. The unity of being is that of a concept.”<sup>34</sup> Or, as Montagnes puts it, the difference between the two theories is the difference between “a metaphysics of the idea of being” and “a metaphysics of the degrees of being.”<sup>35</sup> The debate among Thomists over analogy will no doubt hinge, in no small part, on whether Long has defended the analogy of proper proportionality from this concern that Montagnes raises.

Montagnes argues that only the analogy of one-to-another can supply what is needed, namely, a grounding in causal relation, “in virtue of the relations of efficient and formal causality, and the sum of those relations constitutes participation.”<sup>36</sup> Essences are to be considered from two points of view—the predicamental and the transcendental. Here Montagnes is building on the distinction Fabro draws between analogy at the predicamental level—that is, how being can be applied analogically to substance and the other accidents, or predicaments—and analogy at the transcendental level, or vertically—that is, how being and other names can be applied to different kinds of substances, especially God and creatures.<sup>37</sup> From the transcendental point of view, essences are to

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<sup>34</sup> Montagnes, *Doctrine of Analogy of Being*, 132.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>37</sup> In Long’s view, the analogy of proportionality is equipped to handle both horizontal and vertical similarities while respecting differences. See also John Wippel’s discus-

be considered as degrees and modes of the perfection of being—that is, as participations of being—essence being inseparable from *esse*. “Essence is no longer primarily defined as the potency and limitation of the act of being. It is from the start its formal measure and this is so right up to and including the situation in God.”<sup>38</sup>

Of course, those who defend the analogy of one-to-another try to defend themselves from the accusation of rationalism by appealing to the fundamental distinction between the reality signified by a name (*res significata*) and the name’s manner of signification (*modus significandi*). In this way, “while the absolute and analogical predicates of positive theology are affirmed of God as regards the reality they signify, they must be denied as regards their manner of signification.”<sup>39</sup>

To a large extent, Long seems to be arguing over the foundation of metaphysics and, more specifically, of natural theology. He is arguing that the defenders of one-to-another analogy as the analogy of being are making a fatal move by thinking that we can discover a direct proportion between God and creatures, as in 1:2, rather than a proportionality, as is involved in 6:3:4:2, “God cannot be put into any determinate relation to the creature (although the creature is determined in relation to God).”<sup>40</sup> Long writes, “While the emphasis on analogy of proportion, of one to another, and of effect to cause are all to be found in Thomas’s later writings, there are no apparent grounds for holding that any strict analogy of proportion in the sense in which Thomas earlier denies it, or in any sense that does not presuppose analogy of proper proportionality, is countenanced by him.”<sup>41</sup> There can be no direct proportion between God and creature because there is no relation of God to effect. He writes: “The analogy of effect to cause, of one to another, can be only an analogy of transferred proportion, for the divine cause has no determined relation or proportion to the effect, although the effect is wholly determined in relation to the cause.”<sup>42</sup> Long argues that his opponents claim too much in establishing a proportion between effect and cause

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sion of Fabro, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 73n30, 74.

<sup>38</sup> Montagnes, *Doctrine of Analogy of Being*, 161.

<sup>39</sup> Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 334.

<sup>40</sup> Long, 58.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.



as the foundation. As Long concludes, “The distance from the nickel to the dime is the same as that from the dime to the nickel, but there is not such determinate proportion between creature and God.”<sup>43</sup>

It is the analogy of proper proportionality that safeguards the transcendence of the act of faith while not losing the intelligibility of that act of faith.<sup>44</sup> Transcendence is safeguarded because all that is said of God is proportioned to God as his own, without limit of potency and standing in no determined relation or direct proportion to the creature. Intelligibility is safeguarded because the middle term is the proportionate identity of perfection—a perfection limited by potency in creatures, and unlimited in God.

It is important to keep in mind that Long is not denying the importance of the analogy grounded in participation and the causal relation of effect to cause. His point is that, while this type of analogy is important, it is reducible to proportionality and, what is more, if I understand him correctly, that before there can be relation of one to another, there must be anything at all. “Analogy of relation is simply another term for what Thomas calls an improper analogy of proportion (for owing to the divine simplicity, God has no determinate relation to the creature.”<sup>45</sup> And the existence of anything other than unlimited, pure act is only possible if there is a correlative principle of limitation that limits act, that is, potency, since neither absolute nonbeing nor mere possibility could serve such a function. The existence of anything other than being itself can only be admitted if Parmenides is answered in his contention that being is self-identical and thus the many and change cannot be. The Aristotelian division of being in the act-potency distinction is the answer, for only this distinction makes possible the claim that any substance other than pure act exists, and implicit in this distinction is the notion that act is of itself unlimited.

This foundation provides Long with the firm footing to meet objections coming from two opposing ends of the spectrum. On the one hand, Long must meet the Scotistic objection to nonunivocity theories, namely, that analogous reasoning must be grounded in a simple, univo-

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 101–2.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

cal concept of being, which can apply to everything, at least insofar as it is, rather than is not, if one is going to avoid a whole range of claims in natural theology that involve one in sheer equivocation. In Scotus's view, at least some theological claims must be univocal for any subsequent analogous reasoning to avoid equivocation.<sup>46</sup> In a way, much of Long's book constitutes his implicit answer (as did Cajetan's book) and his attempt to safeguard the intelligibility of speech about God without positing a third thing for the middle term under which God and creatures fall.<sup>47</sup> By recalling Scotus's theory, however, we see how crucial is Long's extended argument that the concept of being is intrinsically analogous and possesses a "proportionate identity which is sufficient for reasoning" when applied to God and creatures.<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, Long's account of analogy also attempts to address more recent accusations made against St. Thomas's entire theological enterprise coming from the opposite direction, namely, the accusation that he has fallen into a sort of rationalism, or even ontotheology, in which God is understood as falling under the concept of being, as one being among many. Here, of course, one thinks of the Barth's famous accusation of analogy as the work of the Antichrist or the more recent accusation of Jean-Luc Marion in his *Dieu sans l'être* of Aquinas being a sort of "onto-theologian."<sup>49</sup> And although Marion later largely retracts this accusation, Long carefully shows the reader why any sort of rationalistic or ontotheological interpretation of Aquinas ought to be rejected.<sup>50</sup> He also clearly seems to intend to rescue the Cajetanian approach from the accusation that it involves a veiled univocal concept that ends in ontotheology.<sup>51</sup>

On this point Long defends the view that God is infinitely more

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<sup>46</sup> See Richard Cross's discussion of Scotus's univocity theory: *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33–39.


<sup>47</sup> Long, 102.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, trans. Thomas H. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>50</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'onto-théologie," *Revue thomiste* 95 (1995): 31–66; see also Brian Shanley, O.P., "St. Thomas Aquinas, Onto-Theology, and Marion," *The Thomist* 60 (1996): 617–25; Shanley, *The Thomist Tradition* (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 63–66.

<sup>51</sup> See Shanley, *The Thomist Tradition*, 54.

perfect and nobler than that of all limited being (i.e., proportionate and participated substances), and in such a way as to exceed all proportion.<sup>52</sup> “In God there is no potency to limit the perfection of act, and act is not self-limiting.”<sup>53</sup> We are without direct proportion when it comes to God; we have only a likeness of proportions, that is, proportionality. “We know God as unknown, and the divine perfections are always cognized by us only as incomprehending God.”<sup>54</sup> Sertillanges, in his eloquent defense of the analogy of proper proportionality, makes a similar point quoting Albert the Great, “God is at once unnamable and all-namable, and ‘Unnamable’ is the most beautiful of all His names, for it raises Him at the outset above every endeavor to speak of Him.”<sup>55</sup> 

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<sup>52</sup> Long, 31.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>55</sup> A. G. Sertillanges, O.P., *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy*, trans. Godfrey Anstruther, O.P. (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1931), 83.

**On Analogy, the Incarnation,  
and the Sacraments of the Church:  
Considerations from the  
*Tertia pars of the Summa theologiae***

ROGER W. NUTT  
*Ave Maria University*  
*Ave Maria, FL*

**Introduction**

IN THE THICK FOREST of the literature, the density of which is significantly clouded by the contributions of Thomists, it can be forgotten that, at its root, analogy is simply a means of comparing logical, mathematical, and metaphysical realities. From these comparisons, whose validity is founded upon the existence of similitudes, attributes, relations, and proportions in diverse realities, real, scientific conclusions can be made. Philosophers and theologians, of course, have had—and still do have—a great deal to say about how far these conclusions can be extended and which forms of analogical comparison lead to authentic knowledge about reality.<sup>1</sup>

Theological disquiet over analogy tends to settle into two primary collection areas. On the one hand, there is a substantial body of literature resulting from Karl Barth's famous charge that the analogy of being

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<sup>1</sup> In *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2004), Gregory Rocca traces the "commencement" of analogy. Rocca begins with the pre-Socratic understanding of analogy as "mathematical or geometric proportionality," moves to its extension to "the properly philosophical plane" (77) by Plato and Aristotle, and continues all the way to Aquinas and his interpreters by way of brief considerations of, inter alia, Augustine and Dionysius. See especially, 77–134.

was the “invention of the Antichrist.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, there is the so-called ontotheological critique of Aquinas and his commentators, especially Cardinal Cajetan on account of his reading of Aquinas on analogy.<sup>3</sup> In each of these cases the analogy of being is held in suspicion because of its apparent failure to respect revelation by reducing God vis-à-vis analogical comparison to the order of creaturely existence.<sup>4</sup>

In his most recent book, *Analogia Entis*, Steven Long defends Aquinas’s doctrine of the analogy of being by correcting a misreading of Aquinas on analogy that has become quasi-normative and hence unchallenged for more than a generation. Long identifies the fact “that a generation and more of historically nuanced and profound contemplation of the metaphysics and theology of Thomas Aquinas nonetheless has managed . . . to mislay the central tenets of the Angelic Doctor”<sup>5</sup> as his primary motivation for composing the book. These mislaid tenets are, Long argues, “precisely those that prove most essential to the metaphysician and the theologian: in particular, those that concern the intrinsic analogicity of being as divided by act and potency, an analogical division that is the foundation both for the doctrine of participation and for the causal demonstrations proving the truth of the proposition that God exists.”<sup>6</sup>

This essay is divided into two sections. In the first section I broadly sketch the key movements of Long’s argument in *Analogia Entis*. In the second section I consider a few points from St. Thomas’s theology of the Incarnation in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae* in light of my

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), xiii [I/1]. For a presentation of Barth’s position on the *analogia entis*, his engagement with Catholic interlocutors, and interpretations of his position, see Keith L. Johnson, “Reconsidering Barth’s Rejection of Przywara’s *Analogia Entis*,” *Modern Theology* 26 (2010): 632–50.

<sup>3</sup> For an example of the ontotheological critique of Cajetan’s reading of Aquinas on the analogy of being from a theological perspective, see Laurence Paul Hemming, “*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*: The Ontological Consequences of the Doctrine of Analogy,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 (2004): 118–29.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Joseph White, O.P., offers a helpful Thomistic response to these criticisms. He draws particular attention to the shortcomings of the ontotheological critique of Aquinas in its post-Kantian, Heideggerian forms. See White, *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2009), esp. 3–28.

<sup>5</sup> Steven A. Long, *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

preliminary sketch, as a means of testing Long's thesis. My purpose is to highlight the underappreciated significance that Aquinas's doctrine of analogy has within his articulation of the relation of the world to God in Christ and in the Church through the sacraments. Aquinas does not explicitly invoke the phrase "analogy of being" in the *tertia pars* when expounding the Incarnation and the sacraments, but his reasoning certainly presupposes a doctrine of analogy, without which the Incarnation and presence of God in the sacraments would reduce God to the order of created being.<sup>7</sup>

### **Analogia Entis: Interpretive Keys**

#### *Proper Proportionality in Aquinas*

During the final period of his life, especially when composing the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas, according to Long, seems to emphasize "analo-

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<sup>7</sup> In "*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*," Hemming appeals to the *tertia pars* to make the case, inspired by the ontotheological critique of Aquinas and his followers, that there is de facto no analogy of being in Aquinas. "I am going to take for my authority in this," Hemming writes,

the supposed author of the *analogia entis* (although he never himself uses the term), St Thomas Aquinas. The great fountainhead for study of the term *analogia* in St Thomas is Question 13 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. This alone should alert us that something is up with St Thomas' use of the terms *analogia* and *analogice*. Question 13 assumes such an importance in neo-Thomism and the crypto-Thomism that succeeded it because the two terms hardly appear anywhere else in the whole of the *Summa*. So it was not very important for Thomas. Moreover, and to the chagrin of the new breed of analogists, it does not turn up once just exactly where it should if all the contemporary theorizing on analogy really did have its home in Aquinas—in the *Tertia Pars*, the treatise on Christ and on the Sacraments (119–20).

What I hope to demonstrate in the second part of this essay is that while Aquinas does not specifically invoke the analogy of being when making metaphysical-comparisons in the *tertia pars*, his causal and participatory analogies—which are frequent—about the Incarnation and sacraments presuppose, as Long implies, the prior foundation of the analogy of proper proportionality as the analogy of being. Hemming fails to recognize that were this not the case, God's presence and causal activity in Christ and the sacraments, would be founded upon a univocal notion being. It is precisely the analogy of being, properly understood, that enables Aquinas to avoid this mistake.

gy of attribution and proportion,” while in the earlier work, *De veritate*, proper proportionality was put forward by the Angelic Doctor “as the analogy of being and as alone capable of avoiding the error of affirming God to have a determined relation to creatures.”<sup>8</sup>

If the position of *De veritate* on the analogy of proper proportionality as the analogy of being is abandoned, Long highlights the emergence of problems that vitiate the internal consistency of metaphysical and theological doctrine. Because there is no “strict analogy of proportion between the creature and God,” analogy of simple proportion when set forth absolutely creates obvious difficulties for the philosopher and the theologian alike. Likewise, with analogy of attribution a similar issue arises. Created effects enable arguments to be made for God’s existence and nature, but the existence of creatures is not, *de facto*, the existence of God. Long argues that the analogy of being qua proper proportionality, while not substituting for “causal analysis” is, nevertheless, “the foundation and precondition for causal resolution in God.”<sup>9</sup>

### *Analogy and the Problem of the One and the Many*

Aristotle’s response to the monism of Parmenides and Thomas’s appropriation and development of this response hold a pivotal place in Long’s presentation.<sup>10</sup> The division of being into act and potency makes it possible to forge a coherent solution to the problem of the one and the many: “As the potency to laugh,” Long explains, “is to actually laughing, so is the potency to thought to actually thinking . . . yet laughing is not thinking . . . There is a likeness of diverse *rationes* of act and potency.”<sup>11</sup> This point is of crucial importance because “analogy of proper propor-

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>10</sup> In *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), John F. Wippel summarizes Thomas’s understanding of Parmenidean monism as follows: “On the ontological level or the level of being itself, it seems that being cannot be divided from being. It cannot be divided from itself by being, since it already is being. Viewed from this perspective, it is simply one. Nor can it be divided from itself by nonbeing, since this is nothingness. Therefore it cannot be divided at all, and all is one” (69).

<sup>11</sup> Long, *Analogia Entis*, 18.

tionality does not place creature and God indifferently under being, but rather affirms that the actuality of God is infinitely more perfect and nobler than that of the creature.” God and creatures are thus not placed (or tied together) in proportionate degrees of being because the being of God “is wholly free of *potentia*, the proportion to which alone accounts for limitation in the perfection of being.”<sup>12</sup>

This point goes to the very heart of both the Barthian concern and the ontotheological critique. Long establishes that God is not compared to creaturely being according to the creaturely mode of being, but as free from all potency, and hence in no way reducible to or participatory in the creaturely realm of *potentia*.

A key text of Aquinas that Long develops in defense of his thesis is *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 11, which asks, “Is knowledge predicated of God and men purely equivocally?” In this text Thomas states various ways in which knowledge is “predicated” analogously, or according to proportion, of both God and creatures. According to the one form, Thomas articulates the proportion of the analogates to each other in terms of numeric standing (such as double) or attribution (such as health). “Nothing can be predicated analogously of God and creature according to this type of proportion,” Aquinas declares, “for no creature has such a relation to God that it could determine a divine perfection.”

Another type of analogy, however, that Thomas recognizes in *De veritate*, q. 2, is when a similitude such as “sight is predicated of bodily sight and of the intellect because understanding is in the mind as sight is in the eye.”<sup>13</sup> In this type of analogy, Aquinas explains that “no definite relation is involved between the things which have something in common analogously, so there is no reason why some name cannot be predicated analogously of God and creature in this manner.”<sup>14</sup> Aquinas here makes the very clarification—*by way of analogy*—that critics of the analogy of being mistakenly accuse him of transgressing.<sup>15</sup> As Long

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>15</sup> “No matter how dressed up . . . the *analogia entis* will simply not do the work in contemporary theology that all too many theologians want it to do,” Laurence Hemming argues. Why? Failing to appreciate that proper proportionality does not entail a “definite relation” between the common analogates, Hemming thus views the



demonstrates, proper proportionality is, by its nature, the very avoidance of any direct dependence of the nature of God on the world.

*Revelation and the Analogy of Being*

In the final chapter of *Analogia Entis*, Long extends his meditation on analogy to the realm of faith and theological discourse. On the analogical nature of revealed concepts, Long cites Maritain from the *Degrees of Knowledge*, who argues that

in the knowledge of faith it is . . . from the very heart of the deity that the whole process of knowledge starts out . . . That is to say, from the source, through the free generosity of God, derives the choice of objects and of concepts . . . which God alone knows to be analogical signs of what is hidden in Him, and of which he makes use in order to speak of Himself to us in our own language.

Maritain continues: "Once designated by revelation as likeness of what is hidden in God, the mind perceives that such things as paternity and filiation . . . have the value of the analogy of proper proportionality."<sup>16</sup> The importance of this insight by Maritain cannot be stressed enough: the knowledge communicated in revelation, issuing from divine wisdom, indicates certain likenesses or analogies between creatures and God. Revelation also communicates the otherness of God, thus revelation presupposes the analogy of proper proportionality. As a result, Long observes that "the analogy of being is necessarily presupposed by divine revelation, just as the existence of creatures is presupposed by their real relation to God."<sup>17</sup>

Revealed likenesses like paternity and filiation cannot be understood according to any analogy of proportion because the divine paternity and filiation are infinite and hence in no way bear any proportion to

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*analogia entis* as an "attempt to 'tie the being of God, man and the world' together." Hemming, "*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*," 119.

<sup>16</sup> Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald Phelan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 257.

<sup>17</sup> Long, *Analogia Entis*, 104.

created paternity and filiation. Likewise, paternity and filiation cannot be attributive analogies because God does not stand in any determined relation to created, participated paternity and filiation. As a result, the analogies offered in revelation are four-term analogies of proper proportionality: as the human father is to his offspring, God is eternally to the eternal Son. In both cases the paternity and filiation are real, but God's paternity and filiation in no way participates in creaturely paternity and filiation.

### Summary

Three central movements in Long's work have been highlighted in this all too brief summary: namely, the foundational importance of the analogy of proper proportionality in Aquinas, the role that proper proportionality has in Aquinas's development of Aristotle's response to Parmendeian monism, and finally the use of likenesses by revelation under the presupposition of the analogy of being to communicate knowledge of God.

### Analogy and the *Tertia pars*

In the second part of this essay, I attempt to test Long's thesis in light of a few texts from the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae* in which Aquinas sets forth various analogies to explain the Incarnation and the sacraments. These texts are not considered by Long in *Analogia Entis*, nor are they generally discussed, for obvious reasons, in philosophical literature in which analogy is taken up.<sup>18</sup> In these texts Aquinas does not explicitly put forth the analogy of proper proportionality as the analogy of being, but the analogous reasoning that he engages in is highly consistent with Long's contention that causative and participatory conclusions presuppose the foundation of proper proportionality as the analogy of being. Aquinas's doctrinal theology can and should be used as an important measure of the claims of Thomist philosophers about his thinking on

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<sup>18</sup> In the first of his formidable three-volume work on analogy, Santiago Ramirez, O.P. has a detailed section on the use of analogy in sacred theology, which includes references and application to Aquinas's theology of the hypostatic union and the sacraments in the *tertia pars*. See Ramirez, *Opera Omnia*, vol. II, *De Analogia* (Madrid: Instituto de Filología "Luis Vives," 1972), 1736ff [esp. 792 and 793].

analogy; it is indeed hard to imagine that St. Thomas would abandon or contradict his deepest philosophical sensitivities when seeking to render intelligible the articles of faith.<sup>19</sup>

### *Analogy and the Hypostatic Union*

In the very first article of the first question of the *tertia pars*, Thomas considers the fittingness of the Incarnation. Each of the objections opposes the fittingness of the Incarnation on account of some aspect of the perfection of the Divine *esse* such that it would seem unfitting that the Being who is eternal, infinite, uncreated spirit, and incomprehensible unite to itself some being of a lower order. These considerations are not far from the problem of the one and many, which, as we saw above, Thomas solves with the analogy of proper proportionality.

Aquinas roots the fittingness of the Incarnation in the very essence of the divine being itself, offering an analogy to establish his argument. Fittingness, Aquinas explains, is what belongs to each thing by reason of its nature: as reason is fitting to man “because he is of a rational nature,” God by his very nature is goodness.<sup>20</sup> “Hence,” Aquinas argues, “what belongs to the essence of goodness befits God. But it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others” and “it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature” and therefore it was fitting for the Word to personally

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<sup>19</sup> The examples below from the *tertia pars* are not meant to be exhaustive; many more could be provided. They are offered simply as a sampling of Aquinas’s analogical reasoning in relation to Long’s thesis.

<sup>20</sup> Seemingly unawares of the careful qualifications and many analogies that Thomas uses to explain the fittingness—not arbitrariness or absolute nature—of the Incarnation according to the divine goodness, Hemming writes: “Thomas does not resolve his theology of the incarnation or of the sacraments through a doctrine of analogy, and neither should we. He does not do this for a very good reason—he believes that the incarnation is effected by divine fiat—that is to say, because God just chooses it to be that way, rather than because they thereby indicate an already analogical tie between the being of things and the being of God.” See Hemming, “*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*,” 120. Yet as early as the *Scriptum* on Lombard’s *Sentences* Aquinas explicitly invokes analogy to explain these very theological realities. “Sacramentum non dividitur per sacramenta veteris et novae legis sicut genus per species,” Aquinas clarifies, “*sed sicut analogum* in suas partes, ut sanum in habens sanitatem, et significans eam” (emphasis added). In *IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 1., s. 3, ad 5.

unite himself to a human nature.<sup>21</sup> The analogy used here is based on what is fitting in relation to what follows most distinctively from diverse natures: as reason is fitting to rational nature, so too the highest form of self-communication, hypostatic or personal union, is fitting to the divine goodness.

Thomas's teaching on the fittingness of the union between God and man in Christ fits well with Long's thesis insofar as the very *ratio* for the fittingness is rooted in the perfect goodness of the divine *esse*.

### *The Nature of Christ's Perfections*

Aquinas moves logically from the fittingness of the Incarnation to the metaphysical implications of the hypostatic union. In a brief article in the second question, which treats the mode of the union, Thomas establishes a point that is central to Long's argument, namely, that the union of God and man in Christ does not place God in a determined relation to the creature. The *ratio* of this position seems to rely on the division of being into act and potency: the substantial union terminating in an infinite person constitutes the highest possible union without effecting change in God because the term of the union, the Eternal Word, exists in full act. The union, in short, does not activate any potency in the Word because there is no potency in the Word. Speaking of the relation between God and creatures in light of the Incarnation, Aquinas succinctly states that the relation "is not really in God, but only in our way of thinking, since it does not arise from any change in God."<sup>22</sup> Because God is *actus purus* the change in the Incarnation is on the part of the created nature because the participation in God on the part of Christ's human nature is a union with a being who is pure act prior to the union.

Aquinas tests this conclusion by the consideration of the special fittingness of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. The spe-

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<sup>21</sup> *Summa theologiae* III, q. 1, a. 1. "Unde quidquid pertinet ad rationem boni, conveniens est Deo. Pertinet autem ad rationem boni ut se aliis communicet, ut patet per Dionysium, IV cap. de Div. Nom. Unde ad rationem summi boni pertinet quod summo modo se creaturae communicet." Translations from the *tertia pars* are taken from volume 4 of *St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologica*, 5 vols., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, cited hereafter as *ST*.

<sup>22</sup> *ST* III, q. 2, a. 7: "non autem est realiter in Deo, sed secundum rationem tantum, quia non nascitur secundum mutationem Dei."

cial fittingness of the Incarnation of the Second Person is defended by Aquinas on the analogy of the likeness that exists between a concept in the mind of a craftsman and the work that he produces. “The Person of the Son,” Aquinas reasons, “Who is the Word of God, has a certain common agreement with all creatures, because the word of the craftsman . . . is an exemplar likeness of whatever is made by him.” This likeness, however, is not participated by the Word, even in the hypostatic union. Aquinas explains this important point as follows:

By the non-participated and personal union of the Word with a creature, it was fitting that the creature should be restored in order to its eternal and unchangeable perfection; for the craftsman by the intelligible form of his art, whereby he fashioned his handiwork, restores it when it has fallen into ruin.<sup>23</sup>

This passage is significant because Aquinas posits diverse *rationes* of participatory likenesses of creatures to God, yet the diversity of these likenesses is intelligible only by analogy insofar as the restoration of creaturely friendship with God in Christ is predicated on that fact that Christ enjoys these perfections in a prior, manner according to their full actuality.

Thomas further identifies the Incarnate Word’s nonparticipatory primacy by arguing that the comparison of the grace of the union and the grace enjoyed by Christ’s members is not reducible to a common genus. Thomas ponders an objection that asserts that since habitual grace is common “to Christ and others” while the grace of union is exclusive to Christ, habitual grace must therefore be prior in thought to Christ’s unique grace of union. Yet, in comparing Christ’s grace of union to habitual grace, and hence Christ’s uniqueness to that which can be commonly predicated, Thomas declares that “the grace of union is not in the same genus as ha-

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<sup>23</sup> *ST III*, q. 3, a. 8. “Ipsius autem personae filii, qui est verbum Dei, attenditur, uno quidem modo, communis convenientia ad totam creaturam. Quia verbum artificis, idest conceptus eius, est similitudo exemplaris eorum quae ab artifice fiunt. Unde verbum Dei, quod est aeternus conceptus eius, est similitudo exemplaris totius creaturae . . . ita per unionem verbi ad creaturam non participativam sed personalem, conveniens fuit reparari creaturam in ordine ad aeternam et immobilem perfectionem, nam et artifex per formam artis conceptam qua artificiatum condidit, ipsum, si collapsum fuerit, restaurat.”

bitual grace; but is above all genera even as the Divine Person Himself.”<sup>24</sup> Thomas contends, therefore, that the hypostatic union of the Son with his human nature is “prior in the order of nature to habitual grace” and that “the habitual grace of Christ is understood to follow this union, as light follows the sun.”<sup>25</sup> In this instance, again, Thomas posits grace in a sense that is intrinsically analogical and realized in diverse *rationes*.

### *Analogy and Christological Naming*

Aquinas’s method of Christological naming when appropriating terms or offices that apply to both Christ and others presents a further case that is worthy of exploration in light of Long’s thesis.<sup>26</sup> Thomas explores the theological validity of applying biblical offices such as head, priest, and mediator to Christ. An article is devoted to each of these that is framed by an *Utrum sit proprium Christo* question.<sup>27</sup> *Proprium*, as Thomas uses it in these cases, is meant to identify whether or not there is something unique, particular, or exclusive to Christ’s standing as head, priest, or mediator. In other words: are Christ’s headship, priesthood, and mediation merely one privileged realization of these offices among many other subordinate realizations, or rather is there something unique and exclusive to Christ’s exercise of these offices?

In each case, Thomas affirms that bishops as heads of churches, Levites, New Testament priests, and so on, share these offices in a fashion that is extrinsic, participatory, and subordinate to Christ’s intrinsic, singular standing as head, priest, and mediator. These offices seem to be attributive, with Christ, as man, standing as the primary analogate. Yet, I wonder in relation to Long’s argument, in what sense attributive analogies like these necessarily presuppose the prior recognition that Christ’s divine perfection and grace of union are fully actual and nonparticipatory such that his standing as the primary analogate in these cases is read or

<sup>24</sup> *ST III*, q. 7, a. 13, ad. 3. “Gratia autem unionis non est in genere gratiae habitualis, sed est super omne genus, sicut et ipsa divina persona.”

<sup>25</sup> *ST III*, q. 7, a. 13. “Unde gratia habitualis Christi intelligitur ut consequens hanc unionem, sicut splendor solem.”

<sup>26</sup> For a full treatment of the content and method of Aquinas’s treatment of Christ’s names, see Henk Schoot, *Christ, the ‘Name’ of God: Thomas Aquinas on Naming Christ* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., the representative articles in *ST III*, qq. 8, 22, and 26.

translated through his ontological and nonparticipatory uniqueness as the Incarnate Word? Christ's priesthood can be participated in by others, but Christ's own exercise of the office is unique and nonparticipatory. In addition, Thomas treats each of these offices only after treating the mode of the union and Christ's perfections. Christ as man, of course, has a determined relation to creatures, but his standing as unique head, mediator, and priest is derivative of the grace of union, which itself is rooted in the communicability of the divine *esse* as the highest good.

*The Instrumentality of Christ's Human Nature and the Sacraments*

One of the most frequent and common analogies that Aquinas deploys in the *tertia pars* is the likeness that exists between the integral unity of a (matter-form) composite entity and the unity of motion in a composite action performed by an agent who uses an instrument.<sup>28</sup> Thomas first introduces this analogy in the *prima secundae* of the *Summa theologiae* when treating composite human acts. He then extends the analogy to the relation of Christ's human nature and the sacraments to the Word. "A whole is composed of matter and form (e.g. man, who is one natural being, though he has many parts, is composed of soul and body)," Thomas explains,

so, in human acts, the act of a lower power is in the position of matter in regard to the act of a higher power, in so far as the lower power acts in virtue of the higher power moving it: for thus also the act of the first mover is as the form in regard to the act of its instrument. Hence it is evident that command and the commanded act are one human act, just as a whole is one, yet in its parts, many.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> On St. Thomas's use of analogy in his sacramental theology, see Ruggero Biagi, *La Causalità dell'umanità di Cristo e dei Sacramenti nella "Summa Theologiae" di S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano 1985), esp. 25–27. For a general treatment of analogy in sacramental theology, see Antonio Miralles, *I Sacramenti Cristiani: Trattato Generale* (Rome: EDUSC, 2008), 117ff.

<sup>29</sup> *ST I-II*, q. 17, a. 4: "aliquid totum componitur ex materia et forma, ut homo ex anima et corpore, qui est unum ens naturale, licet habeat multitudinem partium; ita etiam in actibus humanis, actus inferioris potentiae materialiter se habet ad actum superioris, in quantum inferior potentia agit in virtute superioris moventis ipsam, sic enim et actus moventis primi formaliter se habet ad actum instrumenti. Unde patet quod imperium et actus imperatus sunt unus actus humanus, sicut quoddam totum est unum, sed est secundum partes multa."

This analogy of the unity of matter and form in composite substances and composite human acts serves as a foundation to which Thomas refers many times in the *tertia pars*, each time specifying the unique way in which Christ and the sacraments realize in diverse ways the reality of instrumental efficient causality. For example, in the seventh question of the *tertia pars*, Thomas puts forward an objection arguing that Christ's human nature did not enjoy habitual grace because instruments do not act by way of their own habitual operations, but by the habitual operations of the principal agent.<sup>30</sup> To this objection, Thomas affirms the instrumentality of Christ's human nature but qualifies the nature of its instrumentality:

The humanity of Christ is the instrument of the Godhead—not, indeed, an inanimate instrument, which nowise acts, but is merely acted upon; but an instrument animated by a rational soul, which is so acted upon as to act. And hence the nature of the action demanded that he should have habitual grace.<sup>31</sup>

Christ's human nature is a true instrument insofar as it works to produce effects in a unified motion with a higher agent, but it is a unique type of instrument. Aquinas takes up this point several other times in the *tertia pars* to explain how Christ's human nature contributes in the order of efficient causality to his miracles,<sup>32</sup> salvation through the passion,<sup>33</sup> and the causal efficiency of the sacraments.<sup>34</sup> Thomas explains the inner workings of instrumental efficient causality as follows:

what is moved by another has a twofold action—one which it has from its own form—the other, which it has inasmuch as it is moved by another; thus the operation of an axe of itself is to

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<sup>30</sup> *ST III*, q. 7, a. 1, ob. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *ST III*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 3: “humanitas Christi est instrumentum divinitatis, non quidem sicut instrumentum inanimatum, quod nullo modo agit sed solum agitur, sed tanquam instrumentum animatum anima rationali, quod ita agit quod etiam agitur. Et ideo, ad convenientiam actionis, oportuit eum habere gratiam habitualement.”

<sup>32</sup> See *ST III*, q. 43, a. 2.

<sup>33</sup> See *ST III*, q. 48, a. 6.

<sup>34</sup> See *ST III*, q. 62, a. 1.



cleave; but inasmuch as it is moved by the craftsman, its operation is to make benches.<sup>35</sup>

He concludes from this that “in Christ the human nature has its proper form and power whereby it acts”<sup>36</sup> as does the divine nature. In the divine plan Christ’s human nature causes salvation by its knowledge and love as the instrument of Word.

Finally, in addition to making an analogy between the unity of a matter-form composite and the motion of a principal agent and instrument, Thomas clarifies that the instrumentality of the sacraments is analogous in relation to the instrumentality of Christ’s human nature. “The instrumental cause works not by the power of its form,” Thomas explains, “but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent . . . And it is thus that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace: for they are instituted by God to be employed for the purpose of [causing] grace.”<sup>37</sup> This analogy allows Thomas to trace the causal dependency of the sacraments as causes of grace from the sacramental celebration itself back to Christ’s passion and ultimately to the fullness that he enjoys as a result of the hypostatic union. “An instrument is two-fold,” Thomas argues,

the one, separate, as a stick, for instance; the other, united, as a hand. Moreover, the separate instrument is moved by means of the united instrument, as a stick by the hand. Now the principal efficient cause of grace is God Himself, in comparison with Whom Christ’s humanity is as a united instrument, whereas the

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<sup>35</sup> *ST III*, q. 19, a. 1: “actio eius quod movetur ab altero, est duplex, una quidem quam habet secundum propriam formam; alia autem quam habet secundum quod movetur ab alio. Sicut securis operatio secundum propriam formam est incisio, secundum autem quod movetur ab artifice, operatio eius est facere scamnum.”

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* “Sic igitur in Christo humana natura habet propriam formam et virtutem per quam operatur et similiter divina.”

<sup>37</sup> *ST III*, q. 62, a. 1. “Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae, sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento, sed principali agenti, sicut lectus non assimilatur securi, sed arti quae est in mente artificis. Et hoc modo sacramenta novae legis gratiam causant, adhibentur enim ex divina ordinatione ad gratiam in eis causandam.”

sacrament is as a separate instrument. Consequently, the saving power must needs be derived by the sacraments from Christ's Godhead through His humanity.<sup>38</sup>

This demonstrates that the participation of the sacraments in the efficient causation of grace is rooted by St. Thomas in the analogical realization of diverse and subordinate forms of instrumentality, each of which presupposes the unique, fullness of grace enjoyed by the Incarnate Word.

### Summary

These examples should not be taken as demonstrations of the analogy of being as such. However, such consistent and developed use of analogical reasoning by St. Thomas in the *tertia pars* evidences his commitment to explain the participation in the life of God through the Incarnation and sacraments in a way that presupposes Long's central claim about Thomas's ongoing commitment to proper proportionality, namely, that proper proportionality safeguards causal and participatory doctrines from the error of placing God in a determined relation to the world.

### General Conclusion

To the extent that revealed doctrines such as the Incarnation and the sacraments possess an intelligibility that renders them capable of meaningful speech and thought, such doctrines must avoid internal metaphysical contradiction. In *Analogia Entis*, Steven Long gives the philosopher and the theologian a tool suitably forged for just that task. It is my contention that the metaphysically exacting doctrines the Incarnation and sacramental causality are articulated by St. Thomas in the *tertia pars* in a fashion that presupposes Long's claim about Aquinas's doctrine of

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<sup>38</sup> *ST* III, q. 62, a. 5. "Est autem duplex instrumentum, unum quidem separatum, ut baculus; aliud autem coniunctum, ut manus. Per instrumentum autem coniunctum movetur instrumentum separatum, sicut baculus per manum. Principalis autem causa efficiens gratiae est ipse Deus, ad quem comparatur humanitas Christi sicut instrumentum coniunctum, sacramentum autem sicut instrumentum separatum. Et ideo oportet quod virtus salutifera derivetur a divinitate Christi per eius humanitatem in ipsa sacramenta."

the analogy of being. Those of us who work in the various branches of theology owe Long a special debt of gratitude for demonstrating the way in which Thomas's metaphysical doctrine of analogy safeguards the intelligibility of faith and the meaning of revelation. **N&V**

## Book Reviews

**The Betrayal of Charity: The Sins That Sabotage Divine Love** by Matthew Levering (*Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011*), x + 219 pp.

IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE I daresay one would be hard pressed to find a word that simultaneously is invoked with more frequency and yet is more vacuous than the word “love.” Everyone knows that “God is love” and that the Christian life can be summed up in dual injunction “love God and neighbor.” Yet, for a generation at least, since the “triumph of the therapeutic” first noted by Philip Reiff and the unfortunate popularity of Joseph Fletcher’s situation ethic, the prominence of love in the moral life has been evacuated of substantive content and replaced by emotive feeling and sentiment.

Matthew Levering, a professor of theology at Mundelein Seminary, sets out in this work to recover the substance of love for moral theology. Yet the path he travels is not, as the title might suggest, a genealogy of the contemporary world’s betrayal of love. Rather, he takes as his guide St. Thomas Aquinas, for whom charity was central to the Christian life. Specifically and intriguingly, Levering considers Aquinas’s treatment of charity by way of that which Aquinas posits as the opposite of charity: hatred, sloth, envy, discord, and so forth. Indeed, the eight chapters of this book each focus on one such practice opposed to love.

Organizing the work thus has a certain appeal, insofar as to both undergraduate readers and seminarians Aquinas can appear somewhat daunting. Approaching his ethic in this manner is sure to diminish the trepidation of many a novice reader, and so this work may serve as a salutary entry into the splendors of Aquinas. Moreover, insofar as we are in the midst of a minor renaissance in the interest in sin—here I am thinking of a number of recent publications on the seven deadly sins as


well as notable marketing campaigns (that have appealed to those sins as selling points!)—there is little question that approaching love by way of its opposite has a certain cultural appeal.

This work is not simply a treatment of Aquinas, however, for into the conversation on love and its opposite, Levering invites a host of contemporary voices. For example, Levering takes up the much-regarded arguments of Regina Schwartz and Laurel Schneider concerning the violent and imperial character of monotheism in a chapter on charity and violence. In a chapter on hatred he engages Harold Bloom's argument that the biblical God is a sadist, and in a chapter on sloth he treats the postmodern claim that true love must not expect or intend reciprocity as that argument is articulated by Timothy Jackson, who suggests Christian love should be severed from faith in the resurrection and life after death. His treatment of scandal, a much-neglected area of contemporary moral theology and ethical life in general, brings Thomas into conversation the work of René Girard.

It should be noted that the book is not a monograph carefully and sequentially developing a sustained argument. Rather, it is a collection of independent essays that hold together particularly well. For some, this will be a weakness of the book. The topic of any given chapter is not carried over and developed further in later chapters. As such, each chapter serves as an introduction and pathway to deeper research for scholars so interested. Several of the chapters in particular call out for further exploration and development. Consider, for example, the chapter on love and war. Levering chooses to approach this much-belabored topic in a novel and quite helpful manner. He engages it by taking up Aquinas's interpretation of Scripture around the subject of Christian participation in war and comparing that with the well-known pacifist John Howard Yoder's interpretation of Scripture. The result is a fascinating study that, while not pretending to resolve the issue or even fully treat Yoder's position, helpfully identifies important exegetical moves that underlie this most contentious and important debate within the Church. A second example of the novelty and helpfulness of Levering's approach is provided by his treatment of envy. Here again, Levering focuses on the reading of Scripture. This time, he takes up contemporary rabbinic interpretations of various instances of envy in the Hebrew Bible and compares that with Aquinas's reading of the Bible on envy. The re-

sult is a wonderful example of how contemporary Christian exegesis can benefit from engaging contemporary Jewish thinkers.

If this book's appeal may be lessened for some because it is not a monograph-length argument, as I read it I was increasingly convinced that it is precisely the collected character of the work that is one of its strengths. It is the kind of book that I could (and will) use in a seminar-type classroom setting. Because each chapter can stand on its own merit, it can easily be used in an undergraduate or even seminary context where workload considerations can sometimes preclude using monograph length treatments. The clever decision to engage Aquinas and the seemingly overexposed to the point of triteness topic of love by means of sins opposed to love, and to use it as a foil for such engagement with contemporary "hot" issues and authors, results in a text that is quite engaging. Furthermore, the space each chapter leaves for further development is exactly what I need to initiate discussion, stimulate intellectual engagement, and prompt further research.

In a world dominated by utilitarian and deontological modes of moral reflection, where sin is thought more interesting than holiness and the tradition downright dull, it is works such as this that just might nurture a new generation of persons interested in character and virtue and who find the tradition, and thinkers like Aquinas, relevant, interesting, and even insightful. 

*Daniel M. Bell Jr.*

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary  
Columbia, SC

**The World as It Could Be: Catholic Social Thought for a New Generation** by Thomas D. Williams (*New York: Crossroad, 2011*), xxiii + 230 pp.

THOMAS WILLIAMS has written a readable book to explain many aspects of Catholic social thought and Catholic social doctrine (CSD). The latter term, Williams explains, is used to characterize teachings put forth by the Magisterium of the Church. The former "refers to the broader discussion among Catholic scholars that takes this doctrine as its inspiration and permanent reference point" (5). Williams is at his best in ex-

plaining the significant contribution that Pope Benedict XVI's first and third encyclicals, *Deus Caritas Est* and *Caritas in Veritate*, have made to the development of CSD. Williams is also good at arguing for several changes long overdue in the presentation of CSD. It is time for Catholic scholars and the lay faithful to recognize that CSD is found not only in the papal writings known as the social encyclicals, but also in other documents of the Magisterium such as Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Evangelium vitae*, and his apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*. It is also time for all Catholics to recognize that abortion is an issue pertaining to social justice and should be a part of any discussion of CSD.

Williams has insightful chapters on the common good, the use of force, capital punishment, economic development, distributive justice, global governance as opposed to global government, the great good of religious liberty, and the case for state limitation of religious liberty. These chapters are written in such a way that both scholars and non-scholars could benefit from reading them. Surprisingly, Williams's chapter on the dignity of the human person is deficient because of what it fails to say about the lifelong task of living in accordance with one's dignity. I would also argue that Williams does not sufficiently bring out the connection: between the practice of virtue and the attainment of the common good. In other words, he does not adequately explain what Pope John Paul II meant by saying that "we shall reach justice through evangelization."<sup>1</sup> In addition, Williams does not integrate his fine comments on integral human development, as understood by Pope Paul VI and Pope Benedict XVI, into his chapter on the common good.

Williams begins his reflection on *Deus Caritas Est* (DCE) by noting that it will never be included in the list of social encyclicals, even though Pope Benedict's "careful consideration of the social question in light of the theological virtue of charity, offered an original contribution to Catholic social doctrine and merits serious study" (161). Williams, of course, is well aware that the Church from its very beginnings has encouraged individuals and the entire ecclesial community to place themselves at the service of their neighbors. This service (*diakonia*) or charity is the necessary complement to the Church's mission to proclaim God's word (*keryg-*

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<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, "Address to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops," Puebla, Mexico, January 28, 1979, III, 4.

*ma-martyria*) and to administer the sacraments (*leitourgia*). What is new is grounding the Church's modern social teaching in the virtue of charity.

I would note that this is not a new thought for Pope Benedict XVI. In 1986, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger discussed the origin of the Church's social doctrine in the *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of which he was the head. Ratzinger wrote, "the Church's social teaching is born of the encounter of the Gospel message and of its demands (summarized in the supreme commandment of love of God and neighbor in justice) with the problems emanating from the life of society" (§72). CSD then gives valuable guidance by helping people come to know what love and justice require in the various circumstances of life, knowledge that would escape many people without instruction. St. Augustine also underscores the difficulty of carrying out the commandment to love one's neighbor: "From this commandment arise the duties pertaining to human society, about which it is difficult not to err."<sup>2</sup> Because of the difficulty in recognizing what love requires in the various circumstances of life, Pope Benedict has put great emphasis on the role of truth, attained by faith and reason, in guiding the exercise of charity.

Williams does a good job of explaining other aspects of the Church's social teaching contained in DCE. Through careful selections of quotations from the encyclical, Williams demonstrates Benedict's view that CSD is a gift to every society. For example, he quotes Benedict's statement that the Church "wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly" (166, §28). Williams also notes Pope Benedict's view that CSD "argues on the basis of reason and natural law, namely, on the basis of what is in accord with the nature of every human being" (166, §28). What Williams does not explain is how CSD can ultimately be rooted in the theological virtue of charity, as it is, and still appeal to all people of good will on the basis of reason and natural law, as it does.

The last chapter of the book is a substantial reflection on Pope Bene-

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<sup>2</sup> St. Augustine, *The Catholic and Manichean Ways of Life (De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae)* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1966), §49, 40.



dict's *Caritas in Veritate*. Williams begins by highlighting Benedict's view "that *Populorum progressio* (PP) deserves to be considered the *Rerum novarum* of the present age" (171, CV, §8). Pope Benedict especially admires Paul VI's 1967 encyclical because it conveys two truths that are important for the future of CSD. "The first is that the whole Church, in all her being and acting—when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity—is engaged in promoting integral human development" (174, CV, §11). This means that the Church's fidelity to its threefold mission is crucial for implementing its social doctrine, the heart and soul of which is integral human development. The second truth in PP is that integral development "concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension" (174, CV, §11). This term "integral" means that development is not limited to the provision of economic goods, but includes the realm of spiritual goods for each and every individual throughout the world. In fact, Pope Paul VI teaches that "life in Christ is the first and principal factor in development" (cf. PP, §16), meaning that integral development should aim at the greatest possible perfection for every single person, in addition to overcoming poverty, disease, unemployment, and ignorance. Williams quotes Benedict, saying, "This is the central message of *Populorum Progressio* valid for today and for all time" (174, CV, §18).

Integral development, of course, needs the contributions of people motivated by love in truth. Otherwise, they would never think that working for development means bringing Christ into people's lives. *Caritas in Veritate* "is the principle around which the Church's social doctrine turns" (§6). Both faith and reason discern the truth by which love takes its bearings.

Pope Benedict's linking of truth to love is right on the mark, argues Williams. "Those who would sacrifice truth in favor of love find that they have forfeited both. When love loses its moorings to truth, it takes on a radical subjectivism where good intentions have no objective reference in action" (177).

Given what Williams says about "integral development as the kernel of Catholic social thought" (175), one would expect to see it integrated into his chapter on the common good. Williams does direct his readers' attention to the definition of the common good found in *Gaudium et spes*: "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment [better trans-

lated as perfection] more fully and more easily” (§26). Williams could have said that one important way of explaining the fulfilment or perfection of individuals is with the concept of integral human development. Williams does make a statement that could induce his readers to think about the dependence of integral development upon the attainment of the common good. “Attention to the common good, far from destroying the particular good of persons, is essential to it. Just as the common good comprises the particular good of persons, so the particular good necessarily is achieved through attention to the common good” (15). This implies that establishing certain social conditions—such as an economy that produces enough jobs, good family life and authentic education—is crucial for promoting integral development.

Williams’s great appreciation for the concept of integral human development could have suggested to him a more inclusive understanding of the dignity of the human person. He grasps the permanent or ontological character of human dignity, but does not see that dignity is also something to be achieved over a lifetime. According to Catholic teaching, people have dignity because they are created in the image and likeness of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ and destined for eternal life in communion with God. The threefold foundation for human dignity is both unshakable and instructive. No act of the human person can remove this foundation. Even when people commit the worst sins and crimes and suffer diminished physical and spiritual capacities, they retain human dignity. While this Christian teaching about the permanent character of human dignity is often mentioned and acknowledged by informed Christians, rarely do Catholics hear that human dignity is also a goal or an achievement, or otherwise stated, is in need of perfection. Nevertheless, this is the clear implication of the threefold foundation of human dignity and the explicit teaching of *Gaudium et Spes*. Human beings have to achieve communion with God by struggling against evil and striving for holiness. *Gaudium et Spes* says that the dignity of the person “is rooted and perfected in God” (*in ipso Deo fundetur et perficiatur*, §21).

The council makes the same point when discussing the obligation of all to obey their conscience. “Man has a law in his heart inscribed by God, to obey which is his very dignity, and according to which he will be

judged.”<sup>3</sup> The text implies that people diminish their dignity by not obeying their conscience. Everyday speech captures this human possibility in the expression, “to act beneath one’s dignity.” In sum, all people continually *achieve* or realize their dignity by seeking the truth, obeying their conscience, resisting sin, practicing virtue and repenting when they succumb to temptation. In other words, dignity is not only a permanent possession, unaffected by the way people live. All have to obey their informed conscience both to avoid acting beneath their dignity and to achieve it.

So the dignity of an individual may continually be diminished by a life of sin or, alternatively, it may progressively unfold and flourish over a lifetime of seeking perfection. In *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII made the same point using language characteristic of Thomas Aquinas: “true dignity and excellence in men resides in moral living, that is, in virtue.”<sup>4</sup> Saint Leo the Great’s famous Christmas sermon states this point in a memorable way: “Christian, recognize your dignity, and now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition.”<sup>5</sup> It is significant that this quotation stands as the first sentence in the section on morality in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). It immediately directs attention to the necessity of achieving human dignity by living without sin. Finally, Pope John Paul II goes so far as to say that martyrdom is “the supreme glorification of human dignity.”<sup>6</sup> This statement makes eminent sense because martyrs achieve the summit of human dignity by laying down their lives for God and neighbor.

Every element of society should promote respect for basic human dignity and its perfection. As Vatican Council II specifically says, “it devolves on humanity to establish a political, social, and economic order which will to an even better extent serve man and help individuals as well as groups to affirm and perfect the dignity proper to them” (*ad dignitatem sibi propriam affirmandam et excolendam*).<sup>7</sup> This means that the family, mediating institutions, the law and the Church all have a role to play in helping individuals to perfect their dignity. For example, the education a mother

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<sup>3</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, §16.

<sup>4</sup> Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum*, §37.

<sup>5</sup> CCC, §1691.

<sup>6</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Dominum et vivificantem* [On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World], §60.

<sup>7</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, §9 (modified translation and my emphasis).

and father give to their children in the family will help them recognize and achieve their dignity. Schools, a primary mediating institution, to a greater or lesser extent, form the character of students so that they might be inclined to act in accordance with their dignity. The law encourages people not to act beneath their dignity by driving while drunk or acting in a discriminatory manner toward racial minorities. In *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II says that the Church contributes to the enrichment of human dignity when she “proclaims God’s salvation to man, when she offers and communicates the life of God through the sacraments, when she gives direction to human life through the commandments of love of God and neighbor.”<sup>8</sup> These examples show that a correct conception of the human person provides guidance to all educators and to legislators, and also enables all people to recognize that they must strive to perfect their dignity in order to be good persons and, even, good democratic citizens. These examples just scratch the surface. Those working for social justice would have to discern what else needs to be done in the political, economic, and social order that would help people perfect their dignity and that shows respect for their permanent or basic dignity, such as insuring access to food, housing, work, health care and education.

It should be clear that the concepts of integral human development and the perfection or flourishing of human dignity are two ways of talking about the same realities, the complete temporal well-being and virtuous perfection or holiness of each and every individual. Unless the good of persons is properly understood, the common good will not be accurately understood. In the words of Williams, “A sound notion of the common good rests on the foundation of a sound Christian anthropology” (18). Otherwise stated, once we know what the perfection of the human person means, then we are in a position to recognize the political and social conditions that will realize the common good and thus help individuals achieve their perfection.

Throughout his book, Williams makes reference to various virtues that must be practiced in order to implement CSD. We have already discussed the role played by the theological virtue of charity. In his chapter on the common good, Williams also places emphasis on the virtue of solidarity, which John Paul II defines in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* as “a firm

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<sup>8</sup> *Centesimus annus*, no. 55.

and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good” (§38). He also brings up solidarity in the chapter on global governance arguing that the practice of solidarity by individuals and the establishment of the right structures guide globalization to a good end. Given Williams’s appreciation of virtue, I am surprised that he did not find a place to stress that the practice of the virtues by many individuals is necessary to establish justice, as Benedict has noted in not a few contexts, particularly his Latin America speeches. Anticipating a likely objection to his emphasis Benedict asks how one can justify “the priority of faith in Christ and of ‘life’ in him” when there are so many pressing political, economic, and social problems in Latin America. He answers that both Marxism and capitalism promised that just structures, an indispensable condition for promoting justice in society, could be established and maintained without “individual morality”—without individuals formed by the virtues. Benedict XVI implies that people now see that both political and economic systems failed to live up to their promises. In fact, just structures depend on a moral consensus in the body politic and lives lived by citizens in accord with the virtues. This point must be emphasized in any book on CSD because so many believe that the structures recommended by social justice are alone sufficient to bring about a just social order.

I would like to conclude my review by briefly discussing Williams’s two chapters on religion. In his chapter “‘Tolerance’ and Religious Liberty,” he astutely points out that the Vatican II’s declaration on religious liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*, never mentions tolerance or toleration. Williams’s point is that “religion is a human good to be promoted, not an evil to be tolerated. . . . Religious practice forms part of the common good of society and should be encouraged [by the state] rather than marginalized” (131). Williams also observes that in the contemporary era, tolerance implies “a general attitude of permissiveness and openness to diversity” (132). In other words, tolerance encourages the acceptance of relativism. Williams wants to see a genuine respect for religion because of what it can do for the salvation of individuals and the preservation of modern democracies. “The respect for religious freedom stands head and shoulders above a supposed tolerance for religious belief, with the relativism, indifference and subtle disdain for religion it so often comprises” (138).

In his second chapter on religion, Williams follows Pope Benedict in pointing out that some religions can be harmful to a polity and need to be

restrained by state action. There are now “pathological forms of religion,” including some understandings of Christianity, that steer people away from the good. Williams also mentions the harm that can come to modern democracies from Islam, some primitive religions, new age religions, Hinduism, Animism, and atheistic fanaticism, which functions as a kind of dangerous religion. Williams’s treatment of this potentially inflammatory subject is well done. It would have been even better had he reflected on Pope Benedict’s point that reason can correct the aberrations of faith, and faith can correct the aberrations of reason.

Thomas Williams has written a thoughtful book that merits a close reading by anyone interested in Catholic social doctrine and Catholic social thought. 

*J. Brian Benestad*  
Assumption College  
Worcester, MA

**On Liturgical Asceticism** by David W. Fagerberg (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013*), xix + 246 pp.

FOR SEVERAL DECADES now it has been relatively common to speak of the ressourcement movement in Catholic theology and to note the towering achievements of such figures as Congar, de Lubac, Daniélou, and Chenu, inter alia, and the influence of them and others on the Second Vatican Council and its reforms. To that illustrious pantheon of historians and theologians I think we can now add David Fagerberg’s name, for his splendid new book, *On Liturgical Asceticism*, is completely immersed in the major sources of monasticism, mysticism, and asceticism of the Christian East. This cogently written, deeply engaging book very much merits a place in every seminary and graduate course in liturgy and spirituality.

Fagerberg, of course, is no stranger to liturgiology or the Christian East, as his 1992 book *What Is Liturgical Theology* and his 2003 *Theologia Prima* (which I always require my graduate students to read) both manifest a deep and abiding indebtedness to the greatest liturgical theologian of the postwar period, the late Alexander Schmemmann, whose works, thirty years after his early death in December 1983, retain, as the Jesuit

historian Robert Taft recently noted, an astonishing shelf life unrivaled by anyone else in the field. But unlike those two earlier books, which attempted something of a “straddle” between East and West, Fagerberg’s present book shows a much fuller and more complete immersion in the spirituality of the Greek and Syriac Fathers as well as modern Orthodox sources (e.g., Pavel Florensky, Georges Florovsky, John Zizioulas). To them Fagerberg has turned in quest of bridges between fields he rightly regards as unhelpfully divided in the West for too long: theology, liturgy, and asceticism. By drawing extensively on Evagrius, Maximus the Confessor, and the Cappadocians (inter alia), Fagerberg demonstrates beyond all doubt that unless theology, liturgy, and asceticism are treated as a whole, each of them remains incoherent. Theology treated purely as an academic enterprise without ascetical and liturgical grounding is highly dangerous and borderline demonic.

Though he does not name them here, I take Fagerberg to be following the counsel of the English Dominican Aidan Nichols and the Jesuit Robert Taft, both of whom argued forcefully in the 1980s and 1990s that when, following Vatican II, so much of ascetical practice in the West was wrongly jettisoned by appeal to the fabled “spirit of Vatican II,” and so much of Western liturgy turned into an anthropocentric quest for “creativity” and “variety,” the way one begins to recover liturgical-ascetical stability and seriousness precisely in and for the West is by looking *ad Orientem*: to the rich literature, both ancient and modern, of the Christian East. Fagerberg has brought that literature alive in such a vibrant and accessible way, and written so compellingly and convincingly, that this book could *and should* stand alone as an excellent volume for Roman Catholics seeking an introduction to the Desert Fathers (the *apophthegmata patrum* are lavishly cited throughout), to monasticism, and to liturgical theology. This book, as I noted above, deserves a wide audience on the part of Western Christians, both Catholic and Protestant.

In turning to the East, however, Fagerberg does so without any of the triumphalism, romanticism, or fatuous preening one occasionally finds in some contemporary Orthodox writers who, ignoring the problems besetting all the Orthodox Churches today, luxuriate in long sneers at the West. Fagerberg has no truck with any of that gnat straining, instead turning to the East simply because—as the writings of Vatican II, and Pope John Paul (cf. especially *Oriente Lumen* and *Ut Unum Sint*) have




long made clear—"the East" is not an exotic land far off, but is already part and parcel of the Catholic patrimony. Fagerberg, thus a "scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven, is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Mt 13:52).

The hallmark of a great scribe and householder is that he makes the question of what is "old or new" or "East or West" largely irrelevant. The provenance of the treasures is not important; their purpose is. And the purpose of all these treasures is to fit us for the Kingdom of Heaven and to make us like the king Himself. The goal of asceticism, then, is nothing less than theosis.

It may be astonishing for some today to hear that theology and theosis should go hand in hand. But by drawing on the fourth-century highly influential monastic Evagrius of Pontus and by bringing him to the forefront of the Catholic household today, Fagerberg reminds its residents that theology, if it is properly understood, is not merely or even primarily intellectual or academic: its goal is not plaudits and prizes from the Catholic Theological Society of America or other self-selecting and often self-congratulatory guilds. Theology is quite simply the quest for communion with and contemplation of God, and may thus be practiced by, and open to, anyone and everyone who prays. Theology must be the product of deep, lifelong liturgical formation in the Church's cycle of feasting and fasting, and that cycle itself, especially in the fasting periods, is only intelligible through an asceticism shot through with eschatological *anamnesis*.

To make these connections clear in six chapters, Fagerberg first begins by defining what he means by "liturgical asceticism." Then, in his second through fourth chapters, he reviews our present plight without robust asceticism ("the malady"), the cure for it ("askesis"), and the fruits of that cure, namely, joy. The final two chapters look at how to live an ascetical-liturgical life not only among monastics but also among the *laic*, a neologism Fagerberg borrows from the Orthodox theologian and canonist Nicholas Afanasiev (whose ecclesiology, as is well known, had a profound impact on *Lumen Gentium*) to designate those living in the world while nonetheless striving to practice what Paul Evdokimov famously called "interiorized monasticism" to which all people, regardless of their station in life, are called by God (the "universal call to holiness" of Vatican II).



Those familiar with reforms to the liturgy following Vatican II, the section on liturgy in the 1992 universal *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the writings of Pope John Paul II will recognize in all these a deep indebtedness to the Christian East and a desire for the Catholic Church to rediscover Greek and Syriac sources so that ultimately the Church learns once more not so much about self-consciously breathing with “two lungs” (an overworked and inadequate metaphor) as about unconsciously living from the fullness of her one heart, which is Christ’s. To the extent that Fagerberg’s book enables the whole Church to do precisely that, we are all in his debt. 

*Adam DeVille*

University of Saint Francis  
Fort Wayne, IN

**The Word Made Love: The Dialogical Theology of Joseph Ratzinger/  
Pope Benedict XVI** by Christopher Collins, S.J. (*Collegeville, MN:*  
*Liturgical Press, 2013*), xiv + 181 pp.

CHRISTOPHER COLLINS, S.J., has written a book that will be received with deep gratitude. Possessing a writing style that is crisp and clear, Collins leads his readers into a fresh understanding of both the sources of Joseph Ratzinger’s theology and his theology itself. The author takes us through the fundamental themes of Ratzinger’s life’s work: revelation, Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Collins leaves us with a true appreciation of the coherence of Ratzinger’s theology, a theology that was made greater still by the future pope’s own vulnerability to the Living Word, as influenced by the faith of his own family and teachers who refused to reduce Christ to an “idea” or a philosophy but who risked being drawn into communion with the Trinity as mystery. As a result of this vulnerability on Joseph Ratzinger’s part, we have been gifted with a theology that is also *a way into God* and not one that simply presents theories about him. The structure of Ratzinger’s theology is communion, dialogue. Collins is expert at taking the reader through all of Ratzinger’s dialogue partners as well. Here we meet the Evangelists and St. Paul, of course, but also Plato, St.

Bonaventure, as well as modern philosophical and theological movements such as personalism, liberation theology, relativism, neo-scholasticism, and Ratzinger's own theological contemporaries. Through this theological and philosophical dialogue the believer is invited to allow an encounter with God to occur, which begins in the eternal sharing of the Father's Word through covenants and culminates in this Word taking on flesh in human history. God is not interested in a monologue wherein he simply reveals truth; he desires to engage humanity in a loving dialogue where "I and Thou" meet within creation and within a unique intimate love (*chaburah*) known as the Church.


Collins takes us into Ratzinger's deep and dense writings on Bonaventure. In doing so, Collins delivers one of the most accessible treatments of Ratzinger's understanding of Bonaventure that I have ever read, paying particular attention to how history is part of revelation. As such, revelation progresses from the seeds of the Logos within a narrative, rather than being simply revealed as data in linear fashion. From Bonaventure, Ratzinger contemplates Christ as *the center of all history*, the center from which all flows out into time and all history returns to an eternal communion with the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. In this way, it is love that defines history and brings it to its fulfillment. And, because it is divine love that initiates and sustains the existence of all reality, Ratzinger (unlike Karl Rahner, for example) begins his theology upon the *action divina*, rather than upon an anthropological foundation.

Collins also draws the reader's attention to the fascinating theme of Christ himself being the dialogue God has with Man. Here, within Christ, we see that humanity can only be fulfilled when it responds faithfully to God acting and speaking Truth. To respond to Christ himself is to respond to God's searching love. God did not simply reveal his mind but his Word, a Person. And this Person is living still; he is not to be sequestered within the past. Ratzinger's focus upon the truth that Christ *lives now*, in and through the Spirit, uniquely marks his theology as respectful both of faith and the scientific methods that probe history. If one were to separate faith (dogma) from history, one would make Scripture irrelevant to each succeeding epoch by confining scripture further and further into the past. Summarizing Ratzinger, Collins notes

that theologians do not say things about God as one who acts in the past, but should treat God *as the one who speaks* (51).

For Ratzinger, Jesus Christ sheds light upon the deepest meaning of human life, underscoring that it is God who speaks to Man in Christ and Man understands himself only when he responds *to Christ*. God's Son is the measure of humanity and not the other way around. Even more fundamentally, one cannot understand who Jesus is and the dignity of who Man is in relation to God apart from the Church. To abstract Jesus or Man from the Church is to only dimly perceive truth. In Christ is the revelation of what a human being is: persons who long for union with the fount of love itself. Christ both reveals God and reveals who the human person is within his singular particularity, a particularity that is scandalous to a relativistic and religiously pluralistic age. Despite such scandalous thinking, Ratzinger is clear: God has spoken his Word uniquely and definitively in Jesus Christ. It is the Church's vocation to gather to hear this unique Word and respond to it by way of personal conversion and, in turn, to proclaim this Word to the world. When its members truly enter a faithful dialogue with Christ in the Spirit, they become the saints who make up the real majority of its population. The Church is historically conditioned, and hence it sins, but it is capable of receiving God, and hence it is called to give witness to what Christ means for history: God is among us—respond to him in loving trust. Fundamentally, this response is the Church's worship and such worship marks out the Church's deepest identity and ministry: to be reconciled to God and enter communion with Christ as he offers thanksgiving to the Father. Here, in the worship of the Father by Christ, death dies and becomes an act of love. In opening the human heart to the love of Christ, the believer then receives salvation in Christ, in the one who met death with love and gave birth to hope. This hope affects the entire person, and is given as a result of encountering the Savior. In such an encounter, the sinner hears from him that "it is good that you exist" (157). To know Christ is to step into the dialogical relationship between God and Man and thus be redeemed.

Father Collins begins each of his five chapters with a helpful summary of what is contained therein and then concludes each chapter with a synopsis that both deepens the reader's understanding of what was just meditated upon and prepares the reader for the next chapter.

As we read these pages, we discover that not only is Christopher Collins an excellent writer but also an insightful teacher. I recommend this work for any theologian who wishes to possess the thought of Ratzinger in one accessible volume and to any teacher looking for a text that not only introduces Ratzinger's thought but, thanks to Collins' gifts, carries with it the seed to make one a true devotee of Joseph Ratzinger's beautiful theology. 

*James Keating*

Institute for Priestly Formation, Creighton University  
Omaha, NE

**Eusebius of Emesa: Church and Theology in the Mid-Fourth**

**Century** by Robert E. Winn (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011*), xiv + 277 pp.

Eusebius of Emesa is not one of the better-known Christian figures of the fourth century. This volume, a revised version of Winn's dissertation, makes the case that this is not as it should be, and it makes that case persuasively. Eusebius rubbed shoulders with the most powerful bishops of the eastern Roman Empire, but he disliked ecclesiastical politics, preferring what he saw as straightforward and nonpartisan evangelical exhortation. Noted by Jerome for his reputation for oratory (*De viris illustribus* 91), Eusebius has left us a corpus of thirty-six extant sermons. With the exception of an extended quotation preserved in Theodoret of Cyrrhus's *Eranistes* and some scattered fragments in catenae, none of these survive in Greek. E. M. Buytaert published an edition of twenty-nine Latin sermons in 1953. These were followed shortly by a series of Armenian sermons edited by N. Akinian, eight of which Winn follows H. Lehmann in deeming authentically Eusebian. One of these sermons survives in both Latin and Armenian; hence the total of thirty-six. Until now, despite widespread admiration for Eusebius's preaching in the ancient and medieval Christian world, no theological analysis of the sermons including both the Latin and the Armenian material has been attempted. This book steps into that lacuna. Winn discerns in these sermons a carefully executed theological program designed by Eusebius to carve out and solidify a particular "ecclesiastical identity" for his congregants in the cosmopolitan environment of fourth-century

Roman Syria.

Chapter 1 is devoted to filling out Eusebius's context by focusing on the localities that played a prominent role in his life: Eusebius's hometown of Edessa; Antioch, where he lived off and on in the 330s as an episcopal protégé, and where he would eventually die; and Emesa, his own see from 341. Winn also includes a section dedicated to George of Laodicea, whose association with Eusebius he deems the key to unlocking certain events of the last part of Eusebius's life. The chapter's geographical arrangement offers the advantage of a fairly rich sense of Eusebius's social context. It bears the slight drawback of requiring a bit of patient sleuthing on the part of the reader to piece together a full chronology of Eusebius's life. There are also a few puzzling omissions. For instance, we know, and Winn does mention, that Eusebius was favored by Constantius II and accompanied him on a military campaign. Given Winn's insistence on the centrality for Eusebius of delineating "the place of the church in fourth-century Roman society" (13) and Constantius's reputation as an eager but uninformed and fickle participant in imperial-eclesiastical politics, some consideration of the possible meaning of his association with the emperor might have been helpful.

In chapter 2, Winn takes up Eusebius's rhetorical and exegetical strategies. Winn's burden is to show that Eusebius's use of rhetoric is exclusively aimed at inculcating his "ecclesiastical agenda." He seeks to do so in particular by examining Eusebius's use of the *encomium* rhetorical form, which he took up in praise of the apostles in four of the extant sermons. Winn shows how Eusebius consistently drifts from discussing the apostles themselves to discussing Jesus and Jesus's superiority to other religious figures. This, of course, technically violates the canons of the rhetorical form, but it does not seem particularly surprising in a Christian sermon. Nonetheless, Winn reads this as evidence of Eusebius's "agenda," concluding that the apostles "had to suffer less than normal honors in orations ostensibly delivered in their honor for the greater good of the church they founded" (68).

Winn's analysis of Eusebius's exegesis brings out interesting tensions. He argues, on the one hand, that Eusebius may well be the "missing link" (H. Lehmann's phrase) between early Antiochene exegetes like Lucian and Eustathius and later ones like Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopuestia, and John Chrysostom, whom we know to have read Eusebius

admiringly. On the other hand, Eusebius had studied under Eusebius of Caesarea, and Winn's characterization of Eusebius's view of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments smacks rather strongly at the very least of Origen, or even of the Pseudo-Barnabas. Winn even suggests that Eusebius denies the Old Testament its own integrity: apart from its New Testament fulfillment, it is essentially meaningless, a stance hardly typical of "Antiochene" exegesis.

The next four chapters (3 to 6) are devoted to what Winn regards as the most central and recurring topics of Eusebius's preaching. The synthesis involves a cumulative progression. One moves with Eusebius from a correct understanding of the natural world and of human nature, wherein the superiority of incorporeality to corporeality is established (chap. 3), to an affirmation of God's incorporeality, which Eusebius valued so highly that he warned against using natural analogies to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son (chap. 4). It is worth noting here that, in light of Eusebius's emphasis on incorporeality, his proclamation of the miraculous powers of the martyrs' relics is quite striking, but Winn does not comment on the apparent tension (230–31).

As with his exegesis, Eusebius's Trinitarian theology and Christology defy easy classification. Like Cyril of Jerusalem, Eusebius abhorred the ecclesiastical partisanship that swirled around extrabiblical terms like *homoousios*, urging Christians not to fall prey to factionalism over language that was not explicitly endorsed by scripture. Nonetheless, Winn demonstrates a shift over the course of Eusebius's preaching career from a marked subordinationism to passages in the sermons delivered at Jerusalem in the 350s that would not seem out of place several decades later in Augustine's *De Trinitate*; for example, "Everything that the Father is, the Son is the same, except that he is not Father. Everything that the Son is, the Father is the same, except that he is not Son and did not take flesh. And everything which the Father and the Son are, the Holy Spirit is the same except that he is not Father or Son, and did not become flesh as the Son" (quoted on 171).

The binary now established between passible corporeality and impassible incorporeality sets the terms for Eusebius's Christology (chap. 5). Winn brings out apparent vacillations in Eusebius's Christological articulations. The concern to guard against any suggestion of divine passibility often leads him to imply a two-subject Christology. At other

times, Eusebius seems to have held a more nearly one-subject Christology. In fact, if fragments preserved by Philoxenus of Mabboug are to be trusted, as Winn thinks they are, Eusebius was even able to make statements such as “God died for us” (206). Be that as it may, for Winn as for R. Gregg and D. Groh (*Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981]), fourth-century Christology is only secondarily about metaphysical analysis of one particular Person; what is really at stake is soteriology. While Eusebius expressed the purpose of the Incarnation in more than one way, the most central is a version of the “formula of exchange,” perhaps best known from Irenaeus (*Adversus haereses* 3.19.1) and Athanasius (*De incarnatione verbi* 54.3). As Eusebius puts it in one sermon, “God, the Son of God, came in a body in order to conform men to divinity” (quoted on 216). But, on Winn’s telling, since this transformation of human nature is “not an eschatological transformation” (218), what Eusebius intends thereby is exhaustively realized as ascetic renunciation of a very particular kind: “faith in Christ assumes an asexual angelic existence” (223).

This emphatically ascetical vision of the Church’s identity is the subject of chapter 6 and the culmination of the theological movement begun in chapter 3. Virginité and martyrdom are seen as the very content of an “incorporeal,” “angelic” mode of life. Accordingly, consecrated virginité should be the norm of the Christian life, and martyrdom its desired term. Celibacy could even be equated with salvation, *tout court*: “living a transformed life as an asexual angel was how Eusebius understood salvation in general” (240). Nevertheless, Winn points out that Eusebius “was not advocating an encratic church” (241). To the contrary, Eusebius took care to specify the legitimate place of marriage and active life in the Church. While consecrated virginité undoubtedly held pride of place, and eventual renunciation of the use of marriage came in second, Eusebius does seem to have begun exploring how faithful and fruitful married life could be understood as a mode of participation in the kingdom of God. Similarly, the meaning of martyrdom could be expanded from execution *in odium fidei* to its etymological sense of “witness,” comprising an entire life spent pursuing holiness, waging war against vice, and thus bearing witness to the Gospel to non-Christian observers.

As they stand in the book, these two poles of Eusebius’s thought—



the virtual equation of sexual renunciation with salvation and, at the other end, the possibility of noncelibate ways of being faithful to the Gospel—stand in unresolved tension. While that lack of resolution may be an accurate reflection of Eusebius's own thought, one wonders whether a more fulsome picture of Christian salvation might have emerged from viewing the this-worldly ascetical ideal, not as evacuating soteriology of its eschatological horizon, but as a sign of and proleptic participation in the future life of the resurrection. Such an interpretation seems entirely compatible with the ample quotations from the sermons that Winn provides.

So how does Winn's overarching thesis that "ecclesiastical identity" is the constant "underlying agenda" for Eusebius's preaching ultimately fare? There seem, in fact, to be two versions of it that run side by side throughout the book. The stronger one, that the tail of identity politics wags the doctrinal dog, appears to overreach. Certainly, Eusebius, like many late antique Christian preachers, wished his congregants to be well informed and observant of the differences between themselves as Christians and their Jewish, "heretical" (mainly Manichaean and Marcionite), and pagan neighbors. Winn has no trouble producing evidence of this, and it often strikes the modern reader as distasteful. But while it is patently one dimension of Eusebius's preaching, it is far from clear that this contrastive identity construction is its beating heart, something that is further undermined by Winn's awareness that Eusebius understood himself to be transmitting the authentic apostolic faith, not a series of spin-doctored adversarial talking points. The more modest form of the thesis simply claims that Eusebius's preaching sought to instill a distinctively Christian identity, defined as "a set of beliefs and a way of life characterized by asceticism that Eusebius considered essential to members of the church" (15). This is eminently defensible, but it is also circular: Eusebius promotes certain beliefs and practices in service of an ecclesiastical identity that comprises precisely those beliefs and practices. Like all tautologies, this is true but leads nowhere. In the end, then, the repeated emphasis on "ecclesiastical identity" is a confusing and distracting scaffolding, artificially rigged up over the book's real argument. Fortunately, the edifice of Winn's work stands perfectly upright without it, and it can safely be jettisoned. The real virtue of the book is its logically synthesized presentation of the key themes in Eusebius's sermons. Winn's progres-



sive analysis of Eusebius's preached doctrine, from right perception of the natural world and the human person to a right notion of God, and thence to an account of Christ, the salvation He wrought, and how it looks in concrete practice, is both coherent and cogent.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the book is unfortunately marred by a significant number of typographical errors and inconsistencies in conventions, and by the occasional malapropism ("perspicuity" for "perspicacity" [34], "laying" for "lying" [108]). Most problematically from a historical-theological point of view, on eight occasions Winn uses the expression "the divine economy" to refer to the theology of the immanent Trinity (126, 128, 129, 132, 144, 154, 173, 179). Thankfully, these do not detract substantively from a suggestive volume that deserves the attention of every historian of fourth-century Christian theology. **N&V**

*John Sehorn*  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, IN