# *SACRA DOCTRINA* AND THE THEOLOGY OF DISCLOSURE

BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P.

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

AS IMPLIED by the title, Robert Sokolowski's recent *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* has a dual purpose: it is both a theological reflection on the Eucharist and "an example of the kind of thinking that can be called a theology of disclosure." [1] What is innovative about Sokolowski's project is that it represents an attempt "to discuss a type of theological thinking that draws on philosophical resources provided by phenomenology." [2] Sokolowski argues persuasively that Husserlian phenomenology, hitherto underutilized as a theological tool (in contrast with Heideggerian phenomenology), provides peculiarly powerful resources for both engaging and transcending the problematic engendered by modernity's psychologistic disparagement of appearances. Through a phenomenological recovery of the dimensions of disclosure latent in manifestation or appearance, it is possible to articulate a kind of theological thinking wherein the display of Christian things-how they come to light-is explicitly thematized as revelatory and disclosive of the divine. Sokolowski's rehabilitation of appearances is not only an attempt to chart a postmodern

[1] Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 173 (hereafter cited as *EP*).

[2] *EP*, 1.

approach for theology, it is also a self-conscious attempt to retrieve a premodern, patristic style of theology.[3]

It is precisely this double project of both engaging the postmodern problematic and retrieving a premodern kind of theology that makes Sokolowski's work pregnant and provocative. The purpose of this essay is to push Sokolowski 's project in the direction of a retrieval of a style of premodern theology that he unfortunately overlooks: Thomas Aquinas's *sacra doctrina.* In Sokolowski 's reading of the history of theology, the medieval period marks the ascendancy of what he characterizes as speculative-ontological theology, in distinction from the theology of disclosure. I intend to show, however, that what Sokolowski understands by the theology of disclosure is at the heart of what Aquinas understands by *sacra doctrina secundum revelationem divinam.* Herein lies a certain irony: what Sokolowski (along with most others) overlooks in Aquinas, he also reveals in his articulation of the theology of disclosure. Hence Sokolowski's theology of disclosure can function as a hermeneutical tool to retrieve a proper understanding of Aquinas's *sacra doctrina* in a way that both enhances and contemporizes the latter.

In order to establish this claim, I will begin with an exposition of Sokolowski's general account of the theology of disclosure, emphasizing how it differs from more traditional styles of theology and how it represents a strategic response to the problematic of modernity. Then I will highlight certain fundamental themes in the theology of disclosure that will be helpful in the retrieval of *sacra doctrina.* In the second section, I will show how Aquinas's understanding of *sacra doctrina secundum revelationem divinam* is an exercise in the theology of disclosure and how that is reflected in the very structure of the *Summa Theologiae.* In the final section, I will offer some concluding remarks regarding why this dimension of Aquinas's thought has been obscured and why it needs to. be retrieved.

[1] "The Fathers, in their Neoplatonic style, accepted the display of Christian things as part of the subject of their theology. Emanation, splendor, presence, concealment, and imaging were spontaneously accepted and vividly described. It is this aspect of Christian reflection that the theology of manifestation is to recover, but in a manner appropriate to our day and age and with recognition of the contributions of both speculative and positive theology" *(EP,* 10).

## I

### *A) Sokolowski's General Account*

"One of the central forms of thinking used in phenomenology is the activity of making distinctions .... [it] is a much more strategic part of philosophy than is usually recognized."[4] Sokolowski accordingly begins his exposition of the theology of disclosure[5] by characterizing it as an "intermediate form of reflective thought"[6] distinct from the traditional forms of faith seeking rational understanding exemplified in positive and speculative theology. Drawing primarily upon history, positive theology aims (1) to show "how the articles of faith are found and developed in Scripture and Tradition" and (2) "to formulate the truths of revelation in contemporary terms."[7] Drawing primarily on philosophy and presupposing the findings of positive theology, speculative theology aims "to provide an ordered and comprehensive understanding of these truths [of faith], using distinctions, definitions, causal explanations, and analogies."[8] Speculative theology targets the realities or "things" that have come to light through Christian revelation: God; his nature, attributes, and activities; the cosmos; the human being, etc.[9] In its analysis of Christian realities, speculative theology manifests an "ontological" concern to define things and to articulate their intelligible connections. This is the form of theology developed

[4] *EP,* 197-98. See also Sokolowski's essay on "Making Distinctions" in his *Pictures, Quotations, and Distinctions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 55-91.

[5] Sokolowski acknowledges that the term "theology of disclosure" is not entirely satisfactory, but argues that it works better than any alternative candidates like "theology of manifestation" or "phenomenological theology." See the discussion of terminology in *EP,* 173-74.

[6] *EP,* 5.

[7] *EP,* 5-6. The text goes on: "Biblical studies are the primary part of positive theology, but other parts examine the Fathers of the Church, the Papacy, the Councils, the liturgy, and the general history of the Church as it is related to the articles of faith. Positive theology discusses the historical settings in which the truths of faith have been revealed, confirmed, and transmitted; it tries to shed light on these truths by discussing the historical contexts in which they have been presented to us, and it also tries to formulate them again in terms appropriate to our own context."

[8] *EP,* 6.

[9] See the description of speculative theology in *EP,* 6.

and displayed most fully in the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages (and *a fortiori* in the theology of Thomas Aquinas).

Sokolowski distinguishes the theology of disclosure from the two traditional forms as follows:

> There is room for another form of reflective theological thinking. This third form, which I will call the theology of disclosure, would have the task of describing how the Christian things taught by the Church and studied by speculative theology come to light. ... While historical theology examines facts, the theology of disclosure examines structures of disclosure; it describes the forms of manifestation proper to Christian things. It tries to describe how Christian things must display themselves, in keeping with what they are, and how they must distinguish themselves from things that resemble them and with which they may be confused. Thus, the theoIOgy of disclosure differs from speculative theology because it examines the manifestation of Christian things and not, primarily, their nature, definition, and causes; and it differs from positive theology because it is concerned with the essential structures of disclosure, which would hold in all times and places, and not with matters of historical fact. Although it differs from these two theologies, it is obviously closely related to them and does not contradict anything they establish as true. [10]

To connect the theology of disclosure with manifestation and appearance is to confront immediately the deeply entrenched modern tendency to disparage appearances by reducing them to inner-subjective states of consciousness (ideas) that are split off from some unknown and unknowable outer-objective way that things "really" are. This divorce of "mere" appearance from the "real" display of being is one of the main targets of phenomenology's philosophical therapy. Phenomenological thought attempts to recover the connection between appearance and being ingredient in the Greek understanding of *eidos.*[11] This retrieval is gained not

[10] *EP,* 7-8. This rather abstract discussion of the theology of disclosure provides only the barest sense of the actual reality. The only adequate way to grasp the nature of the theology of disclosure is to consider its exemplification in Sokolowski's treatment of the Eucharist.

[11] "Appearance, manifestation, disclosure were appreciated in antiquity; the very term *eidos,* which was central to the thought of Plato and Aristotle, implies presentation. *Eidos* primarily means the 'look' or 'view' that things present to us. In modernity, the *eidos* of a thing, instead of being a disclosure, becomes merely the subjective impact the thing makes on us or the idea that we ourselves fabricate of an unknown thing. The *eidos*

by making an end-run around modernity back to a naive premodern posture, but rather by directly confronting the question of appearance as "the metaphysical problem of modernity." [12] Phenomenology does not attempt to refute the modern problematic, however, since such a refutation would necessarily fail insofar as it accepts the psychologistic starting point of an isolated subjectivity in search of reassurance regarding a common world behind the veil of ideas; to begin with the egocentric predicament is to become locked inside a mental cabinet from which there is no escape. Instead, "Husserl helps us to see that the mind is 'outside' from the start and that the world presents itself to man." [13]

Sokolowski 's phenomenological strategy is to expose the "problem of the real world" and its constitutive doctrine of "ideas" as a pseudo-problem arising out of a misunderstanding of the status of our speech "about things *insofar as they are experienced and spoken about:* that is, insofar as they present themselves to us or are intended by us in the various modes achieved'" [4] in (1) pre-philosophical world-directed discourse about things, features, and relationships and (2) our subsequent ontological reflection on them. Reflection on things as experienced in the various modes of intentionality-for example, as present or absent; as pictured, quoted, or remembered-is properly phenomenological. Now one way in which things can be intended is as merely supposed or proposed by a speaker to some hearer through the use of words; when something is intended by someone as presented by another in speech, then it becomes an idea, or a concept, or a proposition, or a meaning. The basic modern error is to reduce this way of intending things, this way of being in the world and allowing things to present themselves to us, to a pseudo-realm of private mental representations. The

of classical philosophy is replaced by the 'idea' of modernity" *(EP,* 183). Sokolowski notes that *eidos* originally had an ambiguous meaning: "The word means the substantial form of things (a principle of ontology) and also the appearance, the 'look' of things (a factor in phenomenology). One of the benefits we can draw from modernity is a sharper distinction between these two forms of reflective thought" *(EP,* 193).

[12] *EP,* 184.

[13] *EP,* 182.

[14] *EP,* 191 (emphasis in the original).

thing as presented to us in speech is substantialized into an internal entity that is other than the thing itself and so a dubious intermediary between the ego and the "real world." The modern doctrine of ideas is the result of a profound misunderstanding of intentionality: ideas are the postulates of philosophical confusion, not the givens of experience. [15]

Once the modern epistemological predicament is exposed and dissolved, the way is open to reconnect being and appearance through an analysis of the multifarious ways in which things manifest themselves to us and become meaningful to us. Phenomenology helps us to recover the truth that the way things are presented to us is part of their being. Of particular importance to the theology of disclosure is a recovery of an appreciation for the way in which things become manifest and meaningful for us as presented by another, particularly in speech. When something is presented to us by another in speech, a new dimension of the world can be disclosed. Speech does not have as its aim the introduction of private mental entities into consciousness, but the disclosure of a new presentational dimension of being. The words of another can alter how we take the world and how we in turn present the world to others. It is the task of the theology of disclosure to show how the world takes on a new presentational dimension when the speaker is divine.

### *B) Fundamental Themes*

There are numerous themes opened up by the theology of disclosure, but they all presuppose the central issue of disclosure: the new perspective on the world that is introduced in Christianity. It is a perspective opened up not by philosophical reflection, but rather by divine revelation and Sacred Scripture. [16] The key to this new perspective lies in what Sokolowski calls the

[15] *EP*, 190-93. For a fuller exposition of this topic, see Sokolowski's "Exorcizing Concepts" in *Pictures, Quotations, and Distinctions*, 173-85.

[16] "The Christian understanding of the world as having been created by God was not reached through the exercise of mere natural intelligence. It was disclosed through biblical revelation. Biblical revelation does more than give us new information: it provides an entirely new perspective on the world, on the divine, and on ourselves. It engages new forms of intentionality, new modes of presentation, and new distinctions" *(EP,* 138).

*Christian distinction between the world and God* that is disclosed by the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo.*[11] God is disclosed in Christian belief as being perfectly self-sufficient such that creation is an act of sheer generosity that introduces no increase of being or goodness into the divine nature.[18] That God has originated a universe of beings is an obvious fact, but the sheer givenness of the world takes on a new light when it is considered as profiled against the possibility that it might not have been at all except for the generosity of God. The God who is the Creator need not create in order to be God. God could have been all that there is, alone, without suffering diminution in being, or loneliness.

Sokolowski notes that in order to appreciate the originality of the Christian distinction, it is helpful to contrast it with the natural understanding of the world and the divine that is ingredient in "pagan" (i.e., classical Greek and Roman) thought. In pagan thought the divine is understood to be only a part-albeit the necessary, permanent, most powerful, and hence best part-of a more encompassing whole that comprises both God and the world; the divine and the nondivine are complementary correlatives within the larger and more fundamental whole. Within the horizon of the pagan perspective, it is both false and meaningless to assert the proposition that God could be all that there is without a world, since to be divine is to be the most important part of the more ultimate whole that necessarily includes both the divine and the non-divine. In the horizon opened up by creation, however, God and the world do not constitute a necessary whole since the transcendence of the Creator means that God is not encompassed by some larger totality. Because the Creator God could meaningfully have been the whole, what originates from creation does not constitute a greater whole that relativizes the divine to a part.

[11] Sokolowski's original and fuller exposition of the "Christian distinction" can be found in his *The God of Faith and Reason* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 1-52. See also Thomas Prufer, *Recapitulations: Essays in Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 32-42.

[18] For an excellent analysis of the gratuity of creation, see Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Gift: Creation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982).

A proper appreciation of the Christian distinction leads to a shift in our fundamental perspective on the whole and it is one of the central tasks of the theology of disclosure to thematize the importance of that shift. Drawing on Husserl's analysis of our fundamental belief about the whole *(Urglaube* or *Urdoxa),* Sokolowski highlights the need to recognize how our conscious reflection on specific parts (here individual theological doctrines) presupposes a more basic stance regarding the whole that normally remains unthematized. Biblical revelation and the Christian distinction shatter the natural whole so that we come to see God, ourselves, and the world within a completely new context. The natural whole is now seen as utterly contingent, non-ultimate, and therefore gracious when profiled against the God who is not a part of the whole and who could have been apart from the natural whole in undiminished being. A proper appreciation of this new whole requires radical rethinking of the ways in which such concepts as necessity, contingency, choice, and agency are applied to God and creatures; [19] it also requires a new sense of absence and presence to do justice to the transcendent immanence of God.[20] It must be recalled, however, that all such further precisions depend upon the more basic Christian distinction as opening up the context in which they can be made. The fundamental horizon-opening Christian distinction must therefore be continually recalled and remade as a remedy to our proclivity to lapse back into the horizon of the natural whole: "This Christian distinction is always energetic and always needs to be worked out and worked through, because we have a permanent propensity to take the whole as ultimate and to see the divine as part of the whole." [21]

Understanding the Christian distinction is not like the registration of a fact about a particular thing, but rather it is the disclosure of a new dimension, a new formal mode of presentation. As Sokolowski notes, the disclosure of a new dimension is more subtle and strategic than the discovery of a new fact because "a

[19] See *EP,* 42-51.
[20] See *EP,* 194-95.
[21] *EP,* 198.

form of presentation arises for us and consequently the whole world, and everything in it, begins to look different." [22] A central presentational dimension thematized in the theology of disclosure derives from the recognition that the manifestness and intelligibility of the world are not exhausted by the human perspective. Just as the world takes on a new dimension of presentation when intersubjective experience reveals to us that what we experience is also given to other datives of manifestation or centers of awareness, so too the world takes on a new presentational dimension when we realize that there is a divine dative of manifestation. The world takes on a different look when it is seen from the point of view of the Creator:

> If the intersubjective dimension enhances the identity and being of things, how much more does this divine perspective strengthen them in our eyes? The world and the things in it are now seen as being known and chosen to be by the Creator. We ourselves cannot, of course, adopt the divine point of view, but in faith we can formulate something of what it is, and we can strive to see the world as subject to it. The theology of disclosure strives to bring out the special features of this dimension, this form of presentation, which is one of the constitutive elements in the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Reflection on the act of faith, for example, must take into account how the God we believe in is presented or represented to us, and also how we understand the world and ourselves to be presented to him.[23]

As I hope to show in what follows, this articulation of the theology of disclosure is also an articulation of Aquinas's understanding of *sacra doctrina.*

## II

### *A) Sacra Doctrina*

Aquinas begins his analysis of *sacra doctrina* in the *Summa Theologiae* by describing it as a teaching *secundum revelationem divinam.* [24] As T. C. O'Brien has demonstrated, this qualification

[22] *EP,* 200.

[23] *EP,* 204.

[24] "Dicendum quod necessarium fuit ad humanum salutem esse doctrinam quandam secundum revelationem divinam praeter philosophicas disciplinas, quae ratione humana investigantur" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 1). The *Summa* text cited in this essay is the Ottawa edition of 1941.

holds the key to the proper interpretation of Aquinas's understanding of *sacra doctrina.* [25] The necessity of another body of knowledge in addition to the already established disciplines *(praeter philosophicas disciplinas)2*[6] follows from the revelation by God that humanity is called to a destiny beyond the ken of natural reason. [27] Following genetically or sequentially from the encounter with God revealing, there arises the need for another teaching or intellectual discipline in conformity with the new dimension of intelligibility disclosed by God. [28] Revelation

[25] See T. C. O'Brien, *"Sacra doctrina* Revisited: The Context of Medieval Education," *The Thomist* 41 (1977): 475-509. The nature of *sacra doctrina* is a much-disputed point among Aquinas's interpreters. I cannot enter into the debate in this essay; the interested reader should start with 0 'Brien's piece and follow the references provided in his notes. See especially James A. Weisheipl, "The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in the *Summa theologiae* I, q. 1," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 49-80; Weisheipl's article is the foil for O'Brien's piece and provides a summary of classical interpretations of *sacra doctrina.* Since the publication of 0 'Brien's article, two important collections of articles on the theology of St. Thomas have appeared: Albert Patfoort, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Les clefs d'une theologie* (Paris: FAC-editions, 1983), and Yves Congar, *Thomas d'Aquin: Sa vision de theologie et de l'Eglise* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984). I am convinced that 0 'Brien's reading of the first question remains the most illuminating and the most underappreciated.

[26] As O'Brien shows, *philosophicas disciplinas* refers to the entire corpus of human learning *("Sacra doctrina* Revisited," 478-92).

[27] The corpus of *STh* I, q. 1, a. 1 as cited inn. 24 continues: "Primo quidem quia homo ordinatur ad Deum sicut ad quendam finem qui comprehensionem rationis excedit, secundum illud *Isaiae* LXIV: *Oculus non vidit Deus absque te, quae praeparasti diligentibus te.* Finem autem oportet esse praecognitum hominibus, qui suas intentiones et actiones debent ordinare in finem. Unde necessarium fuit homini ad salutem quod ei nota fierent quaedam per revelationem divinam, quae rationem humanam excedit. Ad ea etiam quae de Deo ratione humana investigari possunt, necessarium fuit homine instrui revelatione divina. Quia veritas de Deo per rationem investigata, a paucis, et per Iongum temp us, et cum admixtione multorum errorum homini proveniret; a cuius tamen veritatis cognitione dependet tota hominus salus, quae in Deus est. Ut igitur salus hominibus et convenientius et certius proveniat, necessarium fuit quod de divinis per divinam revelationem instruantur. Necessarium igitur fuit praeter philosophicas disciplinas, quae per rationem investigantur, sacram doctrinam per revelationem haberi."

'" 0 'Brien notes that the preposition *secundum* has two interrelated meanings in this context: "The first, immediately linked with the derivation of *secundum* from *sequor*, is 'following after,' in time, succession, rank, value. The first meaning of the stated conclusion of art. 1, then, is that there is need for *sacra doctrina* as a teaching following on divine revelation, genetically or sequentially. The second, extended meaning that *secundum* has is 'agreeably with,' 'in accord with,' 'according to'; it takes on the idea of conformity or

discloses that the *philosophicas disciplinas* do not exhaust the intelligibility of the real because the world as manifested to human reason is an incomplete manifestation of the world's meaning to the Creator God. The revelation of a divine dative of manifestation who graciously wills to share the divine dimension necessitates a radical rethinking of the whole.

The new horizon or whole explored in *sacra doctrina* originates in the encounter of God revealing and human believing that is described by Aquinas in his analysis of the theological virtue of faith. Some central points in that analysis bear recollection here. The most significant feature of a theological virtue for Aquinas is that it bears directly upon God as its object.[29] This technical terminology wherein God is described as an "object" must be carefully understood. It is not meant either to reify God as an impersonal thing or to register the banal fact that a theological virtue is somehow "about" God. It is rather meant to express the profound truth that what makes a virtue theological is its origination in an immediate, vital, immanent, and gracious personal union with God.[30] To say that God is the formal object

fidelity to a model. The second meaning of the stated conclusion of art. 1, then, is that there is a need for a teaching in keeping with, conformed to divine revelation" *("Sacra doctrina* Revisited," 493). O'Brien's analysis of *secundum* relies on the entry in Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1969): 1654-55.

[29] "Et huiusmodi principia virtutes dicuntur theologicae: tum quia habent Deus pro objecto, inquantum per eas recte ordinamur in Deum; tum quia a solo Deo nobis infunduntur; tum quia sola divina revelatione in sacra Scriptura huiusmodi virtutes traduntur" *(STh* 1-11, q. 62, a. 1).

[30] On the meaning of "object" in the *Summa,* see O'Brien's appendix 1, "Objects and Virtues," in *Faith,* volume 31 of the English-Latin edition of the *Summa Theologiae,* trans. T. C. O'Brien (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1974): 178-85. On the idea of God as the object of the theological virtues, O'Brien writes: "the statement that God himself is the formal objective of the theological virtues is the attempt to articulate the reality of such a union of operation, to state what the mystery of grace is revealed to be. That God is object means that the acts of faith, hope, and love exist and are what they are because God communicates himself as the one to be believed, to be hoped in and to be loved in return. The actuating and perfective function of object with reference to act is elevated to a new level, and is delegated to express the actual graciousness of God. The language of object in this use is meant to describe God's giving of himself. The theological force, so far from being impersonal or from managing God, means that the acts of the theological virtues are pure reciprocity, and are freely given responses to God, lovingly communicating himself to man" (184).

of the theological virtues is to affirm the central truth of Aquinas's theological vision and his *Summa:* by grace we have really become partakers in the divine nature. [31] By grace, the soul and its capacities are given a share in the very life and activities of God such that faith involves our intellect participating in God's own knowledge. [32]

Aquinas's realism about grace is reflected in his assertion that the formal object of faith is nothing other than First Truth itself *(nihil aliud est quam Veritas prima).* [33] Faith is an immediate and grace-filled cleaving to God precisely as the First Truth. Faith first accepts God himself speaking and initiating communication *(credere Deo)* before it accepts what God reveals *(credere Deum).* [34] Faith is primarily an assent not to a body of propositional truths, but to Truth itself disclosing itself; [35] revelation is first of all a Revealer revealing and then what is revealed. Of course the believer does assent to a body of truths, a corpus of sacred writings, a Church, because God has chosen a specific historical way to reveal saving Truth. Yet it must always be remembered that the assent to these other truths, the various material objects of faith, presupposes the formal object as

[31] "Alia autem est beatitudo naturam hominis excedens, ad quam homo sola divina virtute pervenire potest secundum quandam divinitatis participationem; secundum quod dicitur II *Petr.* 1,4, quod per Christum facti sumus *consortes divinae naturae" STh* 1-11, q. 62, a. 1. This article points ahead to the central teaching of the *Summa* on the reality of grace as a participation in the divine nature, articulated in 1-11, q. 110.

[32] "Unde relinquitur quod gratia, sicut est prius virtute, ita habeat subiectum prius potentiae animae; ita scilicet quod sit in essentia animae. Sicut enim per potentiam intellectivam homo participat cognitionem divinam per virtutem fidei; et secundum potentiam voluntatis amorem divinam, per virtutem caritatis; ita etiam per naturam animae participat, secundum quandam similitudinem, naturam divinam, per quandam regenerationem sive recreationem" *(STh* 1-11, q. 110, a. 4).

[33] *STh* 11-11. q. 1, a. 1.

[34] In explaining why the virtue of religion is not a theological virtue, Aquinas asserts that acts of worship do not attain God directly as does faith: "Cui cultus non exhibetur non quasi actus quibus Deus colitur ipsum Deus attigant, sicut cum credimus Deum, credendo attingimus, propter quod supra dictum est [11-11, q. 2, a. 2] quod Deus est fidei obiectum non solum inquantum credimus Deum, sed inquantum credimus Deo" *(STh* 11-11, q. 81, a. 5).

[35] "Actus autem credentis non terminatur ad enuntiabile sed ad rem" *(STh* 11-11, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2).

providing the authenticating force for the assent.[36] Faith always assents to a truth on the basis of the formal motivation *quod est a Deo revelatum* or *quod est a Deo dictum.*[37]

If by faith we transcend the human horizon and participate in the divine perspective,[38] such sharing nevertheless remains *secundum modum cognoscentis.* The fullness and simplicity of divine Truth *in se* is grasped through a glass darkly, in limited and fragmentary ways.[39] Faith is not yet the fullness of vision towards which it points.[40] Aquinas makes it clear that belief, as an intellectual activity, necessarily involves incompleteness and imperfection.[41] In his analysis of the traditional Augustinian definition of belief as *cum assentione cogitare,* Aquinas notes that it is of the very nature of belief as a *cogitare* to involve a kind of restless pondering that is ended by a firm assent based not on intellectual vision, as in *scientia,* but rather on the concomitant

[36] "Dicendum est quod cuiuslibet cognoscitivi habitus obiectum duo habet, scilicet id quod materialiter cognoscitur, quod est sicut materiale obiectum; et id per quod cognoscitur, quod est formalis ratio objecti. Sicut in scientia geometriae materialiter scita sunt conclusiones; formalis vero ratio sciendi sunt media demonstrationis, per quae conclusiones cognoscuntur. Sicut igitur in fide, si consideremus formalem rationem obiecti, nihil est aliud quam veritas prima: non enim fides de qua loquimur assentit alicui nisi quod est a Deo revelatum; unde ipsi veritati divinae fides innituitur tanquam medio" *(STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 1).

[37] *Super epistolam ad Romanos lectura, c. IV, lectio 1,* n. 327 in *Super epistolas s. Pauli lectura,* ed. Raphaelis Cai, vol. 1 (Rome: Marietti, 1953).

[38] "Unde oportet quod fides, quae virtus ponitur, faciat intellectum hominus adhaerere veritati quae in divina cognitione consistit transcendendo proprii intellectus veritatem" *(De Veritate* q. 14, a. 8 in *Opera omnia,* vol. 22 [Rome: 1972]).

[39] *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 2.

[40] "Ad tertium dicendum quod visio patriae erit veritatis primae secundum quod in se est, secundum illud *I Joann.* 3,2: *Scimus quoniam cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est.* Et ideo visio ilia erit non per modum enuntiabilis, sed per modum simplicis intelligentiae. Sed per fidem non apprehendimus veritatem primam sicut in se est" *(STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3). Faith as the inchoation of the beatitude that will eschatologically consist in vision is a pervasive theme in Aquinas. See II-II, q. 2, a. 3 on the way in which faith is the beginning of our learning about beatitude from God our teacher: "Unde ad hoc quod homo perveniat ad perfectam visionem beatitudinis praeexigitur quod credat Deo tanquam discipulus magistro docenti."

[41] "Fides autem in sui ratione habet imperfectionem quae est ex parte subjecti, ut scilicet credens non videat id quod credit" *(STh* I-II, q. 67, a. 3). See also II-II, q. 2, a. 1 and *De Verit.* q. 14, a. 1. For a superb analysis of belief, see O'Brien, "Belief: Faith's Act," appendix 4 in *Faith,* 205-15.

activity of the will.[42] The will supplies the firmness and certitude that would otherwise be lacking; the faintness of vision is remedied by the influence of love. This means that belief is an inherently restless intellectual state because the mind naturally seeks clarity and vision and so chafes at being brought to assent on the basis of something extrinsic to itself. The intellect of the believer therefore seeks something more akin to the divine vision of the whole. This intellectual questing is both steadied and prodded by the will: "For when anyone has a ready will to believe, he loves the believed truth and reflects upon it and embraces any supporting arguments that may be found."[43] *Fides* is inevitably *quarens intellectum.* Faith demands a *sacra doctrina* that explores the new intelligibility of reality revealed by *Veritas prima,* a *doctrina* that explores the godly view of the whole opened up by faith. The conformity to divine revelation implied by *secundum revelationem divinam* means more than that *sacra doctrina* develops in a manner that is logically consistent with what has been revealed. At the deepest level *secundum revelationem divinam* implies a conformity of perspective, a seeing with God; it is a teaching that strives to display the luminosity and intelligibility that the things believed have in God's own mind.

The way in which a new intelligible unity or whole is displayed in *sacra doctrina* is explained by Aquinas in response to the question of whether or not *sacra doctrina* is one science.[44] He begins by recalling one of the basic axioms of his thought: acts, powers, virtues, and ways of knowing are specified by their formal objects.[45] The sciences are diversified by the different dimen-

[42] "Dicendum quod intellectus credentis determinatur ad unum non per rationem, sed per voluntatem. Et ideo assensus hie accipitur pro actu intellectus secundum quod a voluntate determinatur ad unum" *(STh* 11-11, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3).

[43] "Cum enim homo habet promptam voluntatem ad credendum, diligit veritatem creditam, et super ea excogitat et amplectitur si quas rationes ad hoc invenire potest" *(STh* 11-11, q. 2, a. 10).

[44] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 3.

[45] "Est enim unitas potentiae et habitus consideranda secundum obiectum, non quidem materialiter sed secundum rationem formalem obiecti; puta homo, asinus et lapis conveniunt in una formali ratione colorati, quod est obiectum visus" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 3). For a classic text on the diversification of the sciences, see *In Boethii de Trinitate,* q. 5, a. 1.

sions of intelligibility latent in reality;[46] different habits of knowledge correspond to the different dimensions of intelligibility. What specifies and diversifies *sacra doctrina* as a distinct discipline is the new intelligibility of reality opened up by divine revelation: "Since holy scripture considers things insofar as they have been divinely revealed (as already noted), all things whatsoever that are revealable by God *[revelabilia]* share in the one formal object of this science."[47] The term *revelabilia* here bears the burden of describing the new horizon opened up by divine revelation; it denotes the capacity for reality to be grasped in the light of divine revelation.[48] The formal object of sacra doctrina is the intelligibility of the world as spoken by God. *Sacra doctrina* is a sharing in God's unified view of the whole as an *impressio divinae scientiae.*[49] Thus theology is a matter not simply of communicating new information, but rather of articulating an entirely new view of the whole based on the presentational dimension that results from faith's encounter with God revealing.

The scope and unity of the new intelligible whole given by divine revelation involves an ordering: "it *[sacra doctrina]* treats principally of God and then of creatures insofar as they are

[46] "Diversa ratio cognoscibilis diversitatem scientiarum inducit" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2).

[47] "Quia igitur Sacra Scriptura considerat aliqua secundum quod sunt divinitus revelata, secundum quod dictum est, omnia quaecumque sunt divinitus revelabilia, communicant in una formali obiecti huius scientiae. Et ideo comprehenduntur sub sacra doctrina sicut sub scientia una" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 3). Aquinas shifts between *sacra scriptura* and *sacra doctrina* as if the two were largely synonymous throughout *STh* I, q. 1. While the terms are not synonymous, they are closely connected; see Per Erik Persson, *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas,* trans. Ross MacKenzie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 86-90.

[48] The meaning of the term *revelabilia* has long been a matter of dispute and a proper understanding of it is the key to grasping the meaning of *sacra doctrina:* "The term does not stand for the later scholastics' 'virtually revealed,' i.e., deducible from the data of revelation. Nor does it have the meaning given in the fanciful interpretation that it covers truths which, in distinction from the *revelata,* could possibly be revealed, but need not be because they are accessible to unaided reason. In its context *revelabilia* means simply the quality, the formal interest, or intelligible value in every subject matter that engages the act of *sacra doctrina"* (O'Brien, *"Sacra Doctrina* Revisited," 502-3).

[49] "Et similiter ea quae in diversis scientiis philosophicis tractantur, potest sacra doctrina una existens considerare sub una ratione, inquantum scilicet sunt divinitus revelabilia, ut sic sacra doctrina sit velut quadam impressio divinae scientiae, quae est una et simplex omnium" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2).

related to God as their principle and end."[50] God is the true subject of *sacra doctrina* and everything else is considered *sub ratione Dei vel secundum ordinem ad Deum.*[51] Thus nothing lies outside the ken of *sacra doctrina* because in the great *exitus-reditus* of creation everything has God as its *principium vel finem.* In contrast with metaphysics, which attains only to a whole wherein God is known mediately as the First Cause,[52] *sacra doctrina* attains a share in God's own knowledge of the whole and thus constitutes a radically new kind of wisdom.[53] In the light of this new wisdom, the conclusions of the *philosophicae disciplinae* are not annulled, but rather relativized; they are seen now as providing only partial manifestations of the world's full meaning. It belongs to *sacra doctrina* to bring the partial perspectives into the unified whole disclosed by divine revelation; it is a new binding together of God and the world in the light of God's own perspective on the whole.

### *B) The Structure of the Summa*

The new presentational whole opened up by divine revelation is displayed and disclosed in the very structure of the *Summa*

[50] "Dicendum quod sacra doctrina non determinat de Deo et creaturis ex aequo, sed de Deo principaliter, et de creaturis secundum quod referuntur ad Deum, ut ad principium vel finem" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1).

[51] "Omnia autem pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei, vel quia sunt ipse Deus, vel quia habet ordinem ad Deum, ut ad principium vel finem. Unde sequitur quod Deus vere sit subiectum huius scientia" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 7).

[52] On the limited character of the knowledge of God arrived at by metaphysics, see Thomas C. O'Brien, *Metaphysics and the Existence of God* (Washington, D.C.: The Thomist Press, 1960), especially 124-69.

[53] "Dicendum quod haec [sacra] doctrina maxime sapientia est inter omnes sapientias humanas, non quidem in aliquo genere tantum, sed simpliciter. Cum enim sapientis sit ordinare et iudicare, iudicium autem per altiorem causam de inferioribus habeatur; ille sapiens dicitur in unoquoque genere, qui considerat causam altissimam illius generis.... Ille igitur qui considerat simpliciter altissimam causam totius universi, quae Deus est, maxime sapiens dicitur: unde et sapientia dicitur esse divinorum cognitio, ut patet per Augustinum, XII *de Trinitate.* Sacra autem doctrina propriissime determinat de Deo secundum quod est altissima causa; quia non solum quantum ad illud quod est per creaturas cognoscibile, quod philosophi cognoverunt, ut dicitur *Romans* 1,19: *Quad notum est Dei, manifestum est illis;* sed etiam quantum ad id quod notum est sibi soli de seipso, et aliis per revelationem communicatum. Unde sacra doctrina maxime dicitur sapientia" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 6).

*theologiae.* The *ordo disciplinae* of the *Summa* is determined primarily not by the pedagogical requirements of instructing beginners in theology (as indicated in the *Prologus),* but rather by theology's overriding task of articulating the whole *secundum ordinem ad Deum* or *sub ratio Dei.* The *ordo disciplinae* is dictated by the order that things have in God's own knowledge; the *ordo* of the *Summa* is not the construct of human rationalization, but rather the attempt to articulate the way the world is constructed by the creative mind of God.[54]

The precise nature of the guiding architectonic plan of the *Summa theologiae* has been subject to vigorous speculation in the wake of M. D. Chenu's groundbreaking work.[55] In a modified version of Chenu 's original proposal to interpret the structure of the *Summa* in terms of the *exitus-reditus* motif, M. D. Leroy has argued persuasively that the key to understanding the plan of the *Summa* as a whole is the classical distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia.*[56] Following the discussion of *sacra doctrina* in q. 1, the first section of the *Prima pars* (qq. 2-43) is the theological moment of the *Summa,* treating *de Deo secundum quod in se est,* one in essence and three in persons. The remainder

[54] "II s'agit d'autre chose, pour S. Thomas, que d'une systematisation rationelle, comme chez Abelard. II s'agit, autant que cela est possible, de s'elever jusqu'a voir Jes choses comme Dieu lui-meme Jes voit: c'est-a-dire toutes relatives a Son mystere necessaire, celui qu'il est lui-meme en Son unite et Sa Trinite. Qu'on parle de !'Incarnation et de la Redemption, de la creation, des anges, de l'homme, des sacrements, Dieu lui-meme est le veritable *sujet* de tout ce que !'on expose, on s'efforcera de penetrer et de construire ces mysteres a partir de Dieu et vers Lui, tout comme ii Jes a et poses a partir de Soi et vers Soi" (Yves Congar, "Le sens de *l'economie* salutaire dans la 'theologie' de S. Thomas d' Aquin," in *Thomas d'Aquin: Sa vision de theologie et de l'Eglise,* 76-77). See also the remarks by M. D. Chenu in *Introduction a l'etude de Saint Thomas d'Aquin,* deuxieme edition (Montreal: Institut d'Etudes Medievale, 1954), 263-64.

[55] Chenu 's original article on this topic was "Le plan de la Somme theologique de saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 47 (1939): 93-107. The same material appears in his *Introduction,* 255-76. It is the latter work that sparked renewed scholarly interest in the plan of the *Summa.* For an overview of the lines of the debate and bibliographical references, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Initiation a saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Editions Universitaires, 1993), 219-28. A valuable overview can also be found in H.-D. Gardeil, "Le plan de la Somme theologique," in *Somme theologique: La theologie* (Ia., Prologue et Question 1), (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1968), 171-92.

[56] Leroy's proposal comes in the context of a review of Patfoort's *Saint Thomas d'Aquin: Les clefs d'une theologie, Revue Thomiste* 84 (1984): 298-303.

of the *Summa* considers the *oikonomia* wherein God is considered as the origin and end of all things, especially rational creatures *(secundum quod est principium vel finem earum et specialiter rationalis creaturae).*[57] It is within the divine economy of the *Summa* that the *exitus-reditus* schema is central. The second part of the *Prima pars* (qq. 44-119) is dominated by the *exitus* or procession of creation from God, while the *secunda* and *tertia partes* treat the *reditus* of fallen humanity to God through Christ, who is our way of returning to God *(via est nobis tendendi in Deum).*

In the context of this discussion, what is significant about the *theologia-oikonomia* articulation of the *Summa's* structure is that it discloses a presentational whole that is reflective of Sokolowski's Christian distinction. The theological moment of the *Summa* establishes God's absolute independence and transcendence vis-a-vis creation. The treatment of God *in se* makes it clear that God does not need to be *principium* or *finis* of anything *ad extra* in order to be God. In the midst of this consideration Aquinas makes it clear that the key to understanding the relationship between God and the world lies in understanding the Trinity. In the context of explaining why natural reason cannot arrive at knowledge of the Trinity, Aquinas explains the importance of such knowledge:

> Knowledge of the divine persons was necessary to us for two reasons. First, in order that we might judge rightly concerning the creation of things. For when we say that God made everything by his Word, we rule out the error of those claiming that God produced things by necessity of nature. And when we affirm that there is a procession of love in God, it is clear God produced creatures not out of any need for creatures nor as a result of any extrinsic cause, but rather out of love for his own goodness .... The second and more important reason is so that we might judge rightly concerning the salvation of humankind, which is accomplished by the Son who became flesh and by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. [58]

[57] The distinction between *Deus secundum quod est in se* and *secundum quod est principium rerum et finis earum* is found in the prologue to I, q. 2.

[58] "Dicendum quod cognitio divinarum Personarum fuit necessaria nobis dupliciter. Uno modo ad recte sentiendum de creatione rerum. Per hoc enim quod dicimus Deum omnia fecisse Verbo suo, excluditur error ponentium Deum produxisse res ex necessitate

To judge rightly concerning the creation of things in the light of the Trinity is to understand what Sokolowski means by the Christian distinction in an even deeper sense. Indeed, what Sokolowski intends by the Christian distinction might best be termed the "Trinitarian distinction" in Aquinas. It is the conception of God as Trinity that ultimately distinguishes the Christian view from both pagan and other monotheistic views of the divine. To grasp the Trinitarian distinction is to see that God could have been all that there is and completely happy [59] in the community of Persons that is the Trinity quite apart from creation; creation is an act of pure generosity that adds nothing to God. The procession of creatures *ad extra* is utterly gratuitous because the processions *ad intra* of *Verbum et Amor,* Son and Spirit, constitute the perfect plenitude of divine life. Hence the procession of creatures is a pure gift of love that finds its deepest meaning in its reflection of the very processions of the Trinity.[60] The Trinitarian meaning of the *exitus* is reflected most significantly in the creation of the human person to reflect the image of the Trinity in a special way by sharing in the divine life through grace and, ultimately, the beatific vision.[61]

Just as the *exitus* of creation from God as *principium* must be understood in the light of the Trinitarian distinction, so too the way in which God constitutes himself as the *finis* of creation and especially of the *reditus* of humankind must be understood in the light of the distinction between the triune God and the world. God's decision to share the divine life with humankind as its *finis* is as sovereign and free as God's decision to create and still

naturae. Per hoc autem quod ponimus in eo processionem amoris, ostenditur quod Deus non propter aliquam indigentiam creaturas produxit, neque propter aliquam causam extrinsecum, sed propter amorem suae bonitatis. Unde et Moyses, postquam dixerat: *In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram,* subdit: *Dixit Deus, Fiat lux,* ad manifestationem divini Verbi; et postea dixit: *Vidit Deus lucem, quad esset bona,* ad ostendendum probationem divini amoris; et similiter aliis operibus. Alio modo, et principalius, ad recte sentiendum de salutate generis humani, quae perficitur per Filium incarnatum et per donum Spiritus Sancti" *(STh* I, q. 32, a. 1, ad 3).

[59] Notice that the treatment of the divine essence *(STh* I, qq. 2-26) ends with a discussion of God's happiness.

[60] See *STh* I, q. 45, a. 6.

[61] See *STh* I, q. 93.

more wonderfully gratuitous. Thus the entire moral horizon outlined in the *Secunda pars* is transformed by the disclosure that human action is a response to the triune God's generosity in creation, redemption, and ongoing sanctification. The finalization of human action by the gracious gift of God's own life requires new resources for human action, that is, the theological virtues, the infused moral virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.[62] It is vital to note that *sacra doctrina* involves a new 'frinitarian way not only of seeing the whole, but also of experiencing the whole.[63] The divine disclosure engages and transforms the entire person. By the gracious indwelling of the 'frinity we attain a new perspective that is not a disinterested speculative shift, but rather a complete reorientation of emotions and experience because the knowledge involved is affective, *per modum inclinationis;* it is a *notitia experimentalis,* a *verbum spirans amorem.*[64] It is knowledge by sympathy, familiarity, affinity, instinct, and assimilation; it is the knowledge of a mind in love.[65]

[62] Sokolowski has explored this theme in his chapter on "Theological Virtue" in *The God of Faith and Reason,* 69-87.

[63] "Dicendum quod cum iudicium ad sapientem pertineat, secundum duplicem modum iudicandi, dupliciter sapientia accipitur. Contingit enim aliquem iudicare uno modo per modum inclinationis, sicut qui habet habitum virtutis, recte iudicat de his quae sunt secundum virtutem agenda, inquantum ad ilia inclinatur unde et in X *Eth.* dicitur quod virtuosus est mensura et regula actuum humanorum. Alio modo per modum cognitionis, sicut aliquis instructus in scientia morali posset iudicare de actibus virtutis, etiam si virtutem non haberet. Primus igitur modus iudicandi de rebus divinis pertinet ad sapientiam quae ponitur donum Spiritus Sancti, secundum illud *I Car. 2.15: Spiritualis homo iudicat omnia,* etc.; et Dionysius <licit, II cap. *De Div. Nam.: Hierotheus doctus est non solum discens, sed et patiens divina.* Secundus autem modus iudicandi pertinet ad hanc doctrinam, secundum quod per studium habetur, Iicet eius principia ex revelatione habeantur" *(STh* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3). A fuller treatment of this theme is found in Aquinas's discussion of the gift of wisdom in *STh* 11-11, q. 45, especially a. 2.

[64] *STh* I, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2.

[65] See "The Dialectic of Love in the *Summa,"* appendix 10 in *Christian Theology,* volume 1 of the English-Latin *Summa theologiae,* trans. Thomas Gilby, O.P. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited, 1964), 124-32. Note especially the following passage wherein Aquinas describes the difference between faith's knowledge of God and every other kind of knowledge of God: "Nam notitia de Deo quae habetur per alias scientias, illuminat intellectum solum, ostendens quod Deus est causa prima, quod est unus et sapiens, etc. Sed notitia de Deo quae habetur per fidem, et illuminat intellectum, et delectat affectum, quia non solum <licit quod Deus est prima causa, sed quod est salvator noster, quod est redemptor, et quod diligit nos, quod est incarnatus pro nobis, quae omnia affectum inflammant" *(Super secundum epistolam ad Corinthios,* 11, lect. 3, n. 73 in *Super epistolas s. Pauli lectura,* vol. I).

The Trinitarian distinction is also required to make sense of Aquinas's treatment of the Incarnation and the saving work of Christ in the *Tertia pars.* The rationale for Aquinas's apparent relegation of Christ to the *Tertia pars* has long been a matter for dispute and criticism.[66] In this context what is important is that Aquinas presents the Incarnation and redeeming work of Christ as another expression of the sheer goodness of God.[67] Like creation, Incarnation and redemption find their ultimate reason in divine generosity. The placement of the historical redeeming work of Christ within the *Tertia pars* highlights the absolute gratuity of the Incarnation within the divine economy. The *exitus-reditus* circle is completed in the return to the Father through the *Imago* of the rational creature originally made in the image of God.[68]

What emerges from an attentive reading of the *Summa* is an appreciation for the way in which the structure articulates a new view of the whole, a new presentational dimension, opened up by faith in divine revelation. Crucial to this new presentational whole is an understanding of the relationship between the Trinity and creation disclosed in the distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia,* and this distinction unlocks the structure of the *Summa* as an expression of the divine view of the whole. It is the understanding of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the world as graciously created, redeemed, and sanctified that distinguishes *sacra doctrina's* view of the whole from that of philosophy. This completely new understanding of the divine, the world, and the human is successively worked out in the various tracts of the *Summa.* Yet these parts can only be understood within the horizon of the larger presentational whole and especially the Trinitarian distinction that is reflected in the *theologia-oikonomia* structure.

[66] See Gardeil, "Le plan de Somme theologique," 187-92.

[67] See *STh* III, q. 1, a. 1.

[68] See the remarks on the connection between the Incarnation and the *exitus-reditus* schema in Torrell, *Initiation,* 223-28.

## III

When the presentational dimension of theology as a *sacra doctrina secundum revelationem divinam* and the hermeneutical priority of the whole to the part in the *Summa* were obscured, so too was the deepest unifying dimension of Aquinas's thought. The history of this occlusion cannot be told here, but it must be acknowledged that it was powered by factors beyond the modern disparagement of appearances that Sokolowski so ably identifies. The rise of nominalism with its diminished sense of the power of reason to aid faith's search for understanding and the fragmentation of theology in the post-Reformation period were two major historical forces contributing to the loss of Aquinas's vision of *sacra doctrina.* As a consequence, Aquinas's thought came to be presented by his Neoscholastic adherents as a form of speculative-ontological theology. The legacy of this presentation is that even those who approach Aquinas sympathetically from inside the Scholastic tradition are likely to be blind to the presence of a theology of disclosure. Those who approach Aquinas from outside the Scholastic tradition are still more likely to share this blindness, since they tend to read the *Summa theologiae* in piecemeal fashion as the ultimate encyclopedic repository of speculative theology; their ignorance of the whole leads them to a distorted interpretation of the parts.

The fact that even Sokolowski, a perceptive reader and a proponent of the theology of disclosure, could fail to appreciate the presentational dimension of Aquinas's thought is an indication, however, that perhaps Aquinas himself did not do enough to bring that side of his theology from latency to patency. I would argue that two features internal to Aquinas's own presentation of the nature of *sacra doctrina* in the first question of the *Summa* help to explain this difficulty. I have tried to argue that the first question of the *Summa* is programmatic for a theology of disclosure in its articulation of *sacra doctrina* as *secundum revelationem divinam* and as having *revelabilia* as its formal object. Yet that reading of the first question, pioneered by O'Brien, represents a hermeneutic that can be obscured in the light of that very same question's other aim: to justify the status of theology

as a full-fledged *scientia* in the Aristotelian sense. If *sacra doctrina* is assimilated too closely and univocally to the Aristotelian model of a human *scientia,* then theology loses its presentational dimension and takes on the look of a speculative-ontological enterprise concerned solely with deducing new conclusions *(revelabilia* in the traditional and erroneous sense) from prior principles. Traditional Scholastic interpretations of the question, as typified in the late James Weisheipl's contribution to this journal's septicentenary celebration of Aquinas in 1274, reflect this incomplete understanding of the nature of *sacra doctrina.* While Aquinas does indeed practice deductive or speculative-ontological theology throughout the *Summa,* all such exercises presuppose the deeper presentational dimension as their ultimate horizon. Within the theology of disclosure, the paradigm is not the *scientia* of Aristotle's logical treatises, but rather the *scientia Dei et beatorum.*

The second factor internal to Aquinas's own presentation of *sacra doctrina* that obscures the latent practice of the theology of disclosure is that he does not clearly require that question 1 be read in the light of the subsequent analyses in the *Summa* of faith and the other theological virtues. As I have tried to show, *sacra doctrina* presupposes the encounter of the believer with God that results in a sharing in God's own life. In the intersubjective experience of faith, the horizon of the believer is completely transformed (both cognitively and affectively) so that the world takes on a new presentational dimension in the light of God revealing. The world is disclosed as having a new manifestness and intelligibility as presented to the believer by God's Word. It is the task of *sacra doctrina* to explore, deepen, and expand the divine presentational dimension opened up by faith. Yet this essential connection between faith and *sacra doctrina* is not clearly made by Aquinas in the opening question of the *Summa.* Perhaps he assumed that the first question of the *Summa* would be taken as a part and read in the light of the whole; for while in a sense the first question is the key to the whole, it cannot escape the part's dependence on the whole. The nature of *sacra doctrina* cannot be understood until the end of the *Summa,* whose own incomplete status stands as a reminder of the provisional character of

theology in the light of the ultimate disclosure in the beatific vision.

Sokolowski's project of articulating a theology of disclosure can serve two important roles in the recovery of Aquinas's theology of disclosure.[69] The first is to provide a hermeneutical tool that will enable us to get past the many factors that have occluded this latent dimension in Aquinas's thought. It is important to make it clear, however, that what is being advocated here is not some kind of naive or triumphalistic return to or repetition of premodern theology, but rather a genuine retrieval *(Wiederholung)* of premodern theology in the light of the contemporary problematic. It is neither desirable nor possible to assert the presence of a theology of disclosure in Aquinas and then simply reiterate it as if modernity could be neutralized by denial. Herein lies the second role of Sokolowski 's project for those interested in the ongoing viability of Aquinas's theology: Sokolowski has shown how phenomenology provides philosophical resources for engaging modernity as well as for appreciating dimensions of the previous tradition veiled by modernity. Thomists who have hitherto construed phenomenology as simply another species of post-Cartesian idealism will need to reevaluate their positions in the light of Sokolowski's more "realistic" presentation.[70] Sokolowski argues that phenomenology can help us to recover the mind's place in the world, the connection between appearance and being, an appreciation of the presentational dimensions of disclosure in speech, the importance of making distinctions, the hermeneutic of the whole, etc. All of these themes ought to be congenial to a Thomist looking for

[69] While I am concentrating on the relevance of Sokolowski's work for retrieving Aquinas, it must be acknowledged that Sokolowski's analysis of the Eucharist is itself a superb example of the theology of disclosure in operation.

[70] Sokolowski's "realistic" reading of Husserl is somewhat controversial. For an overview of his place within the spectrum of interpretations regarding the status of known objects *(noema)* in Husserl, see the "Introduction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl,* ed. Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22-27. I put "realistic" in quotation marks since I do not think that Sokolowski himself would approve of the term on the grounds that the realism-idealism debate and the attendant labels are generated by the modern pseudo-problem of the egoistic predicament.

ways of recovering and expanding Aquinas's theology of disclosure in a postmodern context; Sokolowski provides resources for genuine retrieval that anyone interested in the theology of disclosure ought to welcome. As Aquinas himself sought aid for the truth wherever it was found in the swirling currents of his contemporaries' thought, so too ought his followers do the same.[11]

In this essay I have tried to show how Aquinas's understanding of theology as a *sacra doctrina secundum revelationem divinam* can be understood as an exploration of the intelligibility of the new presentational dimension of the whole opened up by divine speech. As practiced by Aquinas, *sacra doctrina* encompassed all that would later be separated out into speculative, moral, and positive theology. When those subdivisions subsequently lost their larger context, they lost the horizon that gave them their deepest meaning. Rather than being an "intermediate form of theology," as Sokolowski describes his theology of disclosure, Aquinas's *sacra doctrina* is the architectonic form of theological thinking that makes it possible to do speculative, moral, and positive theology aright.[12] A recovery of a theology of disclosure is needed therefore not just as another kind of theology, but rather as the key to all forms of theological endeavor. That is why its retrieval is so important.[73]

[71] These general remarks ought not to be construed as papering over some obvious and serious conflicts between Sokolowski's phenomenology and Aquinas's position. For example, Sokolowski's campaign to exorcise concepts and species is obviously at odds with Aquinas's insistence on their necessity to an explanation of knowledge. My concern is not to argue for complete compatibility, but rather to claim that there are resources within Sokolowski's version of phenomenology that can be used to bring Aquinas's thought into dialogue with contemporary concerns.

[72] Leonard Boyle's historical work has shown, for example, that one of Aquinas's major aims in the *Summa* was to situate practical-moral theology within a fully unified theological perspective. See his *The Setting of the "Summa theologiae" of Saint Thomas,* Etienne Gilson Series 5 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982).

[73] I would like to thank my confreres Kurt Pritz! and John Allard for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

# AQUINAS'S DOCTRINE OF MORAL VIRTUE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THEORIES OF FACILITY

RENEE MIRKES, 0.S.F.

*Director, Center for NaProEthics*
*Omaha, Nebraska*

THOMISTIC COMMENTATORS from the post-Scholastic era to the modern period generally restricted their discussions of Aquinas's doctrine on the relationship between the acquired and infused virtues to the question of facility, that is, whether or not each kind of virtue facilitates the acts of the other. R. F. Coerver [1] gives 1943 as a cutoff date for contemporary discussion of the question of facility in the infused virtues. His 1946 dissertation on the topic notes that many theologians of his day had discarded the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic facility and, with the exception of the manuals of Merkelbach (1871-1942) and Herve {1881-1958), "few of the modern theologians devote much space to the interrelation of the acquired and infused moral virtues." [2]

'See Rev. Robert Florent Coerver, C.M., *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues,* The Catholic University of America Studies in Sacred Theology 92 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1946).

'Ibid., 113. A literature search from 1946 to 1994 *(The Guide to Catholic Literature, Catholic Periodical and Literature Index,* and *American Theological Library Association Index)* confirms Coerver's observation. The subject of facility in the moral virtues has not appeared as a topic of theological investigation since the 1940s. An exception is Romanus Cessario's *Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics* ([Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991], introduction, 10), which contains a section on the relationship of the acquired and infused moral virtues. After a discussion of Aquinas's distinction between the facility of acquired and infused virtue respectively, Cessario demonstrates how the development of the virtuous life of the Christian depends on the "dynamic interplay which exists between the exercise of the acquired and the enjoyment of the infused virtues." An article by John F. Harvey ("The Nature of the Infused Moral Virtues," *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Catholic TheologicalSociety of America* [1954]: 172-221) gives extended space to the relation of the infused and acquired moral virtues in terms of facility but relies primarily on Coerver's 1946 research. The small number of articles written after 1950 on the relation between acquired and infused

More recently, however, theologians such as Jean Porter [3] and Otto Hermann Pesch [4] have recognized that, in order to facilitate a critical appropriation of Aquinas's doctrine of virtue amidst the contemporary revival of a virtue-based ethics, it is critical that the exposition of his theory be complete. In attempting to assemble such a substantive account, however, one encounters a lacuna in the area of moral virtue. While insisting on the two species of moral virtue, acquired and infused, Aquinas devotes the greatest proportion of the *Secunda secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae* to the analysis of the acquired moral virtues and neglects a correspondingly full exposition of their infused counterparts. [5] Then, in the scattered references in which he does compare and contrast the two species of moral virtue, although he affirms that they can coexist in the Christian,[6] and that the presence of acquired moral virtues exerts [7] a positive impact on

moral virtues demonstrates a shift in thinking from interest in the relation between the acquired and infused moral virtues in terms of facility to their significance within the divine-human unity of Christian moral activity. This article reconsiders the earlier facility discussion in light of the reconstruction of the divine-human unity of moral activity as proposed by Aquinas.

[3] Jean Porter ("The Subversion of Virtue," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* [1992]: 38) opines that to appropriate Aquinas's virtue theory for contemporary purposes, one needs "to offer some account of the relation of acquired to infused virtues in the case of the individual who possesses both." In the same article Porter argues that because Aquinas does not systematically address the question of the relation between the acquired and infused virtues in the *Summa Theologiae,* one must reconstruct his theory on the basis of his explicit teaching on virtue and related topics. My research into other works in Aquinas's corpus in which he focuses on virtue, namely, *De virtutibus in communi, De caritate, De spe, De cardinalibus virtutibus, De veritate, In decem libros Ethicorum ad Nicomachum,* and *Scripta super libros Sententiarum,* verifies Porter's conclusion.

[4] Pesch ("The Theology of Virtue and the Theological Virtues," in *Concilium* 191: *Changing Values and Virtues,* ed. Dietmar Mieth and Jacques Pohier [Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1987], 91) insists that an account of Aquinas's doctrine of virtue cannot be complete until one examines in detail "the relationship between the theological and moral virtues, between infused and acquired virtues."

[5] See *STh* 11-11, qq. 47-170.

[6] See III *Sent.* d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 4, s.c; *STh* 11-11, q. 47, a. 14, ad 1; q. 53, a. 1, ad 3.

[7] In the course of this article, the human soul, its powers, and their perfections, the habits and virtues, are frequently described in a way that connotes hypostatization: the soul understands; the will desires; prudence directs; the acquired moral virtues exert, etc. Aquinas insists that one must always remember that it is the person who wills, the per-

facility in the performance of virtuous acts,8he does not discuss precisely how the two species of moral virtue interrelate in the moral activity of the Christian who possesses both.

Accordingly, we need to investigate the following. First, since Aquinas does not engage in an *ex professo* treatment of the question at hand, is it in accord with his theory of virtue to say that, in the Christian who acquires human virtue, the acquired and infused moral virtues coexist in a parallel fashion? That is, do these virtues enable the individual to perform purely natural acts of virtue at one time and purely supernatural acts of virtue at another? Or do both species of moral virtue contribute in some manner to the performance of the same moral act? Second, if the latter is the case, what is the theoretical explanation for a single moral act following from two causes, one natural, the other supernatural?

I will advance a reconstruction of Aquinas's theory of moral virtue by means of a twofold thesis.[9] First, in the Christian who also possesses the acquired moral virtues, each acquired virtue and its infused counterpart are the material and formal principles, respectively, of the perfect realization of that particular moral virtue and constitute a unified virtue that is supernaturally transformed. Or, to state the thesis differently: In the Christian moral life, a perfect moral act directed to a single material object but performed from two ordered motives, natural and supernatural, is able to realize a created good that is a means to attaining the absolutely ultimate end. Second, the theoretical explanation of the unity of perfect moral virtue [10] not only serves as a litmus

son who is prudent, the person who is virtuous. Reference to the soul, powers, or virtues is only for purposes of analysis and classification, and a certain reification of them is not intended to obfuscate the principal point that habits and powers of the human person are properties of a substantial human being pertaining to the accidental category of quality (see *STh* 1-11, q. 56, a. 5).

8 See *STh* 1-11, q. 65, a. 3, ad 2.

9 Aquinas's "theory of the relation between the acquired and infused moral virtues in the Christian" is alternately referred to throughout this investigation as "the theory of the unity of perfect moral virtue."

10 To understand the first part of the thesis, one must note that (1) Aquinas uses the term "virtue" analogically of human and divine virtue; (2) the terms "matter" and "form," when applied to the relation of these two types of virtue, are also analogical, since both are spiritual qualities when used in reference to virtue; and (3) the term "perfect moral virtue" is applied in its absolute sense only to human virtue transformed by grace.

test for the validity of representative theories of facility but also demonstrates the proper context within which the notion of facility will function as an apt tool in the reconstruction of Aquinas's theory of moral virtue.

## I. FOUNDATIONS FOR THe RECONSTRUCTED THEORY

### *A) Aquinas's Explicit Teaching on "Habitus" and Virtues*

The appropriate first step in grasping what Aquinas explicitly teaches regarding virtue is to investigate his theory of *habitus.*[11] Aquinas's concept of a habit, the genus of virtue, lays a foundation for the thesis of this paper in two ways. First, it highlights the active power of a habit, a cardinal concept in the theoretical part of the thesis which involves the concept of habits related to one another as potency to act or matter to form. In the introduction to his treatise on habit, Aquinas declares that powers and habits are the intrinsic sources of action in the human agent.[12] As a disposition to act, a *habitus* is an active principle or agent that orients a power of the soul to perform a certain operation with ease, promptness, and enjoyment.[13]

[11] *Habitus* is a fourth declension noun which, in the nominative case, has the same form in the singular as in the plural. It is derived from the verb *habere,* meaning to have or possess something, or *se habere,* to be in a certain state (see *STh* 1-11, q. 49, a. 1). Translations are often misleading. To translate *habitus* with the English word "habit" could confuse contemporary connotations of the word with the Scholastic meaning. Whenever the word "habit" (or *habitus)* is used in this paper, it is used in its Scholastic sense. In short, it does not mean some automatic reflex or response passively developed through repetition (as a twentieth-century person might speak of "a habit of smoking") but rather a deliberate qualification of human powers whose exercise always constitutes a freely chosen act.

[12] "Principium autem intrinsecum est potentia et habitus" (prologue to *STh* 1-11, qq. 49-54: Leonine edition, 6:309).

[13] Understood in hylomorphic terms, a habit is related to a power as form to matter or act to potency. It determines or perfects a power, which has the potency to act indeterminately, and causes it to act in a determinate way in an easy and steadfast manner. Because human beings can act in more than one way and because they are subject to random, chance influences, their actions require habituation. They can choose and determine their goals and the means to those goals. Human agents, therefore, need added dispositions to ensure that they act in accord with their nature. Good *habitus* ensure that the rational powers and their natural dispositions toward truth and goodness function optimally. *Habitus* are vicious if these basic dispositions are relativized in evil choices, that is, in choices that cripple the practice of the natural good habit.

The second way Aquinas's theory of *habitus* lays a foundation for my thesis is by illustrating that a habit is also a passive power or agent, that is, capable of receiving further perfection from a superior habit. Aquinas is careful to point out that habits, like human activity, are complex. For example, a good habit of the intellect, such as the habit of science, functions optimally only when the possible intellect and the interior cognitive senses are perfected in their respective activities.[14] From another perspective, a habit of science, although materially a habit of the knowledge of conclusions reached by reasoning, is also formally a habit of the first principles known by insight from which this reasoning proceeds. Moral *habitus* are also complex. Although essentially an appetitive habit, a moral habit is accidentally or secondarily a habit of the intellect, that is, prudence.[15] The habit of the intellect is related to the habit of the appetite as the accidental form of a power is related to the substance of the soul, that is, as form to matter.

The material and formal principles of a composite human habit (e.g., the habit of a particular science) have the following significance. The habit that is the material component (e.g., the habit of memory) is the necessary substratum for the perfecting form (the habit of science) and, while maintaining its own essential form, the habit of memory is further defined by the form that it receives from the superior habit of science. The reality of the composite habit of science transcends that of either component principle. Therefore neither the habit of memory nor the habit of science *in se* is a habit in an absolute sense. Alone the inferior or superior habit is imperfect or incomplete, but together the ordered components form one complete or perfect habit that is unified by the form of the superior habit.

When we move from Aquinas's discussion of *habitus* to good habits or virtues, especially human or acquired virtue, three

[14] See *STh* 1-11, q. 50, a. 3, ad 3.

[15] Aquinas speaks of moral virtue as a requirement of prudence. See *STh* 1-11, q. 57, a. 4. "Therefore, for right reason about things to be done which is prudence, it is necessary that man have moral virtue" ("ideo ad rectam rationem agibilium quae est prudentia, requiritur quod homo habeat virtutem moralem") *(STh* 1-11, q. 58, a. 5: Leonine, 6:376). All English translations of Latin texts are mine.

points of central interest vis-a-vis the thesis emerge. First, Aquinas's analogous use of the term "virtue" creates a fluid hierarchy of human virtue. Insofar as the criterion for superior human virtue is that which inheres in the most perfect human faculty, the intellect, and that which is directed to the noblest human activity, contemplation, intellectual acquired virtue ranks higher than, or is superior to, acquired moral virtue. But when Aquinas defines human virtue in its absolute sense as that which involves the will directed to the formal good, then acquired moral virtue ranks as virtue in an absolute sense *(simpliciter)* while intellectual virtue is virtue in a restricted sense *(secundum quid).* [16]

With Aquinas's introduction of infused virtue into the hierarchy of virtue, however, the superiority of acquired moral virtue is itself relativized. Since divine or infused virtue is directed not to a particular good but to the absolute Good, [11] acquired moral virtue is no longer virtue in an absolute sense but, in reference to infused virtue, is virtue in a restricted sense. Nevertheless, because Aquinas demonstrates the complementarity of the

[16] For Aquinas, the speculative virtues are more excellent than the moral virtues, objectively speaking, because they proceed more directly from the rational part of the human soul and are directed to the ultimate end, the contemplation of God. They are less excellent in *thefullest sense of virtue,* however, because they lack an act of the will directed to a formal good. Since only the will, or faculties directed by the will, is directed to *bonum ut bonum,* only virtues that perfect these appetites are virtues strictly speaking. Therefore, in the order of human virtue, only moral virtues are virtues in an absolute sense. "Thus only the habits pertaining to the appetitive part can be called virtue, not, however, the intellectual habits, and especially not the speculative habits" ("sic solum habitus respicientes appetitivam partem virtutes dici possunt, non autem intellectuales, et specialiter speculativi") (III *Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, a. 4 qcla. 3, sol. 1: Moos, 3:712).

[17] **If** the human agent is to move toward an end, the end must be known and desired, i.e., it must be seen as attainable and lovable. Faith is the virtue that enables the human being to know God for, through faith, "the mind comprehends those things which it hopes for and loves" ("apprehendit intellectus ea quae sperat et amat") *(STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 4: Leonine, 6:405). Hope is the virtue that gives the recipient the confidence that God is attainable, for, perfected by hope, the will reaches out to its end with a "movement of intention tending toward [the good] itself as if toward that which is possible to attain" ("motum intentionis, in ipsum tendentem sicut in id quod est possibile consequi") *(STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 3: Leonine, 6:403). And charity is the virtue that enables the person to love God because "through it [the will] is transformed, so to speak, into that end" ("per quam quodammodo transformatur in ilium finem") (ibid.).

respective ends of acquired moral virtue (particular good) and infused moral virtue (absolute Good), it can be argued that he presents acquired moral virtue as disposed toward infused moral virtue.

Second, Aquinas sets the active-passive potency of the natural dispositions as the standard for the causality that is characteristic of human virtue.[18] Hence, just as the natural dispositions or "seeds of virtue" are the perfecting principles of the inferior power of their respective faculties, so is it reasonable to argue that acquired moral virtue is the perfecting principle of the natural dispositions that are subordinate to it. Just as natural dispositions are the perfectible or material principles of the more perfect principles of the acquired intellectual and moral virtues, so is it reasonable to argue that acquired moral virtue is the perfectible or material principle of infused virtue, which is superior to it.

Third, through his theory of the unity of human moral virtue, Aquinas demonstrates that perfect moral virtue is materially an acquired moral virtue and formally a virtue of prudence. He asserts that knowledge alone fails to ensure good human activity; the human appetites, both rational and sensitive, can present formidable opposition to the direction of reason and demand the perfection of the moral virtues to dispose them to obey reason, that is, to obey the direction of prudence.[19] Therefore, perfect moral virtue in the human order, or relatively perfect moral virtue, is a composite virtue that is formally a virtue of prudence and materially a virtue of justice, temperance, fortitude, or their allied virtues.

[18] The natural dispositions or "seeds of virtue" are passive principles because they are receptive to the form of the perfected or acquired virtue, and they are active agents because, like the natural principle of fire, they induce their own form into the power from which their action originates. In this way, natural dispositions, with a graduated impact, impress their form on their respective powers and on each act that proceeds from their powers until by the frequent repetition of these acts the habits of the virtues and sciences are perfected.

[19] To cite only one example, it is not enough for someone to be well-disposed toward temperate acts in food, drink, and sex by moral virtue; one must also have the knowledge of how, where, why, and when to be temperate through the intellectual virtue of prudence before one can be assured of actually being temperate.

Furthermore, with the composite nature of relatively perfect moral virtue, a single human virtue consisting of ordered components that are in a matter-form relationship, Aquinas sets the precedent for the composition of an absolutely perfect moral virtue. That is, through the unifying presence of prudence, Aquinas defines the prototype of each species of human virtue, both intellectual and moral, as a composite virtue. Similarly, through the unity of charity,[20] he defines absolutely perfect moral virtue as a virtue that is formally an infused virtue and materially an acquired virtue. All the infused moral virtues, Aquinas insists, depend on charity.[21] Charity, or supernatural love of God, is the form, source, and end of all action that is supernatural and meritorious. As a result, besides acts of faith, hope, and charity, Christians can posit supernatural acts of fortitude, temperance, justice, prudence, and their allied virtues, acts that are the means to attaining their supernatural end or happiness. The other moral virtues cannot exist without prudence, and prudence cannot exist without the other moral virtues, for the latter dispose a person to certain natural ends from which the judgment of prudence begins. But for prudence to judge rightly regarding the supernatural end, the virtue of charity that fits the agent to that end must be present.[22] In other words, an infused moral virtue,

[20] For Aquinas, the principle that charity is the form of the virtues means, in its most general sense, that charity perfects the acts of the other virtues by commanding or directing them to their ultimate end, in effect by making the justified capable of acts of love that would otherwise exceed the power of the human will.

In *De caritate,* Aquinas reiterates the notion of charity as an exemplary form *iforrna exemplaris),* but he qualifies the notion slightly by explaining that charity is an effective exemplar form *(exemplar effectivum),* a form producing acts like itself. Here charity is the form of the virtues not so much as generating other virtues like itself but as producing virtues that operate like itself. The nexus between charity and the other virtues is underscored in Aquinas's description: "charity, considered as an act, not only has an exemplarity, but it also has a motive and effective force. For there is no effective exemplar without its copy, because it produces something in being. And thus charity does not exist without the other virtues" ("Caritas quantum ad actum non solum habet exemplaritatem, sed etiam virtutem motivam et effectivam. Exemplar autem effectivum non est sine exemplato; quia producit illud in esse; et sic caritas non est sine aliis virtutibus") *(De caritate* 3, ad 8: Vives, 14:239).

[21] See *STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 3, and ad 1; *De virtutibus cardinalibus* 2.

[22] Aquinas insists that charity is essential to the infused moral virtues. The infused virtue of prudence is able to judge correctly regarding the supernatural end only by means of the direction of charity. Likewise, the other infused moral virtues that are con-

having received its perfect form from charity, is also able to effect, produce, and create its own form or perfection in its acquired counterpart, enabling the acquired virtue to function just like the infused.

Finally, although Aquinas teaches that a particular acquired virtue and its infused analogate have the same material act, they have different formal objects or motives.[23] The motive for practicing supernatural temperance in regard to food, for example, is a supernatural measure: Christians should chastise their bodies and bring them into subjection. The motive for practicing natural temperance in regard to food is a natural measure: food should not harm the body nor hinder reason.[24] The end of an acquired moral virtue is good behavior in human affairs; the end of an infused moral virtue is to perfect the person as a citizen of heaven. Because of the ordered relationship of imperfect to perfect principles, Aquinas demonstrates that the motive and end of acquired moral virtue is included within, or is the material component of, the motive and end of infused moral virtue. As a

nected with prudence and cannot exist without it, also require the perfection of charity in order to direct the agent to the absolutely ultimate end *(ad finem ultimum simpliciter).* What Aquinas appears to be saying is that the line of command or direction from charity to the infused moral virtues, except for prudence, is a mediate one. Prudence maintains its command of the other moral virtues on the supernatural plane; charity informs prudence directly and, through prudence, the other infused moral virtues. In one sense, then, both charity and prudence connect the infused moral virtues, but charity is their ultimate bond because all the divine virtues are directed to the end of charity.

[23] See *STh* I-II, q. 63, a. 4; *De virtutibus* 10, ad 7, 8, 9; III *Sent.,* d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 4.

[24] "Habits are specifically distinguished in two ways: in one way ... according to the specific and formal characters of their objects .... It is evident, however, that the mean which is imposed on desires of this sort according to the rule of human reason differs from that mean which is imposed according to the divine rule. For example, in the consumption of food, by human reason the mean is established that it should not injure bodily health nor impede the act of reason. But according to the rule of divine law, it is required that, by abstinence from food and drink and from other like things, man *should chastise his body and reduce it to servitude"* ("dupliciter habitus distinguuntur specie. Uno modo ... secundum speciales et formales rationes obiectorum .... Manifestum est autem quod alterius rationis est modus qui imponitur in huiusmodi concupiscentiis secundum regulam rationis humanae, et secundum regulam divinam. Puta in sumptione ciborum, ratione humana modus statuitur ut non noceat valetudini corporis, nee impediat rationis actum; secundum autem regulam legis divinae, requiritur quod homo *castiget corpus suum, et in servitutem redigat,* per abstinentiam cibi et potus, et aliorum huiusmodi") *(STh* I-II, q. 63, a. 4: Leonine, 6:411; see also ibid., ad 1).

result, an act of temperance following from a perfect virtue of temperance is a single act performed from two ordered motives and for two ordered ends.[25]

### *B) Aquinas's Teaching on Structurally Related Issues*

We have demonstrated the compatibility of the reconstructed theory of the relation between acquired and infused moral virtues with Aquinas's explicit teaching on virtue, but it is also possible to verify the validity of this theory by illustrating its complementarity to his indirect teaching regarding this question, that is, in respect to cases that are analogous to the relation of the two species of moral virtue and that illustrate his conception of the unity of any entity that consists of distinct components ordered to each other as matter to form.[26] For example, Aquinas argues that the informed human act, though composed of the material-formal components of the commanded act and the act of command, is one act.[21] The human person, though composed of the material-formal principles of body and soul, is one human

[25] As far as the intention of an act is concerned, Aquinas insists that the human agent is able to intend more than one thing at the same time. Therefore, since intention responds to both a final and a proximate end, it is possible to do one and the same act for both a natural and a supernatural end. See *STh* I-II, q. 12, a. 3.

[26] See G. P. Klubertanz, "The Unity of Human Activity," *The Modern Schoolman* 27 (January 1950): 75-103.

[27] "But just as in the genus of natural things a certain whole [being] is composed of matter and form as, [for example] the man who is one natural being is composed from soul and body, although [this whole] may have many part, so also, in human acts, the act of an inferior power is related to the act of the superior power materially. For the inferior power acts in virtue of the superior power moving it; even so the act of a prime mover is related to the act of its instrument formally. Hence, it is evident that a command and the act commanded are one human act, just as some whole [thing] is one, but as to its parts is many" ("Sicut autem in genere rerum naturalium, aliquod totum componitur ex materia et forma, ut homo ex anima et corpore, qui est unum ens naturale, Iicet habeat multitudinem partium ita etiam in actibus humanis, actus inferiores potentiae materialiter se habet ad actum superioris, inquantum 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") *(STh* I-II, q. 17, a. 4: Leonine, 6:121).

person.[28] The activity of Christ, though composed of the material-formal causes of human and divine activity, is a single activity,[29] and the Divine Law, though composed of the material-formal elements of the Old Law and the Gospel Law, is a single law.[30] Therefore, we can deduce, *mutatis mutandis,* what Aquinas might have said if he would have asked the question "How do the acquired and infused moral virtues function within the justified person?" Moral virtue in the Christian, though composed of acquired and infused moral virtue, is an indivisible but composite virtue that is formally an infused moral virtue and materially an acquired moral virtue.

## II. INADEQUATE THEORIES OF FACILITY[31]

### *A) The Suarezian Theory of Facility in the Moral Virtues*

The main lines of the sixteenth-century Scholastic response to the objection that infused moral virtues do not confer facility[32]

[28] "It is not necessary to ask if the body and soul are one [thing] as neither [is it necessary to ask whether] the wax and its shape are [one thing]" ("non oportet quarere si unum est anima et corpus, sicut neque ceram et figuram") (cited in *STh* I, q. 76, a. 7, s.c.: Aristotle, *De anima* 2.1 [412b 6-9]).

[29] "Dionysius posits a *theandric* operation, that is, a *divine-male* or *divine-human* operation in Christ, not through some confusion of the activities or powers of both natures but, through this, that his divine action uses his human action and his human action participates in the power of the divine action" ("Dionysius ponit in Christo operationem *theandricum,* idest *divinam-virilem* vel *divinem-humanum,* non per aliquam confusionem operationum seu virtutem utriusque naturae, sed per hoc quod divina operatio eius utitur humana eius operatione, et humana operatio participat virtutem divinae operationis") *(STh* III, q. 19, a. 1, ad 1: Leonine, 11:240).

[30] See *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 5.

[31] Coerver identifies a number of principal opm10ns regarding facility among Thomistic commentators between the mid-16th and 20th centuries. Of these, the opinions of Suarez and Billot are, in Coerver's estimate, the two main theories. See Coerver, *Facility,* 65-67.

[32] John Duns Scotus, O.F.M. (1274-1308)denied the existence of infused moral virtues distinct from theological virtues, particularly from charity which he argued is sufficient to direct the acquired virtues to a supernatural end. Subsequent to this refutation, an extensive debate ensued over the existence and the nature of infused moral virtue (see Coerver, *Facility,* 10-11; Cessario, *Moral Virtues,* 103-4). Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scholastics, in the revival of theological speculation that accompanied the Counter-Reformation, defended Aquinas's doctrine on the infused moral virtues against two principal objections: first, the moral virtues are not infused; second, these supposed virtues do not confer facility in the practice of virtue.

can be traced to Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), who, followed by the Salmanticenses (Discalced Carmelites) and J. B. Gonet, O.P. (ca. 1616-81),[33] introduced the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic facility in reference to the acquired and infused moral virtues, respectively. He explains the distinction thus:

A twofold facility can be distinguished: one is intrinsic which *per se* is in each faculty in relation to the act to which [that faculty] is inclined; the other is through the removal of impediments which occur *per accidens.* These [infused] virtues, therefore, give the first kind of facility inasmuch as they confer an intrinsic ease of acting to the acts to which they are connaturally inclined as to their own end and ultimate act. Therefore, since these virtues are intrinsically in their powers, they are as certain weights inclining the powers to their proper acts. In this way, they give intrinsic facility.... But they do not supply an extrinsic facility because the contrary difficulty comes either from natural ignorance or inconsideration, or from the stirrings of concupiscence, or from the corruptibility of body; these impediments, however, are not taken away by the [infused] virtues. [34]

Suarez argues that although the intrinsic facility of the infused virtues qualifies as facility in a broad sense by conferring a positive inclination of the faculty to the good of virtue, it does not remove external impediments that may cause difficulties in the exercise of the virtuous act.[35] In order for the intrinsic facility of the infused virtue to become operationally functional, it needs to

[33] Coerver *(Facility,* 26-28) points out that in his *Clypeus theologiae thomisticae contra novos ejus impugnatores,* Gonet quotes verbatim the definition of intrinsic and extrinsic facility from the *Cursus Theologicus,* a theological treatise based on the outline of the *Summa Theologiae,* the bulk of which was written in the seventeenth century by the Salmanticenses, Discalced Carmelites of the College of St. Elias in Salamanca, Spain.

[34] "Duplex enim facilitas ... distingui potest: una est intrinseca, quae per se inest cuicumque facultati respectu actus ad quern inclinatur; alia est per ablationem impedimentorum quae per accidens occurrunt. Hae igitur virtutes priorem dant facilitatem, eo ipso quod intrinsecam conferunt operandi facultatem ad actus ad quos connaturaliter inclinantur tanquam ad finem suum, et ultimum actum. Uncle cum hae virtutes intrinsece insint suis potentiis, sunt veluti pondera quaedam ad suos actus inclinantia potentias. Hoc ergo modo dant intrinsecam facilitatem sicut supra etiam de Theologicis virtutibus tetigimus. At vero extrinsecam facilitatem non praebent, quia contraria difficultas provenit aut ex naturali ignorantia vel inconsideratione, aut ex fomite concupiscentiae, vel corporis corruptibilitate; haec autem impedimenta per has virtutes non auferuntur" (Suarez, *Opera Omnia,* vol. 9, book 6, chap. 9, n. 9: Coerver, *Facility,* n. 52).

[35] Coerver, *Facility,* 29.

be complemented by the extrinsic facility of the acquired virtue. In what way acquired virtues render this assistance is the next issue to be investigated.

After making the distinction between the extrinsic facility associated with the acquired virtues and the intrinsic facility proper to the infused virtues, Suarez discusses yet another difficulty that is both practical and theoretical. Experience teaches that there is an extrinsic facility of action connected with the repeated exercise of infused virtues. How does one account for this kind of facility? Suarez suggests two logical sources:

> First, as a result of the same [repeated] supernatural and infused acts that are from infused habits or those that are elicited by divine help, other habits are acquired, or, second, as a result of other natural acts which can be produced concerning the same matter of the infused habits ... habits are produced proportionate to such acts.'[6]

In the first solution, an acquired habit that is generated directly from the repeated acts of infused moral virtues is the origin of the facility. For example, repeated acts of infused prudence would produce an acquired virtue of prudence which, in turn, lends a facility of action to the infused virtue. Suarez rejects this theory "because a habit which is acquired concerning natural acts tends toward acts of the same kind as those from which it originated and toward the same object under the same formality; the acquired habit cannot tend to the same object under the same formality [as an infused virtue] because that object is supernatural." [37] Therefore, infused acts of virtue could no more generate an acquired virtue than acquired acts of virtue could produce infused virtue. As Suarez states, "A natural quality does

[36] "Primo, quia per eosdem actus supernaturales et infusos, qui ab habitibus infusis; vel per divinum auxilium eliciuntur, alii habitus acquiruntur. Secundo, quia per alios actus naturales qui circa easdem materias habituum infusorum fieri possunt ... producuntur habitus talibus actibus proportionati" (Suarez, *Opera Omnia,* vol. 9, book 6, chap. 14, n. 2; Coerver, *Facility,* 36 n. 2).

[37] "quia habitus qui acquiritur circa actus naturales, inclinat ad actus ejusdem rationis cum his a quibus genitus est, et ad idem objectum sub eadem ratione formali; habitus acquisitus non potest inclinare ad idem objectum sub eadem ratione formali, quia illud objectum supernaturale est" (Suarez, *Opera Omnia,* vol. 9, book 6, chap. 14, n. 7).

not have a natural appetite toward the supernatural. "[38] Instead, Suarez suggests that the facility of action associated with the exercise of infused virtues originates directly from the grace of God that increases the effective power of the infused virtue. The repetition of purely supernatural acts of virtue, then, disposes faculties for ease in the exercise of infused virtue "by removing impediments, by moderating some affections, or by in some way excluding repugnant habits." [39]

Suarez explains that a second possible source of extrinsic facility associated with the exercise of infused virtue has its origin in purely natural acts of acquired virtue. In this case, acts of acquired prudence exercised independently of acts of infused prudence would communicate facility to the virtue of infused prudence. Suarez endorses the second theory but nuances it. Although the repetition of purely natural acts of virtue does not confer direct extrinsic facility of action on the infused virtues, it does give a *per accidens* extrinsic facility. In other words, there is a connection between purely natural acts of acquired virtue and purely supernatural acts of infused moral virtues in that the exercise of the acquired virtue, being directed to the same material object as the infused virtue, contributes a facility of action, or ease of performance, to the latter.

In sum, then, according to Suarez the acquired and infused moral virtues are principally related in one way: the repeated exercise of purely natural acts of acquired virtue can communicate a certain facility of action to their infused counterparts. That is, they do not directly or positively assist in the performance of supernatural acts of virtue, but they assist in an indirect or dispositive way by removing impediments, moderating affections, and excluding vices. Only the grace of God and repeated acts of purely supernatural virtue, however, contribute directly and positively to facility in the infused virtues.

[38] "tum quia naturalis qualitas non habet naturalem appetitum ad supernaturalia" (ibid.).

[39] "tollendo impedimenta, moderando aliquos affectus, vel habitus aliquo modo repugnantes excludando" (ibid., n. 24; Coerver, *Facility*, 37 n. 3).

*. B) Critique*

Suarez is correct in his recognition and interpretation of basic Thomistic principles regarding the differences between the acquired and infused virtues. However, if he had carried the implications of these principles to their logical conclusion, he would have come to a different verdict. As it stands, he contradicts the very principles he initially upholds.

First, it should be conceded that the distinction Suarez makes between extrinsic facility proper to an acquired virtue and intrinsic facility associated with infused virtue (theological and moral) is a faithful interpretation of the brief references of Aquinas to the question. Furthermore, Suarez's definitions of the nature of the two kinds of facility are accurate representations of the distinctions noted by Aquinas. In sum, by eradicating impediments to virtuous acts, acquired virtues make the performance of those acts easy, prompt, and enjoyable. Infused moral virtues, on the other hand, are infused by God rather than acquired through human practice, and therefore do not confer an extrinsic facility of action. They do incline the person to the good of virtue, and the respective human power to the good of virtuous acts.

Nevertheless, after this clear delineation of the distinct kinds of facility peculiar to acquired and infused virtues, Suarez contradicts himself when he insists that extrinsic facility of action *cannot* be attributed to acquired virtues but comes directly from grace, particularly from the persistent exercise of the infused virtues. It is probably correct to suggest that such a conclusion is an effort by Suarez and proponents of his theory of facility to be solidly anti-Pelagian. [40] But it must be said that, by the time he wrote the *Summa Theologiae,* Aquinas was also thoroughly anti-Pelagian; yet he manages to keep in balance the supremacy of divine intervention and the dignity of human effort. While Aquinas admits the complementarity and reciprocity between human and divine effort in the Christian moral life, Suarez appears to underscore the preeminence of the divine by denying any human contribution to supernatural moral activity.

[40] Billot, *De virtutibus infusis,* 58.

Second, it should be conceded that Suarez correctly maintains two complementary rules that Aquinas sets down throughout his treatise on virtue: first, virtues are divided into different species based on their distinct formal objects; second, the effects of virtue are proportionate to their cause so that, for example, infused virtue cannot be said to be the cause of acquired virtue, nor acquired virtue the cause of infused virtue. Based on their specific difference, Suarez contends that repeated acts of infused virtue cannot produce an acquired virtue anymore than repeated acts of acquired virtue can generate supernatural virtues. A supernatural effect, therefore, cannot have a natural cause and vice versa. If this principle is applied logically to facility in virtue, an acquired virtue cannot produce intrinsic facility, and an infused virtue cannot generate extrinsic facility. Suarez, therefore, accurately interprets Aquinas's teaching on the specific difference between the acquired and infused moral virtues by reasoning that if one wants to account for the extrinsic facility that experience indicates can also be associated with repeated acts of infused virtue, one cannot say that the acquired virtue responsible for this facility is generated by an infused virtue. Nevertheless, instead of insisting that the acquired virtue would have to be produced by a proportionate natural cause, he denies his original association of extrinsic facility with acquired virtue and claims that the extrinsic facility of the infused virtue comes directly from grace and from the repeated acts of infused virtues.

Perhaps the underlying flaw that is responsible for Suarez's inconsistent reasoning is his exclusive notion of moral virtue, namely, his assumption that in the Christian life there can be purely natural or purely supernatural virtues. The comprehensive or inclusive view of virtue proposed by Aquinas and supposed in the thesis of this study, namely, that perfect virtue for the Christian who also possesses the acquired virtues is a composite but single entity, dictates that every Christian virtue, adequately considered, is an ordered reality in which the component parts are related as matter to form. A moral virtue, in its absolutely perfect state, is formally speaking supernatural or an infused virtue and materially speaking natural or an acquired moral virtue. For an infused moral or theological virtue to be

rated as a complete or perfect example of that kind of virtue, both the material and the formal causes or principles must make their proper contribution. The formal cause is the supernatural perfection that determines the composite virtue to be the kind that it is; the material cause is the natural perfection that is in potency to the perfecting formal cause and is able to be determined by it, while at the same time exercising its own reciprocal causality.

There is no evidence in Aquinas, then, to support the claim that, in the life of the Christian who also possesses the acquired virtues, there is the possibility of performing purely natural acts of acquired virtue. One could argue that there might be Christian acts of moral virtue that are performed predominantly from natural motives, but taking into account what Aquinas says about virtual intention and charity, even these acts would be formally supernatural. [41]

Although Aquinas speaks of a Christian who performs exclusively supernatural acts of diligence or prudence, he also points out that such an act falls short of perfect virtue or the "fuller" virtue of diligence. [42] A moral virtue of diligence or prudence that lacks a material component only aids the individual to make good decisions regarding supernatural life; it does not also help him to decide well in human affairs. Suarez's exclusive notion of virtue requires him to substitute a caricature of infused virtue-an act that is purely supernatural-for the inclusive notion of perfect nioral virtue presented by Aquinas. Only when absolutely perfect moral virtue is understood as a single, ordered reality do the examples of Aquinas that allude to a lack of facility in those who are practicing infused moral virtue make any sense. The reason that the person still suffers a lack of ease in the performance of infused virtues after their restoral following sacramental penance, for example, is that the infused virtue is still linked with the material component of an acquired vice or a vicious disposition. Until the person is able to replace the acquired vice with an acquired virtue, ease in performing the infused virtue

[41] See *De car.,* 11, ad 2.

[42] See *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 14, ad 1.

cannot occur. If Suarez were correct and the repeated acts of purely supernatural infused virtues and grace produced a direct extrinsic facility, Aquinas's examples would be nullified. The individual who repents and therefore possesses the infused virtues and practices them should, in the Suarezian view, perform them with ease.

Finally, Suarez's conclusions about facility in the infused virtues fail to provide an explicit discussion of the implications of the theory of facility for the larger question of the interplay between human moral effort and divine intervention in the life of a Christian. Instead of making an "end" of the theoretical discussion of facility and the insight it gives about the relationship between the acquired and infused virtues, Aquinas's doctrine on perfect moral virtue in the Christian acts as a "window" that opens onto the broader view of the divine-human interplay in the Christian life as a whole. The first practical implication that one can draw from Aquinas's schema is that human moral effort in the Christian life is not to be suppressed or neglected. By its very nature, human activity lies open to or is dispositive toward divine intervention with its purifying and perfecting power. God expects human beings to do their part and accepts human effort as the very complement of grace.[43] The second practical implication is that grace and divine infusion of virtue is the primary or formative cause of Christian moral activity. Grace permeates nature. The contribution of the Christian, by way of the exercise

[43] It is well to note here that Aquinas's concept of nature and grace, which the matter/form relation of the acquired and infused moral virtues presages, bears little resemblance to the "standard view of nature and grace in post-Tridentine and neo-Scholastic theology" to which Karl Rahner *(Nature and Grace,* trans. Dina Wharton [London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963], 1; see esp 1-44) strenuously objected. For Aquinas, grace transforms nature without destroying it; grace corrects and perfects nature without denying its dignity. Rahner was correct, then, in his criticism of later Thomistic commentators who taught that the natural and supernatural "interpenetrate as little as possible," or that nature's orientation to grace "is thought of as negatively as possible," or that the natural being of man "is a closed system complete in itself with grace as a pure superstructure that leaves what is beneath unchanged" (ibid., 7). Aquinas's theory of the unity of perfect moral virtue, with its focus on an existential description of the nature/grace composite of the moral act of a Christian, accomplishes precisely what Rahner insists contemporary theology must teach about grace, namely, how grace "penetrates our conscious life, not only our essence but our existence too" (ibid., 26).

of virtue, takes place only because of the antecedent gratuitous will of God; divine grace precedes all human effort. Human moral activity and the growth and development of virtue in the Christian life have their source and their ultimate meaning and perfection in God.

### *C) Billot's Theory of Facility in the Moral Virtues*

If the concept of facility is to be applied to the infused virtues, Louis Cardinal Billot argues, it must include more than the conferral of the possibility of supernatural activity. The facility of the infused virtue must also confer an inclination to the object of virtue (i.e., the good), or an inclination to acts of virtue (i.e., the actual pursuit of the good). These two types of inclination are formally distinct and existentially separable, however. One could have an inclination to the object of virtue without having the inclination to the act of virtue.[44] In order to illustrate his point, Billot appeals to the example of two persons who are in bad health. The first has a strong desire to get well, but he has no inclination to take medicine that he dislikes. The second does not have a burning desire to get well, but he has no aversion to taking medicine. The infused virtues confer the first kind of facility in that they give a "special inclination to the good which is its object,"[45] but they do not confer the second type of facility, that is, an inclination to acts of virtue. Only the acquired virtues suppress their contrary vices, temper the passions, and thus make possible the prompt and easy exercise of acts of virtue. Nevertheless, Billot maintains that the facility of the infused virtues still qualifies as facility in the broad sense because it includes an inclination to the good.[46]

Regarding the question of whether an acquired virtue communicates a facility to its concomitant infused virtue, Billot agrees with Suarez that, if the Christian possesses the acquired moral virtues, they confer a *per accidens* facility in performing

[44] Coerver, *Facility,* 32.

[45] "specialem inclinationem ad bonum quod est eius obiectum" (Billot, *De virtutibus infusis,* 34).

[46] Coerver, *Facility,* 32.

supernatural acts of virtue.[47] But, in response to the question of whether repeated acts of the *infused* virtues contribute to the facility of the *infused* virtues, Billot maintains that human experience teaches that they produce acquired habits and, therefore, facility.[48] In the lives of saints, for example, there is no adequate explanation for the facility that one sees in their practice of the infused virtues unless one admits that through the repetition of supernatural acts an acquired virtue is produced. The latter ensures that "the natural power is better subjected to the same infused virtue, and it is always more and more disciplined to perform promptly according to [the infused virtue]."[49]

Against the Suarezian position that describes God as the direct or *per se* origin of the facility of the practice of the infused virtues, Billot argues that grace is an extrinsic factor, and the kind of facility that accrues to the infused virtues is intrinsic to the respective faculty. Also, when Suarez and proponents of his view admit that the facility that belongs to the repetition of acts of infused moral virtues moderates passion, Billot asserts that "they implicitly concede our conclusion, namely, that a habit is generated by which ease of practice of the same virtue is positively acquired."[50] It is inconsistent for proponents of the Suarezian theory, on the one hand, to admit that the facility that follows from the repetition of the infused virtues moderates passions and removes impediments to virtue and, on the other, to deny that repeated acts of infused virtue produce an acquired virtue.[51] Furthermore, to hold such a position is absurd because it is tantamount to admitting that, despite the repetition of infused virtue, Christians will never have the ease, readiness, and delight in their moral activity that persons without grace exhibit who possess acquired virtue.[52]

[47] Ibid., 39.

[48] Ibid., 58.

[49] "naturalis potentia eidem infusae virtuti melius subiicitur, et semper magis magisque disciplinatur ad prompte operandum secundam ipsam" (Billot, *De virtutibus infusis*, 50; see Coerver, *Facility, 55* n. 67).

[50] "implicite concedunt conclusionem nostram, videlicet: generari habitum quo facilitas exercitii eiusdem virtutis positive acquiritur" (Billot, *De virtutibus infusis,* 51).

[51] Coerver, *Facility, 55-56.*

[52] Ibid., 56.

In response to Suarez's argument that an infused virtue with its specific formal object cannot produce a concomitant acquired virtue with a different formal object, Billot contends that this claim substitutes an obscure point for an obvious fact. He advises that, first, the abstruse remarks concerning the specific formal objects of the infused and acquired virtues ought to be abandoned in favor of the straightforward empirical datum that facility does develop from the repetition of acts of infused moral virtue. [53] As Billot insists: "What is more clear than that from repeated acts of infused virtue the same facility of exercise is totally acquired as is ordinarily acquired from any repetition of human acts?" [54] Second, if one makes a distinction between the way a habit is caused by repeated acts and the way acts are caused by a habit, the difficulty of diverse formal objects can be resolved. [55]

When we analyze the way an act is caused by a habit, Billot explains, it is clear that the act takes on the same formal determination as its respective habit and the faculty it perfects. On that account, only supernatural acts will follow from a power perfected by a supernatural virtue. According to the mode of operation of a supernatural virtue, then, a supernatural habit neither produces an acquired virtue or act nor is it directed to the same formal object as the acquired virtue.

But if we examine the way a habit is caused by repeated acts, it is possible to argue that a natural virtue can proceed from a supernatural virtue; a natural virtue is virtually contained in the supernatural, and the natural virtue is directed to the same formal object as the supernatural. [56] Billot argues that although each faculty, as a passive power, receives the impressions of repeated supernatural acts, it does not receive their supernaturality. The faculty, exercised in the same way by repeated acts of both acquired and infused moral virtues, is indifferent to natural or

[53] Ibid., 58.

[54] "quid clarius quam quod ex frequentatione actuum virtutis infusae eadem omnino acquiritur exercitii facilitas, quae acquiri solet ex qualibet repetitione actuum humanorum?" (Billot, *De virtutibus infusis,* 53).

[55] Coerver, *Facility,* 68.

[56] Ibid., 68-69; Billot, *De virtutibus infusis,* 60.

supernatural formation: [11] What happens when the faculty is formed by repeated supernatural acts is that it acquires a disposition and a propensity to perform similar acts of virtue. In other words, this disposition and propensity are the acquired habit and the facility that follows from it. Therefore, when the active agent determining the faculty is the repeated acts of infused virtue, the disposition or facility that is produced in the faculty is nevertheless an acquired virtue. [18] Thus, according to the way in which a habit is produced by acts, there is a common formal object between the acquired and infused virtue, and therefore a univocal predication between the substance of the acquired moral act and that of the act of the infused virtue. [59]

In defense of the position that the facility that accompanies repeated acts of infused virtue has its source in acquired virtue as generated from the infused, Billot has his own interpretation of the following passage from the *Summa Theologiae.* (Coincidentally, this text is also used as a proof for the Suarezian argument that an infused virtue cannot produce an acquired virtue.)

> Acts which are produced by an infused habit do not cause some habit but strengthen a preexisting one, just as medicines brought to a naturally healthy man do not cause health but rather reinforce the health already possessed. [60]

Billot argues that if this text is understood in its context, it does not contradict his position. [61] First, Aquinas is referring to both the theological virtues and the infused moral virtues when he refers to the category of "infused virtue." Second, it must be noted that Aquinas is presupposing the principle that two habits of the same species cannot exist in the same subject. With this context in mind, one can interpret Aquinas as saying that the

[57] Coerver, *Facility,* 58.

[58] Ibid., 58, 69.

[59] Ibid., 68.

[60] "Dicendum quod actus qui producuntur ex habitu infuso, non causant aliquem habitum, sed confirmant habitum praeexistentem: sicut medicinalia adhibita homini sano per naturam, non causant aliquam sanitatem, sed sanitatem prius habitam corroborant" *(STh* 1-11, q. *51,* a. 4, ad 3: Leonine, 6:329; cited in Coerver, *Facility,* 61 n. 84).

[61] Coerver, *Facility,* 61-62.

infusion of virtue does not mean that two species of the same virtue exist in the Christian at the same time. Neither the repeated acts of theological virtue nor the repeated acts of infused moral virtue produce virtues of the same species. For that reason, the exercise of infused moral virtue (one species) cannot produce infused moral virtue (same species), nor can the exercise of infused moral virtue produce acquired moral virtue, because, in Billot's schema, "the *per accidens* infused virtue [infused moral virtue] is of the very same species as the acquired virtue."[62] Based on the same principle, the exercise of repeated acts of theological virtue (one species) cannot generate other theological virtues (same species). However, Aquinas does not, according to Billot, rule out the possibility that the repeated exercise of theological virtue (one species) is able to generate acquired virtue (different species). Thus Billot concludes that Aquinas's text does not contradict his theory that the exercise of infused theological virtues produces an acquired virtue.

*D) Critique*

In Billot's theory of facility in the infused virtues, the acquired and infused virtues are related in two ways. First, repeated acts of purely natural or acquired virtue can communicate an accidental extrinsic facility to the performance of their infused counterpart. Second, repeated acts of infused theological virtue generate acquired virtue which, in turn, confers to the theological virtues a *per se* facility of action.[63] Billot's notion of a natural virtue being virtually contained in an infused theological virtue means that the acquired and infused virtue are directed to the same object, the supernatural end, and therefore are of the same substance. Although this approximates Aquinas's idea of a composite moral virtue in the Christian life, Billot is unsuccessful, on another score, in doing justice to Aquinas's inclusive concept of moral virtue in the life of grace. Having categorized the acquired

[62] "infusus *per accidens* omnino eiusdem speciei est cum acquisito" (Billot, *De virtutibus infusis,* 56).

[63] As discussed above, the first type of facility is called accidental because it follows from acts performed independently of the infused virtues. *Per se* facility follows directly from repeated acts of infused virtue.

and infused moral virtues as the same species of virtue, and following Aquinas's principle that two species of the same virtue cannot exist in the same subject, Billot is unable to extend his analysis of *per se* facility in the infused virtues to include the question of the relationship between the two species of moral virtue. Failing on that point, he is also prevented from mining completely the rich vein that Aquinas explores, namely, the human fullness of moral virtue in the Christian life, with its even richer implications for the interplay of nature and grace in the moral activity of the justified.

In his observations regarding the communication of an accidental facility from the acquired virtues to the infused, Billot displays the same exclusive theory of moral virtue as Suarez. Accordingly, the Christian is able to practice purely natural acts of virtue which, in helping to remove impediments to the exercise of virtue, make performance of acts of infused virtue easier.

As discussed above, this exclusive notion of Christian virtue cannot be reconciled with Aquinas's presentation of absolutely perfect moral virtue. In the Christian who also possesses the acquired virtues, moral virtue is a composite, ordered reality. It consists of an acquired virtue or material component and an infused virtue or formal component that together enable the justified to perform moral acts that are directed to one material object under two different but ordered formalities. We have already noted that Aquinas does recognize that moral virtue in its perfect state does not belong to every Christian. However, although he alludes to the fact that some Christians perform good acts from the infused virtues alone,[64] Aquinas does not present the reverse possibility of a Christian who performs purely natural acts of virtue. He admits, of course, that the good pagan can be naturally virtuous,[65] but even these virtues must be understood against Aquinas's remarks that all good acts are the result of divine and human causality.

[64] In *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 14, ad 1, Aquinas presents the case of an infused virtue of diligence that suffices for good judgment regarding supernatural matters versus a "fuller" supernatural virtue of diligence that equips one for good judgment in both eternal and temporal affairs.

[65] See *STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 2.

Essential to Billot's theory is his assertion that what ought to be given primary consideration in the discussion of facility is not the obscure point of the specific difference between the acquired and infused virtues that Suarez emphasizes but a datum of universal experience, namely, that the practice of acts of infused virtues is accompanied by a facility of action. There are two criticisms to be raised against this assertion. First, as we have already pointed out, personal experience and examples from texts of Aquinas contradict Billot's insistence on a direct corollary between facility and the exercise of infused virtues. Aquinas's example of a Christian who, following a sincere act of contrition for serious sin, experiences difficulty in his practice of virtue due to acquired vicious dispositions challenges Billot's suggestion that facility or an acquired virtue universally accompanies the exercise of infused virtues. The fact that, after recourse to the sacrament of penance, a person once again possesses the infused virtues but still experiences a lack of facility in their performance belies Billot's theory. Similarly, the case of a saintly person who possesses the infused virtues and who practices supernatural acts of temperance but who, as a recovering alcoholic, struggles to stay sober because he lacks the acquired virtue of temperance or the material component of Christian moral virtue also rebuts Billot's assumption. What conforms more closely to a lived experience of the graced life for many is the situation of a Christian who exercises infused moral virtues without having the acquired counterpart and who struggles in the practice of moral virtue. Therefore, only when that exercise of infused moral virtue is accompanied by an *ease* of practice can we posit the existence of the acquired virtues as the source of that facility. In short, facility *can* accompany the performance of infused virtues, but it does not universally do so.

The more fundamental question that Billot's theory answers only unsatisfactorily is: What is the cause of the acquired virtue that confers facility in the performance of infused virtues when it is present? Certainly Billot has discovered part of the answer when he connects facility with the possession of acquired virtues. Yet when he maintains that the acquired virtues are generated from the repeated acts of infused virtue, it is clear that he does

not grasp the whole answer. It is consistent for Billot to argue in this manner because he ignores the implications of Aquinas's teaching on the difference of formal objects between the acquired and the infused virtues. If he had recognized the connection between the specific difference of the acquired and infused virtues and Aquinas's principle of the proportion between cause and effect, he would eventually have had to justify his claim that an infused virtue containing a supernatural perfection could generate a virtue containing a natural perfection.

The principal flaw of Billot's conclusion regarding the cause of the facility that accompanies the performance of infused virtue is that he neglects to take account of an important factor in the generation of a virtue: a perfection or virtue is produced in its respective power only when the act that is repeatedly performed contains the perfection of that virtue. To acquire a natural virtue of prudence, for example, the person needs repeatedly to perform acts that contain the perfection of right reason until the accumulated effect of these acts brings the power from a state of potency to actuality, and the person is able consistently and with ease to judge rightly about what is to be done in the here and now. It is the perfection or the goodness of the repeated act in which the agent wills the good as a good for himself that is responsible for the formation of the virtue. Against Billot's claim that the power itself, merely by its repeated exercise, produces a perfection or virtue, it is necessary to point out that the power *in se* is in potency; it *lacks* perfection and only becomes determined, actualized, or perfected through repeated acts that contain the perfection of the virtue being formed. In short, one cannot explain the cause of a perfected power or virtue by something within the power itself, because the power is only in potency to the virtuous disposition.

Billot is correct to insist that the natural faculty lacks the capacity to receive the supernatural character of the repeated acts of an infused virtue. This, after all, is precisely why Aquinas insists that supernatural virtues must be infused by God. But Billot is led to a faulty conclusion regarding the cause of the acquired virtue and its facility when he neglects the point that

human faculties *do* have the capacity to be determined by the natural perfection of repeated acts of acquired virtue. This natural perfection follows from the mean of the virtue set by the rule of reason which is realized in the formal object or motive of the act. The perfection or mean of the acquired virtue of temperance in food consists of the practice of moderation in food from the motive of promoting health of mind and body. This virtue is acquired by the person who, over time and in varying circumstances, deliberately chooses to eat moderately in order to promote a healthy mind and body and to become a productive member of the temporal city. Only after the faculty of the concupiscible power is exercised by acts containing this perfection does the power acquire the perfection of that virtue and the concomitant ease of performance. In sum, Billot's conclusion that acquired virtue proceeds from repeated acts of infused virtue not only contradicts the Thomistic principle that effects are proportionate to their causes, but also deviates from Aquinas's explanation of the correlation between the perfection of the repeated acts and the actualization of the respective power in the process of acquiring virtue.

Billot's attempt to prove that there is no contradiction between the text of Aquinas that states that repeated acts of infused virtue do not produce another habit of the same species,[66] and his own theory that repeated acts of infused theological virtue generate an acquired virtue,[67] also deserve closer examination. First, Billot argues that the passage applies to virtue infused *per se,* that is, to theological virtue, not to infused moral virtues. Second, viewed in this framework, the text only denies that acts of theological virtue are able to produce other theological virtues. But it does not exclude the possibility that acts of theological virtue are able to produce virtues of other species, such as acquired virtues. Therefore, in concluding that repeated acts of theological virtue (one species of virtue) can produce acquired virtue (a different species of virtue), Billot emphasizes

[66] See *STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 4.

[67] Billot, *De virtutibus infusis,* 55-56.

that he does not violate Aquinas's principle that virtues of the same species cannot coexist in the same subject. [68]

The logic of Billot's argumentation, particularly regarding the specific likeness of the acquired and infused moral virtue, completely diverts him from the question of the relation between the repeated acts of infused moral virtue and facility. One can only speculate that, if he had taken into account the specific difference between the acquired and infused moral virtues, he might have been led to a correct account of the proportionate cause of that acquired virtue, namely, repeated acts of acquired virtue. From that conclusion he might have reasoned further to the important implications that follow from the relation of acquired to infused moral virtue represented in the concept of facility. Particularly, he would have had an incipient insight into Aquinas's view of the divine-human cooperation in Christian moral action, a view that accepts human effort as the "matter" that is capable of being transformed by grace. However, aside from such speculation about what Billot might have concluded, we are left with only the tenuous connection that he sees between acquired virtues and their infused counterparts by way of an accidental facility that is communicated from the former to the latter.

## III. CONCLUSION: AN ADEQUATE THEORY OF FACILITY

As we have argued, neither of the representative theories of facility accurately represents Aquinas's concept of the relation between the acquired and infused moral virtues. Certainly, Billot's is a more faithful interpretation; he recognizes that the theological virtue and its acquired counterpart form a single virtue, although he does not explain their relationship in terms of matter and form. The opinion of Suarez, in failing to assign any role to acquired virtue in the *per se* facility of the infused virtue, completely neglects the notion of the acquired virtue as the material component of perfect moral virtue and thereby minimizes the importance of human effort in the Christian moral life.

[68] Ibid., 56.

These critiques of the theories of Suarez and Billot might tempt one to conclude that using the concept of facility to identify Aquinas's view of the unity of perfect moral virtue is unproductive at best or counterproductive at worst. I would like to argue that the insight that led four centuries of Thomistic commentators to use the issue of facility as a way to reconstruct Aquinas's theory of the relationship between the acquired and infused virtue is essentially a sound one. However, this approach will only lead to an accurate interpretation of Aquinas's view of Christian moral virtue when facility is assessed within its full context. In other words, it is critical that the notion of facility is understood, first, within the perspective of Aquinas's notion of the composite nature of perfect virtue discussed in part 1. Second, the theory of facility and its implications for the relation of the acquired and infused moral virtues can only be properly understood within the context of Aquinas's teaching on other issues that deal with a single, ordered reality, such as those discussed in part 2. And, third, an adequate understanding of facility depends on a careful implementation of the relevant Thomistic principles that figured in both the theories of Suarez and Billot and their critiques in this chapter. Our concluding remarks will be directed to the question: How is the topic of facility an effective key to a recognition and substantiation of the matter-form relation of the acquired and infused moral virtues within the unity of perfect moral virtue?

Aquinas's distinction between the type of facility proper to the acquired virtues and that proper to the infused, as well as his examples of lack of facility mentioned above, indicate that only when both types of facility are present in Christian moral activity is the person able to perform supernatural acts of virtue with ease. When one recalls the recurring motif of Aquinas that it is unthinkable that God would provide in a less generous way for the execution of the life of grace than he does for the life of natural virtue, it is clear that, according to Aquinas, ease in performance is something that should mark Christian moral activity just as it does the activity of the non-Christian. In other words, in the very way that Aquinas defines the facility proper to the acquired and infused virtues respectively, he indicates that both ought to be

integral qualities of the moral activity of the Christian and, therefore, characteristics that ought to mark the Christian life. The acquired virtue and its facility constitute the material component of Christian moral virtue; this comprises the visible or observable facility. This facility allows for the easy performance of virtuous acts due to the moderation of passions and the destruction of contrary vices that can only come as a result of the repetition of acts of virtue over time in varying circumstances. The infused moral virtue and its facility comprise the formal component of Christian moral virtue since the infused moral virtue enables the faculty and its natural virtue to adhere firmly to the good of virtue and, through charity, to be ordered to the supernatural end.

The incomplete nature of each type of facility implies their complementarity. The intrinsic facility of the infused virtue cannot be operationally functional without the extrinsic facility of the acquired virtue, and this latter cannot be depended on in the midst of temptations to sin unless united to the perfection of intrinsic facility. If extrinsic-intrinsic types of facility, proper to the acquired and infused moral virtues, respectively, are ordered components of a single reality related to each other as matter to form, *a fortiori* the virtues that generate those respective qualities must also be so ordered. It follows, then, that the relationship between the qualities of extrinsic and intrinsic facility is analogous to the relationship between the acquired and infused moral virtues that produce those types of facility.

In a search for the theoretical explanation for the causality of the acquired virtue that confers extrinsic facility on the performance of supernatural acts of virtue, one must be guided by the principle that effects are proportionate to their causes. The acquired virtue and its concomitant facility, then, can only be generated by a cause proportionate to them, that is, by repeated acts of natural virtue. This conclusion leads to another: in Aquinas's view, **in** the context of the generation of facility **in** the performance of supernatural acts of virtue, human moral effort is a constitutive element which, when transformed by the supernatural, forms an operational unity with grace and the infused virtues.

# DEIFICATION IN THE *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE:* A STRUCTURAL INTERPRETATION OF THE *PRIMA PARS*

A. N. WILLIAMS

*University of Puget Sound*
*Tacoma, Washington*

WHAT IS HUMAN DESTINY? To become God. That, at least, was the belief of the earliest Christians. Such an understanding is evident in the letters of St. Paul (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:49; and 2 Cor 8:9) and the first Christians found it in the pages of the Hebrew Bible (Ps 82:6, quoted in John 10:34). Above all, the nascent theological tradition pointed to 2 Peter 1:4: "Thus has he given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from corruption that is in the world because of him, and may become participants in divine nature." As the tradition reflected on these texts, deification became the dominant model of salvation and sanctification in the patristic period, from Ignatius of Antioch to John Damascene, in the West (in the writings of Tertullian and Augustine) as well as in the East. [1]

Although the doctrine retained this place of pre-eminence in Eastern theology, at some point it ceased to be the prime model for salvation for the West. Conventional wisdom would

[1] Good, concise accounts of deification can be found in Jules Gross, *La divinisation du chretien d'apres les peres grecs: Contribution historique a la doctrine de la grace* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1938); *Dictionnaire de spiritualitt!, ascetique et mystique, doctrine et histoire,* s.v. "divinisation"; William G. Rusch, "How the Eastern Fathers Understood What the Western Church Meant by Justification," in *Justification by Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue* 7 (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985); and G. W. H. Lampe, "Christian Theology in the Patristic Period," in *A History of Christian Doctrine,* ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

maintain that the point of breakage occurred in the Middle Ages, when the West focused first on the doctrine of the atonement and later on justification. Like much conventional wisdom, this account contains a germ of truth; deification lost its dominance at some point, for it clearly no longer occupies such a position in our time, signs of its renascence notwithstanding. Where the conventional wisdom errs, however, is in locating the break in the Middle Ages, for the greatest of all medieval Western theologies, the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, contains a highly developed doctrine of deification.

Indeed, the doctrine of deification pervades the *Summa.* If Western readers have failed to notice it, we may conjecture they have done so for two reasons. The first is that it is precisely pervasive and not localized: one finds no question "Whether Human Persons Are Deified?" in the pages of the *Summa.* Second, Western readers may be unable to see the doctrine simply because they are unfamiliar with it. Because this model of sanctification has been absent from Western theology for so long, Western readers do not recognize either the paradigmatic structure of the doctrine or the language that traditionally conveys it. To see the *Summa's* doctrine of deification, then, we must first describe it in its classic, which is to say patristic, form.

Deification may be distinguished from other doctrines of sanctification in that it refers the question of human holiness in the first instance to the doctrine of God. Sanctification consists simply in participation in divine nature. To describe the transformation of the human person, therefore, we do not undertake principally to specify virtues like gentleness or courage, or powers like healing or levitation. Rather, the description of sanctification departs from a distinctive description of God. One of the prime characteristics of a doctrine of deification, then, lies in the integral connection between theology and anthropology.

A second mark of this doctrine is the particular doctrine of God that forms its basis, balancing two conflicting impulses. On the one hand, God is the giver who not only creates, but invites the creature into communion. On the other hand, in a Christian context, which takes for granted the distinction between creature and Creator, the divine distinctiveness must be upheld,

against the threat of an encroaching, albeit unwitting, pantheism; moreover, for the self-giving to be genuinely *divine* self-giving, the giver must remain transcendent.

In classic formulations of deification, the guard against pantheism and the protective rail around divine transcendence take the form of a particular conception of grace. Grace does not denote some "thing" that is separate from God and that communicates God's power in the manner of an intermediary, conferring on the recipient a degree of godliness that is less than being God. Nevertheless, because God alone gives grace, the assertion that the human person becomes divine by grace rather than by nature effectively reinforces the ontological divide between Uncreated and created. The distinction between creature and Creator can now be parsed as the difference between the One who voluntarily and generously shares his life, and those who can only be recipients of that life. By grace the deified indeed share in divine nature, but they never themselves become Deifiers.

The two chief notes of both the doctrine of deification as a whole and the doctrine of God upon which it is founded are thus the claims of divine transcendence and free self-giving, the assertions that we genuinely participate in the divine nature, but never become divine in the way in which God is divine. The doctrine of deification engages in a never-ending shuttle between these two poles: the assertion of the union of Uncreated and created, and yet the unbreachable ontological divide that separates them.

Another important distinguishing mark of the doctrine of deification is the implication of seamlessness between this life and the next. This seamlessness is not so much directly asserted as strongly implied by the lack of all distinction between sanctification and eschatology. Doctrines of deification decline to specify the qualitative distinction between this-worldly sanctity and next-worldly perfection. They do not, it should be carefully noted, claim that sanctity in this life differs in no respect from the life with God in the age to come; yet their silence regarding the difference implies a unity of sanctification and consummation.

The final identifying mark of the doctrine in its classic form is the well-defined set of images the Fathers use to characterize

deification. This body of images constitutes the doctrine's most important tradent, which is another reason for its invisibility to Western eyes.[2] As Western theology became more systematic in its structure, more propositional in its form, it tended to lose sight of earlier forms of theological exposition. Deification, even in its patristic form, has become virtually invisible to the eyes of modern Westerners because instead of defining deification, or providing a phenomenological description of the deified, the Fathers use a set of cognates for deification that forms a quasi-technical vocabulary. Three of these terms-participation, union, and adoption-function as virtual synonyms for deification. Others, like grace, virtue, and knowledge, denote means or loci of growth in sanctity that are common to all Christian doctrines of sanctification. Another group, light, contemplation, glory, and vision, are found in medieval and modern Western theologies, but tend to be appropriated either to sanctification (light and contemplation) or consummation (glory and vision), rather than denoting the unity of the two, as they do in a doctrine of deification. The status of this last group becomes further complicated by their use in the West primarily within the tradition of mystical and ascetical theology, a position that leaves them largely ignored by modern theologians.

These images fail in the end to give a precise definition of what it means to be deified. They fail to do so, necessarily, because deification, even more than other forms of sanctification, asserts a form of human engagement with God that transcends human experience and defies the descriptive power of human language. Nevertheless, while this body of images is both relatively large and allusive and cannot neatly encapsulate the whole meaning of deification, it provides a description consistent with the three marks of the doctrine already noted: to be deified is to be transformed by God's gift of self, to know God and to grow in virtue towards likeness to God, to contemplate God and to see anew, to encounter light and be illumined by it, in virtue

[1] See, for example, A. N. Williams, "Light from Byzantium: The Signficance of Palamas' Doctrine of Theosis," *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (1994): 483-96.

of the gift of grace that makes one the adoptive child of God, a participant in divine nature by grace, grafted into God's life in a bond that begins in this life and extends into the next in an unbroken unity, but that never violates the transcendence of the gracious Giver.

This doctrine of deification is therefore what we are seeking in the pages of the *Summa.* Since we cannot simply turn to the article that treats it directly, we must use other methods of finding it. We might begin by looking for instances of the images just identified; doing so would not only clearly show the pervasiveness of the doctrine in the *Summa,* but would also demonstrate that despite its systematization Thomas 's theological method retains many similarities to that of the earlier tradition. Such an undertaking would take much more space than we can afford here. Instead, we will look for the doctrine in two other forms: in the handful of direct references to deification, and in the doctrine's structural exposition, the particular way in which the doctrine of God intersects with theological anthropology in the *Summa.*

## I. DIRECT REFERENCES TO DEIFICATION

We begin by establishing the existence of a doctrine of deification in its most elementary form, with those passages where Thomas speaks directly and unambiguously of deification, deiformity, and participation in divine nature. Although few in number, these references indicate that Thomas takes deification for gran-ted.[3] The best example occurs in the response in *STh* I-II, q. 112, a. 1, where he seeks to establish that God alone is the cause of grace: "It is . . . necessary that God alone should deify, bestowing a partaking of the divine nature."[4] While he is here chiefly concerned with an adjacent but nevertheless distinct matter, Thomas clearly indicates that he understands the

[3] In addition to the direct references treated here, the reader is referred to *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 1, ad 2; I-II, q. 50, a. 6; II-II, q. 188, a. 2, obj. 1 (quoting Denys); III, q. 1, a. 2 (quoting Augustine); III, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3; III, q. 16, a. 7, ad 3; suppl. q. 31, a. 1.

[4] Quotations generally follow the translation of the English Dominican Province edition of the *Summa* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1911, rev. 1920, rpt. 1980), although the language has here and there been modernized.

creature's gracing as deification. Indeed, his description of the gift of grace in this response indicates that he sees it primarily in this way: "The gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing short of a partaking of the divine nature, which exceeds every other nature." [5]

Grace results in deiformity not in the form of some unspecified gift, but specifically in the form of the theological virtues. These virtues are so called because they direct us to God (*STh* I-II, q. 62, a. 1, s.c.). They are, Thomas claims, divine virtues (ibid., ad 2) that perfect human persons, enabling them to attain an end that by nature surpasses them, an end that we "can obtain by the power of God alone, by a kind of participation of the Godhead, about which it is written that by Christ we are made 'partakers of the divine nature"' (ibid., resp.). In quoting 2 Peter 1:4, Aquinas has placed himself firmly in the tradition of the Fathers. Furthermore, he alludes to the obvious problem entailed by the assertion of deification and solves it along lines already well established in the tradition: "A certain nature may be ascribed to a certain thing in two ways. First, essentially: and thus these theological virtues surpass the nature of man. Secondly, by participation, as kindled wood partakes of the nature of fire: and thus, after a fashion, one becomes a partaker of the divine nature" (ibid., ad 1). Within this article, therefore, Thomas has laid out a doctrine of deification on the classic lines of the patristic tradition, insisting on the one hand on a genuine participation in divine nature, but, on the other, on a distinction between modes

[5] Here we broach a question that will lurk in the background of much of this discussion for readers familiar with the secondary literature on Thomas: the question of created and uncreated grace. The discussion here presumes that, at the very least, Thomas primarily treats grace as uncreated. In doing so, it builds upon the work done earlier this century by La Taille, "Actuation creee par acte incree," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928): 253-68; and De Letter, "Created Actuation by the Uncreated Act," *Theological Studies* 18 (1957): 60-92; idem, "Divine Quasi-Formal Causality," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 27 (1960): 221-28; and idem, "Reciprocal Causality" *The Thomist* 25 (1962): 382-418. Similar positions have been adopted by Robert Morency, Bourassa, Henri Bouillard, C. Moeller, G. Philips, Otto Pesch, Albrecht Peters, and E. L. Mascall. Karl Rahner's position is somewhat more qualified, but nevertheless largely concurs; see below, notes 13 and 19.

of possession of that nature, and the grounding of the whole in the text from 2 Peter.[6]

If question 62 reveals the closest similarities between Thomas 's doctrine and that of the Fathers, it is by no means the first explicit statement of deification in the *Summa,* for Thomas first broaches the subject near the beginning of the *Prima pars.* In question 12 he is ostensibly concerned with human knowledge of God, but the doctrine of divinization pervades this question. To know God, Thomas tells us, is to become like God; indeed, likeness to God is the prerequisite of knowing God: "The light of glory cannot be natural to a creature, unless the creature has a divine nature; which is impossible. But by this light the rational creature is made deiform" *(STh* I, q. 12, a. *5,* ad 3). Deification, then, not only attends growth in knowledge of God, but is the gift that makes any such apprehension of God possible, and makes possible the qualified reach across the ontological divide. Thomas reiterates this idea in positive form in the next article: "The light of glory ... establishes the intellect in a kind of deiformity" (ibid., a. 6). Here we see again the two poles of deification: the creature indeed becomes a participant in God, yet such participation is not by nature, but in virtue of a divine self-giving. Thomas states exactly this idea in the response to article *5,* this time without using explicit terms such as "deiform": "When any created intellect sees the essence of God, the essence of God itself becomes the intelligible form of the intellect."

Question 12 thus establishes two important principles that will guide our inquiry into the rest of the *Summa.* First, we see in this question a mixture of the classic terminology of deification, which leaves no doubt but that Thomas incorporates the

[6] The Thomistic notion of participation has received extended treatment in the secondary literature; see especially Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalite selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* {Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1961); Francis J. Klauder, *A Philosophy Rooted in Love: The Dominant Themes in the Perennial Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994); and Ralph Mcinerny, *St. Thomas Aquinas* {Boston: 1\vayne, 1977; reprint, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982). These treatments are however chiefly concerned with participation as a philosophical concept, examining that kind of participation in divine being which allows any creature to exist at all. Participation in its patristic sense, as a form of sanctification, has largely been ignored in Thomas 's work.

idea into his theology, and a restatement of the basic idea of *theosis* in terms that are characteristically Thomistic and make no use of the patristic terminology, as in the last quotation from article 5. This mixture warrants extending our search for the doctrine beyond those loci where Thomas uses obvious language of deification, into those places where we see deifying structures.

Second, *STh* I, q. 12 and I-II, q. 62 both signal the most important structure through which Thomas will develop his doctrine of deification in the *Summa:* the interplay of intellect and will, which undergirds each part of the *Summa.* In I, q. 12, a. 6, for example, he not only claims that the intellect will become deiform, he also anticipates the treatise on virtues when he maintains that "he will have a fuller participation of the light of glory who has more charity." Deiformity thus entails specifically the likening of the human intellect and will to the divine intellect and will. The treatise on virtues reveals a similar kind of balancing; if Thomas gives pride of place in the order of generation to faith, drawing on the Augustinian principle that one cannot love what one does not know, he nevertheless maintains that in the order of perfection, charity remains the most important of the "divine virtues," those virtues which direct us to God (I-II, q. 62, a. 4). It is through the complex interplay of the intellect and the will, then, that we will see God transforming humanity into himself.

With this preliminary sketch in mind, we turn to the less explicit articulation of the doctrine in the *Summa,* those loci where Thomas speaks of deification without using terms like "divinize" or "deiform." In the account that follows, we will confine ourselves to the *Prima pars.* This restriction has two purposes. The first and more obvious is that we cannot undertake an investigation of the whole work here; the second, and more important, is that in the *Prima pars* we will see Thomas articulate the theme of his doctrine of deification. The doctrine as it appears in the rest of the *Summa* is a set of variations on that theme. If we grasp the doctrine in the *Prima pars,* then, we will have seen the Thomistic doctrine of deification not exhaustively, but at least in its most fundamental form.

## II. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

We begin with the Five Ways, traditionally that part of the *Summa* that has been of the greatest interest to philosophers. What often gets lost in the debates over whether these are ultimately persuasive arguments for the existence of God, or more recently whether they are indeed such arguments at all, is that the Five Ways are also five portraits of God. The third article of question 2 does not simply establish the existence of what is under discussion in the *Prima pars;* it is the small beginning of the great description that will take up the majority of this part. That description, moreover, contains within it one of the structures we have identified as essential to and characteristic of the classic doctrine of deification: the assertion of a God who is ontologically independent of his creation and yet desires to draw creatures to share his life.

The Five Ways describe God as Prime Mover, First Cause, Necessary Being, Source of goodness, and End of all nature. All of these descriptions, however, directly supply information not only about God, but also about the relation of God to not-God. The Prime Mover, after all, must move something, the First Cause must cause something, the Source of goodness must yield goodness in something, and the End of nature must draw something to itself. These four descriptions of God, then, not only assert the existence of God, but assume the existence of not-God, and sketch the paradigm of their relation. That relation, as implied in Ways One, Two, Four and Five, is one of dependence of not-God upon God. The Third Way clarifies that this relationship of dependence extends in only one direction: because of the aseity of divine Being, God does not need to move, cause, or perfect in order to be God. We know God both as related to ourselves, and as free of any necessary relation to us. Here is the central principle of deification *in nuce:* the Transcendent, who need not create at all, not only does so, but invites his creatures to share in his life; yet this free sharing of self in no way compromises the Creator's freedom or transcendence. Every doctrine of deification must depart from such a picture of God if it is to preserve divine transcendence and thereby guarantee that the life in

which creatures share is genuinely divine and not merely superhuman. It is precisely with such a picture of God that Thomas begins his massive summary of theology.

At this point, one might legitimately protest that a doctrine of deification entails not just a description of the kind of God who could deify, but of creatures who are in fact deified. Yet, while the transformation of the human person forms a necessary component of a doctrine of deification, we must recall that the doctrine in its classic form tends towards theocentricism. The description of the Five Ways is not less a doctrine of deification because it focuses on God; rather, it is a description of a God who in fact divinizes because it assumes that there are sharers of the divine life to which it attests.

Question 2 establishes the doctrine's general outlines. Thomas reinforces and extends them in question 3, where he treats divine simplicity. The relevance of simplicity for deification as we have been describing it is in one respect readily apparent, for simplicity, like divine aseity, is one of the chief principles that articulate the ontological divide between creature and Creator. The assertion of simplicity, however, has much greater significance; to appreciate it fully we must first turn to other sections of the *De Deo uno.*

As we saw in the direct references to deification in the *Prima secundae,* love is central to Thomas's understanding of human sanctification. If growth in love constitutes deification, however, we would expect love to be central to Thomas's doctrine of God. It might seem initially perplexing, then, that the same theologian who so emphasizes love in his treatment of human habits has so little to say of love in his doctrine of the one God (one scanty question, q. 20). The reason for this lack has nothing to do with an indifference to love, and everything to do with principles established in qq. *3* and 13. These two questions balance each other: in q. *3* Thomas explains that since God is pure actuality, we do not rightly think of God as a collection of attributes or qualities; in q. 13 Thomas qualifies this claim by explaining that although God is not an assemblage of distinct parts, our language can only describe him in terms of distinct qualities, and since we have no medium but this admittedly imperfect one, we

are reduced to speaking of God as if his goodness were something other than his love or his justice, or indeed his being. Because of the tension created by the disparity between God's being and the manner in which our language permits us to describe that being, Thomas singles out certain attributes like goodness, love, and justice, and treats them briefly, with primary reference back to the question of simplicity.

The assertion of love in God rests ultimately on scriptural authority; hence Thomas opens his discussion of divine love by citing 1 John 4:16 in the *sed contra* of question 20. The reasoning of the response, however, which explains how it is that God is love, locates love initially in volition. God loves because he wills (q. 20, a. 1). We assert will of God because will follows upon intellect and there is intellect in God (q. 19, a. 1). While Thomas does not devote a question of the *Summa* to divine intellect itself, he discusses it within question 14, which treats the knowledge of God, providing two basic explanations for his claim of divine intellect. The more important of the two, the one to which he has more frequent recourse, is based upon God's pure actuality: "It must be said that the act of God's intellect is His substance. For if His act of understanding were other than His substance, then something else, as the Philosopher says, would be the act and perfection of the divine substance, to which the divine substance would be related, as potentiality is to act" (q. 14, a. 4). The second sort of argument for divine intellect also ultimately reverts to question 3, but by a more circuitous path: In q. 14, a. 1 Thomas argues for divine intellect on the basis of divine immateriality and infinity. The argument for immateriality leads directly back to the claim of simplicity made in q. 3, a. 2; and while the claim of infinity is made in q. 7, a. 1, it is based directly on the distinction between matter and form in that same locus (q. 3, a. 2).

The reasoning that demonstrates how 1 John 4:16 may be understood as true, that shows how God can be understood to be love, reverts by means more or less direct to the assertion of divine simplicity. The reason it is important to grasp this fact is not merely to admire the strong web of coherence in the *Summa*, but to understand why Aquinas might have relatively little (four articles) to say about a tenet that lays strong claim to being the

single most important Christian assertion about God. Thomas finds it important explicitly to make the point that love is in God-he does not leave the reader to draw the logical conclusions for herself, after all. Nevertheless, given that in the context of Thomistic reasoning divine love is a logical consequence of divine simplicity, we need not marvel at the brevity of his treatment. Nor, more importantly, should we assume from that brevity that love ranks low in some Thomistic hierarchy of divine attributes. Failure to grasp that the treatment of love is brief, not because it is less important than simplicity, but because it is in Thomas's view simplicity's inexorable consequent, will lead one to perceive a sharp divide between, on the one hand, the *Summa's* exposition of the one God, and, on the other, its treatment of the Trinity and human sanctification. [7] In fact, all three doctrines point in the same direction, as we shall see; the difference between them lies solely in where love lies in the order of logic. In the exposition of the one God, love is an entailment rather than an axiom, but it is not on that account a less important postulate of divine being itself-though it is indeed less important in the order of our *understanding* of divine being, a status that may seem problematic to some.

The derivation of divine love from simplicity raises nonetheless one important problem, important from the perspective of both theological history and the congeniality of Thomas's notion of love to a doctrine of deification. The association of love with union has always been a powerful one in Christian theology; from patristic exegesis of the sensuous imagery of the Song of Songs as God's love for the Church to the works of Pseudo-Denys the Areopagite and Bernard of Clairvaux, Christians have taken the theological meaning of charity to overlap considerably, if not entirely, with the idea of union. A doctrine of deification, moreover, implicitly claims a union of the divine and human-indeed, "union" and "participation" are often used interchangeably in treatments of *theosis.* The Thomistic idea of

[1] Precisely that seamlessness is contested by Catherine Mowry LaCugna, the central theme of whose reading of Thomas is that he has separated the immanent from the economic Trinity. The treatment of Thomistic deification presented here may be taken as a dispute with such a reading.

love as the correlative of simplicity therefore invites the charge of having abandoned the traditional concept of love, one so congenial to the assertion of *theosis,* with the result that a union of the divine and the creaturely risks compromising divine simplicity.

Aquinas recognizes this problem and addresses it in a way that demonstrates his desire to hold a conception of love that is both derived from simplicity and tied to the Dionysian notion of love as a unitive force. Having described the act of love as a willing of good to someone, he continues:

> Love is called the unitive force, even in God *[dicitur amor vis unitiva etiam in Deo*], yet without implying composition; for the good that He wills for Himself, is no other than Himself, Who is good by His essence. . . . And then again the divine love is a binding force *[amor divinus est vis concretiva],* inasmuch as God wills good to others; yet it implies no composition in God. (Q. 20, a. 1, ad 3)

Here we see the tendency of Thomas 's doctrine of God, in even its most technical aspects, to reach toward his anthropology and to express a link between the two. He portrays love as linked immediately both to the characteristic that distinguishes God from all creation and to that which joins God and humanity most intimately.[8] Within the opening questions of the *Summa* he has moved inexorably from the description of divine being *in se* to divine being *pro nobis.*

Like the Five Ways, then, Thomas's treatment of what seems at first glance a purely philosophical issue proves on closer

[8] The same paradigm of unity-in-distinction operates elsewhere in q. 20, in Thomas's treatment of the manner of God's love and ours. God does not love everything that exists as we love such things. The difference lies in the active agency of love. Our love is elicited by its object; "the love of God," in contrast, "infuses and creates goodness *[amor Dei est infundens et creans bonitatem in rebus]"* (q. 20, a. 2). Although Thomas has nothing further to say on the subject of infusion in these articles, the introduction of the concept here in the doctrine of God is important because of the way it foreshadows what will become a central concept of his doctrine of grace. Even here, however, the portrayal of God's love as, in part, a love for creatures that infuses goodness is significant, for it indicates that the essential structure of God's active and free sharing of himself with creatures involves his being becoming a gift to theirs. If love is the same, in actuality, as God's simplicity, existence, eternity, immutability, and all the rest, then the love that infuses and creates goodness is not conceived as some unspecified growth in goodness, but God's gift of self.

examination to form a crucial part of his doctrine of deification. It is because God's being is utterly simple that we can also know God to be love. It is love that unites and binds us to God, because our growth in love is a growth into participation in divine being.

## III. THE TRINITY AND ITS MISSIONS

The importance of deification to the *Summa* as a whole becomes evident as we turn from the *De Deo uno* to the *De Trinitate,* for after having grounded the doctrine in the idea of divine simplicity, the hallmark of the *De Deo uno,* Thomas proceeds to root it just as deeply in his doctrine of the Trinity. While Thomas 's account of the divine processions differs little in its essentials from the psychological model of the Trinity that had reigned in the West since the fifth century, he has not simply reiterated Augustine's *De Trinitate* in medieval Scholastic form. Nor has he, by explicating first the doctrine of the one God and then the doctrine of the Trinity, divided one from the other or given priority of one to the other-a criticism of his theology that has become almost as common in the contemporary West as it has always been in the East." Rather, he has taken Augustine's essential insight and expanded it, producing what one might call a theological Cubist image: the *De Deo uno* and the *De Trinitate* are portraits of the same God viewed from different perspectives. Within the *De Deo uno* the knowing and willing simple Being h.as one mien, within the *De Trinitate* it has another, one in which the actions of knowing and willing take the form of Persons. In the *Secunda pars* this portrait will be overlaid with a third image, drawn from yet another, differing perspective, in which the activities of knowing and loving take on a human form that imitates God's. [10]

The connection between divine being, love, and human sanctification is therefore by no means confined to the exposition

[9] See, for example, Edmund Hill, *The Mystery of the Trinity,* Introducing Catholic Theology 4 (London: Chapman, 1985), 150.

[10] This reading of Thomas resembles the position taken by Rahner in "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," in *Theological Investigations,* vol. 1: *God, Christ, Mary and Grace,* trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), esp. 310.

presented in the *De Dea uno.* The establishment of intellect and will in God, of divine knowing and loving, is the cornerstone of Thomas 's doctrine of the Trinity, which is in turn vital to his understanding of deification. As we follow the unfolding of the *Summa's De Trinitate,* we hear echoes of the *De Dea uno,* because Thomas reverts in both to the two fundamental principles of intellect and will, showing first how from these two derive all attributes of God and then how the relations of the three divine Persons may be understood as the interplay of precisely these two principles.

Where Thomas 's Trinitarian doctrine becomes most relevant to his conception of deification is in his description of the distinctive characteristics of each divine Person. Fully to grasp the significance of this connection, we would have to examine his treatment of each of the three Persons, something we cannot undertake here. Instead, we will take one element of his portrayal of the Father as an example of his typical procedure.

In his account of what modern theologians would term the "immanent Trinity," Thomas stresses that the inner-Trinitarian distinctions are distinctions of relation. This has drawn charges of inadequacy from Eastern commentators, but, whatever its demerits, such a view has the advantage of permitting Thomas to make connections between the relations of the Persons among themselves, and to creation. Thus, while the Father is so called pre-eminently because of his relation to the divine Son (q. 33, a. 3), this name also signifies a certain relation to creation, and in describing the nature of this relation, Thomas uses the classic language of deification.

> Of some, namely, the rational creature [He is the Father], by reason of the likeness of His image, according to Deut. xxxii.6: *Is He not thy Father, who possessed, and made, and created thee?* And of others He is the Father by similitude of grace, and these are also called adoptive sons, as ordained to the heritage of eternal glory by the gift of grace which they have received, according to Rom. viii.16, 17: *The Spirit Himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also.* Lastly, He is the Father of others by similitude of glory, forasmuch as they have obtained possession of the heritage of glory, according to Rom. v.2: *We glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God.* (Ibid.)

Aquinas here traces three degrees of likening to God (though he does not label them as degrees). The first is the rational creature's innate likeness; for our purposes here, this means little more than the creature's inalienable connectedness to God, inasmuch as God is the source of her being, and her potential for further likening. The second degree of likening occurs in virtue of the gift of grace; while the language of "ordained to the heritage of eternal glory" seems to postpone intimate relations with God to the afterlife, the language of adoptive sonship posits an analogical relationship between the relation of the graced creature to the Father and the relation of the divine Son to the Father, a relationship clearly thought to obtain in this life. Intra-Trinitarian relations are mirrored in the relation of Uncreated to created, so that even though there are clear differences between the two (i.e., a shared nature in one case, the absence of such in the other) the similarity allows one to envisage the creature's gracing as a form of sharing in modes of Trinitarian existence. The third degree of likening suggests that the creature participates in the Father's glory in an even more complete way, so that now we are no longer God's adoptive children, but his children pure and simple. The suggestion of an analogy between the Father's relations to the Son and to rational creatures arises again, obliquely, at the article's end, where Aquinas states that paternity designates the relation between the First and Second Persons in the first instance, and only secondarily the relation between God and creatures. While Aquinas's intent here is clearly to establish the pre-eminence of paternity-filiation language for speaking of God, he also implies that the two uses of *Father* are suitably applied, though to different degrees, so that a proportionate likeness between them is also assumed.

The discussion of the Father's relation to the Son and Spirit, therefore, a question that would appear wholly located within the doctrine of God, turns out to have immediate implications for God's relationship to the human person. Furthermore, it is here that we first glimpse the characteristically Thomistic pattern of sanctification as growth from the likeness of nature, through grace, to glory. This pattern, far from dividing nature and grace dialectically, as it has sometimes been claimed to do,

takes sanctification precisely as part of that kind of seamless growth into God which we have noted typifies a doctrine of deification. In two different respects, then, Thomas's doctrine of the Trinity contains within it the decisive elements of a doctrine of deification.

In the *De Trinitate,* ostensibly focused on the processions and character of each of the Persons, Thomas constantly keeps one eye on the significance of the Trinity for human persons and their relation to God. The treatment of mission (q. 43) then may be regarded not as the turn to a new issue in Trinitarian doctrine, but as the culmination of a long train of thought that has been building since the beginning of the treatise.

Thomas begins his account of the relation between Uncreated and creation by insisting that God's orientation toward creation does not suppose that creation is an end in itself: "The notion of mission includes two things: the habitude of the one sent to the sender; and that of the one sent to the end whereto he is sent" (q. 43, a. l).[11] The initial principle of Aquinas's discussion of creation, then, is that creatures and the created order do not exist for their own sake, but for a purpose, God's purpose. Having grounded the mission in divine will, Aquinas then draws God and creation yet closer, by inviting comparison between Trinitarian relations *ad extra* and *ad intra:* "Anyone being sent implies a certain kind of procession of the one sent to the sender" (ibid.). The impression that procession might imply the continuation of the Trinity's inner life in those for whom the mission is intended is confirmed as Thomas continues: "The habitude to the term to which he is sent is also shown, so that in some way he begins to be present there *[ut aliquo modo ibi esse incipiat]"* (ibid.). The purpose of mission, Thomas seems to say, is the repetition of an inner-Trinitarian dynamic in the human creature so that God's self-giving to humanity results in the union of divine and human life. He summarizes:

> Thus the mission of a divine person is a fitting thing, as meaning in one way the procession of origin from the sender, and as meaning a new

[11] "Unum est habitudo missi ad eum a quo mittitur, aliud est habitudo missi ad terminum ad quern mittitur."

> way of existing in another *[novum modum existendi in alio*]; thus the Son is said to be sent by the Father into the world, inasmuch as He began to exist visibly in the world by taking our nature. (Ibid.)

Here Aquinas makes explicit what has been implicit throughout his exposition of the Trinity: the internal Trinitarian processes are echoed in creation, and in a way that implies creation's sanctification and participation in divine existence ("a new way of existing in another").

The new way of existing in another that Thomas begins to elaborate in question 43 explicitly connects the *Prima pars* to the *Secunda pars,* his theology to his anthropology. On the one hand, this question hearkens back to the fundamental dynamic of both the *De Deo uno* and the *De Trinitate,* the analysis in terms of knowledge and will: "There is one special mode belonging to the rational nature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover.... the rational creature by its operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself" (q. 43, a. 3). The "special mode" of which Thomas speaks also hearkens forward to the *Secunda pars,* for it is nothing other than sanctifying grace (ibid.). The appearance of grace here, when Thomas is still concerned with the Trinity, is significant in that he identifies the sending of the Third Person with grace: "The Holy Spirit is possessed by human persons, and dwells within them, in the very gift itself of sanctifying grace. Hence the Holy Spirit *ipse* is given and sent" (ibid.). Thus, procession, God's indwelling in the human person, humanity's possession of the Spirit, and the sanctification wrought by grace are all bound together in the Thomistic understanding of mission, the point at which Trinitarian doctrine and the doctrine of sanctification meet in a form that increasingly acquires the aspect of a traditional doctrine of *theosis.*

The recapitulation of the traditional doctrine in distinctively Thomistic form emerges clearly in the replies to the objections to q. 43, a. 3. The first states unmistakably the connection between sanctification, as Thomas conceives it, and consummation. The gift of sanctifying grace is said to perfect the rational creature in such a way that she can both use the created gift, and even enjoy the divine Person himself. Here Aquinas allies the gift of grace

with perfection, implying precisely that kind of seamlessness between sanctification in this life and consummation in the next that is characteristic of a doctrine of deification. Even more significantly, he acknowledges that the gift of grace entails not only grace's effects within the human person ("the created gift itself *[ipso dono creato]*") but an assimilation to the Uncreated ("enjoy also the divine person Himself *[ipsa divina Personafruatur]").*

The reply to the second objection gives a characteristically Thomistic flavor to the traditional, patristic doctrine as it glances forward to the *Secunda pars,* identifying the Spirit's self-giving with charity, the chief of the "divine" virtues:

> Sanctifying grace disposes the soul to possess the divine person *[ad habendam divinam Personam];* and this is signified when it is said that the Holy Ghost is given according to the gift of grace. Nevertheless the gift itself of grace is from the Holy Ghost; which is meant by the words, *the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.*

Because God is love and grace is love's gift, Thomas can claim that through grace the human person comes to resemble God: "The soul is made like to God by grace. Hence for a divine person to be sent to anyone by grace, there must be a likening of the soul to the divine person Who is sent *[oportet quodfiat assimilatio illius ad divinam Personam quae mittitur],* by some gift of grace" (q. 43, a. 5, ad 2). Thomas thus takes the mission of the Trinity to be inseparable from the soul's likening to God, portraying the Trinitarian mission as itself an inherently deifying work.

Confirmation of the connection between mission and deification comes as he continues in the reply to the second objection:

> Because the Holy Ghost is Love, the soul is assimilated to the Holy Ghost by the gift of charity: hence the mission of the Holy Ghost is according to the mode of charity. Whereas the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one Who breathes forth Love. Hence Augustine says: *The Word we speak of is knowledge with love.* Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which breaks forth into the affection of love.[12]

[12] "Non igitur secundum quamlibet perfectionem intellectus mittitur Filius, sed secundum talem institutionem vel instructionem intellectus, qua prorumpat in affectum **amoris."**

Here Aquinas has not only again asserted the significance of the infusion of charity (as he did in q. 20, on the love of God), namely, that it constitutes nothing less than the Holy Spirit's gift of self, but has also reminded the reader forcefully of the Trinitarian dimension of the bestowal of charity. Not only does the language of knowing and loving recall his (and, of course, Augustine's) account of the divine processions, but Thomas has now implicated the Word in the act of loving more inevitably than ever before. Until now, the relation between knowing and loving was generally portrayed as the necessity of the act of the intellect preceding that of the will-one cannot love what one does not know. Now, however, the Son's mission is associated exclusively with sanctifying knowledge. Growing in likeness to the Son is not a matter of stupendous intellectual achievement, but an illumination. Although Aquinas provides us with no information at this point as to how, precisely, this illumination differs from knowledge in general, the context strongly suggests that it pertains to God in a way that knowledge in general does not. Furthermore, this sanctification of the mind appears to lead, almost spontaneously, to the expression of love, so that this particular kind of knowledge seems inseparable from charity, just as the Son and the Spirit are united indivisibly in the Trinity.

Aquinas asserts a different kind of unity in the following article, where he considers whether the invisible mission is to all who participate in grace. That the kind of union and participation Aquinas has been discussing does not belong exclusively, or even principally, to the afterlife is made abundantly clear. Because every graced creature is sanctified, and the purpose of the invisible mission lies precisely in such sanctification, the mission must be sent to every graced creature (q. 43, a. 6, s.c.). As he elaborates, he specifies divine indwelling as the experience of both the saints on earth and the blessed; inasmuch as mission implies both the indwelling of grace and renewal by grace, the invisible mission must be sent to those in both states (q. 43, a. 6). While "indwelling" *(inhabitatio)* might apply equally to this life or the next, "renewal" *(innovatio)* can denote only the state of the *via-*

*tor,* the one whose journey to God is not yet complete-yet the sending, in virtue of which God "belongs" to the sanctified, brings about both indwelling and renewal.

The replies to the objections underline this dual application. The second and the fourth refer unmistakably to this life: "The invisible mission takes place also as regards progress in virtue or increase of grace" (ad 2); "Grace resides instrumentally in the sacraments of the New Law.... the mission of the divine persons is not sent to the sacraments, but to those who receive grace through the sacraments" (ad 4). The reply to the third objection, on the other hand, seems to confine itself to the sanctification of the departed: "The invisible mission is directed to the blessed at the very beginning of their beatitude. The invisible mission is made to them subsequently, not by *intensity* of grace *[non secundum intensionem gratiae* ], but by the further revelation of mysteries; which goes on until the day of judgment."

Within the compass of q. 43, aa. 6 and 7, then, Thomas unites earthly sanctification and heavenly consummation, with precisely that kind of seamlessness characteristic of a doctrine of divinization. Thus, even while Aquinas does not use the words *deification,* or even *deiform,* here, a divinizing form of sanctification is clearly operative. The asserted unity of experience of the wayfarers and the blessed witnesses to this, but the location of these claims within the *Summa* also is significant. The assimilation of the temporal to the eternal, and the temporal's consequent transformation, takes place within the sphere of the Trinity's activity, and as a result of that activity. By expounding his notion of the unity of sanctification and consummation within his treatment of Trinitarian doctrine, Aquinas suggests to his reader two ideas. First, sanctification as we commonly think of it-"grace through the sacraments," "renewal by grace," "the indwelling of grace"- is nothing other than God's self-giving to the creature. Sanctification is not the administration of some divine medicine called "grace" that is other or less than God. All sanctification must be understood under the rubric of the mission of the Trinity, which is the revelation of the eternal Trinitarian proces-

sions in time to finite creatures consequently transformed: "The Son has been sent visibly as the author of sanctification; the Holy Ghost as the sign of sanctification" (q. 43, a. 7).

The second point follows from the first: the unity of sanctification and consummation is grounded in the unity of their cause. Aquinas does not state as much explicitly, but the structure of question 43 suggests such an interpretation. The articles we have been considering, which essentially treat the effects of mission and how they are experienced in time, all derive from the center portion of the question. They are sandwiched between articles dealing more with the immanent Trinity, the source of mission and the end to which it is directed. Both the opening and closing articles affirm the unity of the Trinity, so that although the central articles necessarily distinguish the characteristic work of Son and Spirit, the opening article takes pains to indicate that the distinctive role of each of the three implies no disunity: "The divine person sent neither begins to exist where he did not previously exist nor ceases to exist where He was. Hence such a mission takes place without a separation, having only distinction of origin *[sine separatione; sed habet solam distinctionem originis]"* (q. 43, a. 1, ad 2). The final article stresses the unified heart of all missiological activity even more strongly. Aquinas determines that a divine Person is sent by one from whom he does not proceed (thus denying any absolute correspondence between the patterns of procession and mission), but takes this position in order to affirm the unity of the Trinity's operation in sending: "The whole Trinity sends the person sent" (q. 43, a. 8).

Question 43 thus stresses two kinds of unity: the unity of sanctification and the unity of sanctification's cause. Nowhere in this question does Thomas explicitly link the two: nevertheless, the question's movement from the unity of the source, to the unity of the sanctified person's experience of God, back to the unity of the source, certainly suggests that the two are connected in his mind. The internal life of the Trinity is a life of unity, and our life of growing incorporation into divine existence is also a single whole which death may interrupt, but not rupture.

## IV CREATION

Long before Aquinas treats creation proper, his doctrine of deification has been established. As we now turn to his doctrine of creation, we will see this same connection of creature and Creator, but from a new perspective. Aquinas reminds us of the necessary connection between the two right at the beginning of the doctrine of creation, in question 44. Although he will shortly consider the emanation of things from the First Principle (q. 45), his intent here is assuredly not to paint an emanationist picture, whereby divine nature produces creation virtually automatically. Thomas has in mind quite the reverse: to assert the necessary dependence of creatures on God rather than a divine self-fulfillment that requires the production of creation.

The terms in which he describes the necessary dependence of creation on God may, especially as the question progresses, seem fundamentally Aristotelian in their dependence on causal analysis. In the first article, however, Thomas 's language sounds like that of a Neoplatonist. This terminology is also strongly reminiscent of the classic lexis of divinization:

> It must be said that every being in any way existing is from God. For whatever is found in anything by participation, must be caused by that to which it belongs essentially, as iron becomes ignited by fire .... Therefore all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation *[non sint suum esse, sed participant esse].* Therefore it must be that all things which are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by the one First Being, Who possesses being most perfectly. (Q. 44, a. 1)

In a sense, the Thomistic understanding of participation in divine life radically exceeds patristic notions of deification in its scope, for Thomas portrays it as occurring initially not as the sanctifying work of hypostatic union in the Son or graced renewal in the Spirit, but in order for the creature to exist at all. Traditionally, divinization insists upon a continuity between sanctified existence in this life and consummate union in the next. Aquinas extends the participatory link backwards, portraying the creature as participating in divine being from the first moment of her existence, in virtue of that very

existence; it is this participation which provides, logically, the base for all other varieties or degrees of participation in divine being, such as the renewal by grace and the extension of grace mentioned in q. 43, a. 6.

This participation in being, however, results from no spontaneous eruption of divine being, but from God's deliberate will, as Thomas makes manifest in the article on exemplary causality: [13]

> God is the first exemplar cause of all things. In proof whereof we must consider that if for the production of any thing an exemplar is necessary, it is in order that the effect may receive a determinate form .... Now it is manifest that things made by nature receive determinate forms. This determination of forms must be reduced to the divine wisdom as its first principle, for divine wisdom devised the order of the universe, which order consists in the variety of things. And therefore we must say that in the divine wisdom are the types of all things, which types we have called ideas-i.e., exemplar forms existing in the divine mind. And these ideas, though multiplied by their relations to things, in reality are not apart from the divine essence, according as the likeness to that essence can be shared diversely by different things *[prout eius similitudo a diversis participari potest diversimode]*. (Q. 44, a. 3)

For God to have made the world, then, he must have had a specific idea of the diverse creatures he intended to fashion, an intentionality that sits ill with a classic emanationist view, since

[11] There is an extensive body of literature discussing the exact nature of divine causality with respect to the human soul in Thomas's theology. Some, like Robert Morency, want to deny the appropriateness of speaking in terms of formal causality at all *(!.:union de grace selon Saint Thomas,* Studia Collegii Maximi 8 [Montreal: Editions de l'Immaculee-Conception, 1950], 246). Others are willing to speak of some variety of formal causality Bourassa, "Role personnel des Personnes, et relations distinctes aux Personnes," *Sciences ecclesiastiques* 7 [1955]: 151-72). Still another school wants to speak of a quasi-formal causality (De Letter, "Divine Quasi-Formal Causality," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 22 [1980]: 224). De Letter regards Rahner as also thinking in terms of quasi-formal causality, although Rahner himself tends to speak of formal causality, albeit at times with some qualification ("Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," in *Theological Investigations* 1:335). Otto Pesch is also willing to think in terms of a quasi-formal causality *(Theologie der Rechifertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquinas: Versuch eines systematisch-theologischen Dialogs,* Walberger Studien, Theologische Reihe, Die Theologie [Darmstadt: Matthias-Griinewald, 1967], 650-51), while Aertsen claims that Thomas understands the self-communication of the good not in the sense of efficient but of final cause *(Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988], 345).

Thomas has separated the thinking of the forms from their production.

While the argument with emanationism as a whole is not particularly significant for our purposes, the element of divine intentionality is, for this notion provides the underpinning of the Thomistic conception of God as final cause. In the following article, Thomas maintains that every agent acts for an end, and quoting Proverbs 16:4 identifies God's end in creation: "The Lord has made all things for Himself" (q. 44, a. 4, s.c.). God's agency differs from others, however, in that he does not desire to acquire any end, but intends only to communicate his perfection, which is his goodness. Creatures, in contrast, intend to acquire their own perfection. Since this perfection is the likeness of divine perfection and goodness, the divine goodness must be the end of all things (q. 44, a. 4). The purposes of creation, then, are that all things become good and perfect and that all things find their consummation in divine goodness, which is none other than the divine essence (q. 6, a. 3). These two purposes are in reality the same, of course, for to become perfect, to become truly good, is to become God; conversely, to be likened to God, at least as Thomas understands God, is necessarily to become good and perfect. Without any exaggeration, one may say that for Thomas the purpose of creation is deification, that God made human beings in order to deify them.

The deifying focus of Thomas 's doctrine of creation emerges clearly from his treatment of the emanation of things from God (q. 45). Although notions of deification and emanation are sharply distinguished from one another by the insistence of the first on the ontological divide and the tendency of the second to blur it, Thomas uses the question on emanation to indicate exactly how the patterns established in the doctrine of God apply to creation.

He begins by establishing that creation is *ex nihilo* (aa. 1 and 2), which constitutes no more than a restatement, in the context of the doctrine of creation, of his first and most important assertion about God, namely, that God is the One whose essence is identical with his existence. God alone is necessary being; all else derives its being from God. This derivation, however, is not an

involuntary, automatic outpouring of Being, but the result of God's act of creating from nothing. "Creation," Thomas declares in the first article, "which is the emanation of all being, is from *not-being,* which is *nothing."* In creation we have not the subdivision of the divine into lesser parcels called creatures but, once again, the consequence of a voluntary divine act: "Creation signified actively means the divine action, which is God's essence, with a relation to the creature *[quae est eius essentia cum relatione ad creaturam]"* (q. 45, a. 3, ad 1). It is because creation is the expression of divine will, bringing something to be out of nothing, rather than the necessary outflow of Being reproducing itself according to the dictates of its nature, that Thomas can claim, as he did in question 13, a one-way ontological relationship between God and creature so that God's relation to the creature is understood as a purely conceptual relation, while the creature's relation to God is real (ibid.).[14]

The significance of Aquinas's repetition of this point becomes clearer when we reach article 6, for there he begins to expound a correspondence between Trinitarian procession and creation. Had this article not been preceded by the articles asserting God's utter independence of the world, Thomas would risk leaving the impression that there is a necessary relation between God and the world. Instead, his procedure in this question follows exactly the paradigm of the classic doctrine of deification: asserting both the utter distinctiveness of the divine and a genuine participation in it on the part of creatures. The argument with emanationism reasserts the first of deification's two poles; the other pole acquires a distinctly Thomistic stamp in the later articles of question 45.

The intention of Thomas 's doctrine of correspondence between procession and creation is not so much to trace attractive mirror images in distinct areas of doctrine as to assert the unity of the Trinity's action *ad extra:* the act of creation belongs properly to the whole Trinity, not only one of the Persons (q. 45,

[14] "Sed relatio in Deo ad creaturam non est realis, sed secundum rationem tantum. Relatio vero creaturae ad Deum est relatio realis."

a. 6).'[15] Yet Aquinas clarifies that although creation is the common work of the Three, it should not be taken as the work of the Three undivided; indeed, the nature of the Trinity's structure imposes a certain order in creation, because that procession imposes a certain kind of causality:

> The divine Persons, according to the nature of their procession, have a causality respecting the creation of things .... God the Father made the creature through His Word, which is His Son; and through His Love, which is the Holy Ghost. And so the processions of the Persons are the types *[rationes]* of the productions of creatures inasmuch as they include the essential attributes, knowledge, and will. (Ibid.)

Because of this typology, it is possible to say not only that the Trinity creates but, specifically, that the processions of the divine Persons are the cause of creation (ibid., ad 1). As creation goes, so goes the creature. The structure of the human person mimics the divine procession, not because it is ontologically derived from the Trinity, but because it is the Trinity's reflection:

> The processions of the divine Persons are referred to the acts of intellect and will.... For the Son proceeds as the word of the intellect; and the Holy Ghost proceeds as the love of the will. Therefore in rational creatures, possessing intellect and will, there is found the representation of the Trinity by way of image *[repraesentatio Trinitatis per modum imaginis],* inasmuch as there is found in them the word conceived, and the love proceeding. (Q. 45, a. 7)

Thus far, then, Thomas has confirmed the application of his doctrine of God: nature, grace, and glory form a single unbroken unity, in virtue of God's desire to draw his creatures to himself. What Aquinas has chiefly sought to assert in question *45* has been the creature's origin in the Creator; however, in specifying the nature of that causality, he has established the first principle of his anthropology, as is well illustrated when he continues on from the passage quoted above: "In all creatures there is found the trace of the Trinity *[repraesentatio Trinitatis per modum*

[15] "To create is, properly speaking, to cause or produce the being of things. And as every agent produces its like, the principle of action can be considered from the effect of the action; for it must be fire that generates fire. And therefore to create belongs to God according to His being, that is, His essence, which is common to the three Persons. Hence to create is not proper to any one Person, but is common to the whole Trinity."

*vestigii],* inasmuch as in every creature are found some things which are necessarily reduced to the divine Persons as their cause" (ibid.). We encounter here once again two characteristic traits of Thomas's theological procedure in general and his doctrine of deification in particular: the tendency of apparently philosophical questions (such as causality) to become immediately relevant to questions of sanctification, and the tendency of the doctrine of deification to emerge from analyses of divine and human nature as the interplay of intellect and will.

To see the specific ramifications of these characteristics in Thomistic anthropology, we must turn to the next article, where Thomas first gives a detailed account of what the traces of the Trinity look like in a human being:

> For every creature subsists in its own being, and has a form, whereby it is determined to a species, and has a relation to something else. Therefore as it is a created substance, it represents the cause and principle; and so in that manner it shows the Person of the Father, Who is the *principle from no principle.* According as it has a form and species, it represents the Word as the form of the thing made by art is from the conception of the craftsman. According as it has a relation of order, it represents the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as He is love, because the order of the effect to something else is from the will of the Creator. (Q. 45, a. 7)

In this vision, the traces of the Trinity in the creature determine four important anthropological points. First, the paternal element signifies that the human person is a creature whose origin lies in the divine principle; the creature's relation to God as effect establishes an ontological divide between the two that is eternal and inviolable, just as the Father's relation of origin in respect to the Son and Spirit is eternal and unchangeable. Second, the human species has a particular connection to the Second Person, representing the form of that Person in creation; it is therefore to Christ that we look to understand what it means to be a human being as human beings were intended to be in the mind of God. Third, it is through the Holy Spirit that we are to understand the nature of our relatedness to God; it is the work of the Spirit, Thomas here implies, to preserve and strengthen that relation. Fourth, since the relation between God and humanity is conceived

particularly through the Third Person, it is understood to be established and strengthened particularly through love; we would expect, then, that love will prove especially important to Thomas 's account of how the effect returns to its cause and the source of its being. Once again, Thomas's doctrine of creation anticipates his analysis of habit and virtue, and therefore his doctrine of sanctification.

## V. *IMAGO DEi*

Thomas reserves full exposition of the divine tracery in the human person for the end of the *Prima pars.* Not until question 93 does he begin his exposition of what was perhaps the single most important element of patristic anthropology, the doctrine of the *imago Dei.* The placement of Thomas 's doctrine of the *imago* indicates two different ways in which his theology relates to that of the Fathers. The first was suggested by our analysis of the question on emanation: for Aquinas the significance of the divine image in the human person does not lie principally in the way it describes humanity's prelapsarian state.[16] Certainly, he discusses the image long before he discusses the Fall, which he does not treat until *STh* I-II, q. 81, in the treatise on sin. Nevertheless, the theological import of the *imago Dei* lies not in how we are ordered to this life, or what we were intended to be before we turned from God; the exposition of the *imago* serves not to show what we lost at the Fall, but how we are ordered to our end. The *imago Dei* theology tells us primarily what we will be, not what we are. In this respect, Thomas differs from the Fathers, who tended to distinguish between image and likeness, seeing the image as obscured in consequence of the Fall, and appropriating sanctification to growth in likeness to God.

On the other hand, Thomas resembles the Fathers in making the divine resemblance the cornerstone of his anthropology and of his understanding of the divine-human relation, a point easily missed if one attends only to how late in the *Prima pars* we find the question on the *imago.* Although question 93 constitutes

[16] *Pace* Mcinerny, who claims that human beings are in the image of God for Thomas because we have free wills *(St. Thomas Aquinas,* 52).

Thomas's first formal broaching of the doctrine of the image in humanity, he has long before this point laid extensive groundwork for it. Since we cannot examine all of this material here, we will not treat it in detail, but instead trace this thread lightly so as to highlight the disparate points at which Aquinas has touched on this theme. He begins in q. 4, a. 3, where he maintains that the likeness of creatures to God is analogical and solely analogical; we have just seen the full exposition of this position in his treatment of emanation. We see it again in q. 6 where he claims that there is a relation between divine goodness and all other goodness, the latter participating in the exemplary and effective cause of goodness by way of an assimilation nonetheless remote and defective. In q. 8, a. 3 he affirms the existence of God in all things by presence, essence, and power, both as efficient cause and as the object of operation is in the operator. Finally, as we saw, q. 45 claims an analogy of structure between the Trinity and the human person. None of these assertions in itself constitutes a doctrine of the *imago Dei,* of course. Nevertheless, all bear some resemblance to elements of that doctrine and show an affinity for its central claims. If Aquinas waits until q. 93 to give the doctrine formal treatment, he has certainly hinted strongly at it from the earliest pages of the *Prima pars.*[11]

Thomas 's formal treatment begins on the same note we observed in question 45, the uniqueness of God: "Equality does

[11] D. Juvenal Merriell implies a similar view when he claims that Thomas locates the principle of analogical likeness between God and humanity in our participation in God's knowledge and love *(To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching,* Studies and Texts 96 [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990], 221). Merriell thus suggests that the foundation of the *imago Dei* is the *De Dea uno.* His reading of the *Summa* nevertheless differs from that presented here. While he acknowledges that some texts speak of the Spirit's indwelling by grace or charity outside the question on divine missions, he regards these as "insignificant" and indeed attributes the infrequency of such usage to Thomas's desire not to overburden the reader by making explicit connections between the various parts of the *Summa* (233). The reading presented here advocates the opposite view, namely that it is precisely in the tight connections between the parts that the doctrine of deification (which necessarily entails the union of Uncreated and created) is chiefly to be found. Walter Principe takes the moderate position that Thomas's anthropology views humanity in the *Spirit* as in the image of the Trinity *(Thomas Aquinas' Spirituality,* Etienne Gilson series 7 [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984], 23).

not belong to the essence of an image.... in humanity, there is some likeness to God, copied from God as from an exemplar; yet this likeness is not one of equality, for such an exemplar infinitely excels its copy. Therefore there is in humanity a likeness to God; not, indeed, a perfect likeness, but imperfect" (q. 93, a. 1). His reason for this insistence in this context is clear; he wishes to preserve the uniqueness of divine nature and therefore reserves the perfect likeness to God, which could only exist in an identical nature, in Christ (ibid., ad 2). This affirmation echoes question 35, on Christ as the perfect image of God, which in turn reflects the mainstream of patristic teaching. Aquinas's doctrine of the image therefore emphasizes both the unity of Persons in the Trinity (the Father and Son sharing divine essence) and humanity's simultaneous ontological distinction in form and likeness to the divine Creator, a dual emphasis both of whose distinctive impulses emerge strongly in the objections, as if Aquinas must constantly struggle to remind the reader (and perhaps even himself) of both polarities. Thus the reply to the second objection states of the image: "It exists in man as in an alien nature *[sicut in aliena natura],"* while the third proclaims: "As unity means absence of division, a species is said to be the same as far as it is one. Now a thing is said to be one not only numerically, specifically, or generically, but also according to a certain analogy or proportion. In this sense a creature is one with God, or like to Him *[sic est unitas vel convenientia creaturae ad Deum]."*

No more than an analogous unity can be predicated of the image because properly speaking a true image requires likeness of species (q. 93, a. 2). While humanity does not share species with God, human beings differ from the rest of the created world (with the exception of the angels) in possessing a higher degree of likeness to God. Likeness in virtue of existence and life is a fairly low level of likeness. What Aquinas considers far more important is the likeness in virtue of knowledge and understanding, a likeness possessed solely by intellectual creatures who alone therefore are properly regarded as being made

in the divine image (ibid.).[18] Indeed, this intellectual element is so important that it is what determines that the angels possess a greater likeness to God than humanity does (q. 93, a. 3).

The significance of the intellect for the doctrine of the *imago Dei* does not lie principally in the way it distinguishes amongst degrees of likeness in creation, however, but in the way intellectual activity in the human person imitates the internal processions of the Trinity:

> Since human persons are said to be to the image of God by reason of their intellectual nature, they are the most perfectly like God according to that in which they can best imitate God in their intellectual nature. Now the intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves Himself. Wherefore we see that the image of God is in humanity in three ways. First, inasmuch as human beings possess a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all. Secondly, inasmuch as a human person actually or habitually knows and loves God, though imperfectly; and this image consists in the conformity of grace *[per conformitatem gratiae]*. Thirdly, inasmuch as the human person knows and loves God perfectly; and this image consists in the likeness of glory *[similitudinem gloriae]*. (Q. 93, a. 4)

Aquinas here traces the by now familiar three-step process of likening to God, from a likeness embedded in our nature, to a likeness that increases in this life through grace, to a likeness in the next life, when the human imitation of the Trinity's knowing and loving will be perfect.

1\vo elements of Thomas 's exposition here are striking. The first is that the three steps once again strongly suggest (though Aquinas himself makes little of it) an unbroken continuity.[19] The

[18] Aquinas distinguishes between the image found in rational creatures and the likeness by way of trace found in other creatures. He has used the terms "likeness" and "trace" before, but in q. 93, a. 6 he contrasts them directly. The likeness is furthermore found only in the mind of the rational creature; in her other parts, the likeness is that of the trace.

[19] Cf. Rahner: "The life of grace ... and the life of future glory do not stand in a purely moral and juridical relation to each other, such that the latter is the reward of the former as merit; the life of glory is the definitive flowering (the 'manifestation,' the 'disclosure') of the life of the divine sonship already possessed and merely 'hidden' for the moment. Hence, grace, as the ontological basis of this supernatural life, is also an inner entitative principle (at the least a partial principle) of the vision of God" ("Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," 326).

implication is that one level of likeness depends on the other, and that each succeeding level contains the preceding one within it, so that the likeness of glory encompasses the likenesses of grace and nature. Second, although Aquinas began by stressing the intellect's significance for the likeness in this article, he has executed a subtle shift. The intellectual nature that imitates God now functions through the process not only of understanding, but also of loving, an activity that in the doctrine of the Trinity was associated exclusively with the functioning of the will. The *imago Dei,* Thomas seems to be saying, lies not solely in humanity's possession of intellectual capacities, but in the possession of a rational nature broadly conceived so as to encompass the activities of both the mind and the will (cf. his definition of the will as a "rational appetite" in q. 82, a. 5). The shift of emphasis from the intellect alone to both intellect and will also recalls Thomas's doctrine of the Trinity, a suggestion confirmed by the subsequent article.

"The distinction of the divine Persons is suitable to the divine nature," Aquinas reminds us:

> And therefore to be to the image of God by imitation of the divine nature does not exclude being to the same image by the representation of the divine Persons: but rather one follows from the other. We must, therefore, say that in human beings there exists the image of God, both as regards the divine nature and as regards the Trinity of Persons. (Q. 93, a. 5)

Here Aquinas provides the reader with precise instructions for understanding the relation between his *De Deo uno* and his *De Trinitate* on the one hand, and his theology and anthropology on the other. From the *De Deo uno* he takes his definition of God as the one in whom essence and existence are identical, who is the supremely cognitive being in virtue of his immateriality, and also his conception of analogy; from the *De Trinitate* he takes the processes of knowing and loving as the structure of both the entity itself (the Trinity and the human person) and its relatedness *ad extra* (the procession of the Trinity and humanity's relation to God through a progressive likening). Properly and fully to understand both humanity and humanity's link to God, therefore, we must take into account the whole of the Thomistic

description of God. There is in this mode of doing theology already an intimation of a doctrine of deification, for Aquinas is claiming that we must look to God to see our truest self. In God we find not only divine perfection, but also the perfect model of humanity. To look to God is therefore to understand both what we are and what we are meant to be, both our origin and our destiny.

In article 5, this second element of the promise contained in the image is only implicit: the divine perfection of which the human person falls short is what we would resemble, but for that shortcoming. In later articles, however, Thomas dwells in some detail on becoming, furnishing the reader with an important preview of the yet-to-be-developed doctrine of sanctification. As Aquinas searches for the image of the Trinity in the soul, he finds it, not in the soul at rest, but in the soul in action:

> If the image of the Trinity is to be found in the soul, we must look for it where the soul approaches nearest to a representation of the species of the divine Persons. Now the divine Persons are distinct from each other by reason of the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and the procession of Love connecting Both. But in our soul word *cannot exist without actual thought*, as Augustine says. Therefore, first and chiefly, the image of the Trinity is to be found in the acts of the soul, that is, inasmuch as from the knowledge which we possess, by actual thought we form an internal word; and thence break forth into love. But, since the principles of acts are the habits and powers, and everything exists virtually in its principle, therefore, secondarily and consequently, the image of the Trinity may be considered as existing in the powers, and still more in the habits, forasmuch as the acts virtually exist therein. (Q. 93, a. 7)

In article 7, then, Aquinas effectively sets in motion the vast machinery of the *Secunda pars*, with its treatment of habits and virtues. If we read the *Secunda pars* in light of question 93, we come to understand that the treatise on the habits and virtues is not, in the Thomistic scheme of things, a study of human endeavor-not even, in the first instance, graced human endeavor-but rather an extended meditation on the Trinitarian processions. Indeed, Aquinas goes so far as to use the term "procession" of the human soul's activity, a procession of the word in the intellect, and a procession of love in the will, which in itself constitutes a

created image or representation of the uncreated Trinity (q. 93, a. 6). As the mission of the three reflects the internal processes of the Trinity so does the internal activity of the human person, albeit imperfectly. Because the most important way in which the soul reflects the Trinity is in its activity, Thomas claims that it is in the acquisition and exercise of the habits that we most completely image God. The corollary of this claim is that the image of God is something whose fullness we grow towards. The *imago Dei* is no static endowment to be taken for granted, but principally what we become in virtue of the acquisition and exercise of habits, and secondarily the natural precondition of the development and exercise of those habits.

If studying the doctrines of God and the Trinity had not persuaded us that the treatise on the virtues would prove a crucial link between those doctrines and Thomas 's anthropology, we have decisive proof now. The means by which we know and love God are the very means by which we mirror God in the world, and the means by which we are made most like to God. Thomas states this conviction succinctly and definitively in q. 93, a. 8:

> We refer the divine image in man to the verbal concept born of the knowledge of God, and to the love derived therefrom. Thus the image of God is found in the soul according as the soul turns to God, or possesses a nature that enables it to turn to God *[imago attenditur in anima secundum quodfertur, vel nata est Jerri in Deum].*

On the essential base of the Trinitarian likeness which is the soul's capacity to know and love is fashioned an image that comes more and more to resemble God; this growing resemblance will come about through exercise of the habits, but it will be God's work, not that of the human person herself, since the knowledge and love of God can exist in us only by grace (ibid., ad 3). Ever so fleetingly, Aquinas alerts the reader to another theme that will prove highly determinative of his anthropology and his account of sanctification: his doctrine of grace.

As we have seen, Thomas often employs some of the classic terminology of deification, such as participation and union, to describe the nature of the soul's relation to God. He does not

neglect to speak of the *imago Dei* in these very terms at the end of his formal treatment of the image: "Likeness is a kind of unity, for oneness in quality causes likeness" [20] (q. 93, a. 9). Lest any reader take Thomas to be claiming only some general affinity of the creature for the Creator, he here removes all question of such an interpretation. Throughout question 93 he has built steadily on groundwork already laid to bring us to this vantage point in the *Summa,* from which we look both backwards and forwards. The backwards glance reveals the doctrines of God and of the Trinity, and tells us what we are to become: a likeness of divine nature and the Trinity. The forward glance opens up the vista of the *Secunda pars,* whose treatment of habit, virtue, and grace will tell us how this likening will be accomplished.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Within the confines of the *Prima pars,* well before Thomas has embarked upon his doctrine of sanctification proper, he has provided a complete account of deification, one that possesses all the characteristics of the doctrine established by the Fathers. On this classic patristic doctrine, however, Thomas has placed his own distinctive mark.

In the *De Deo uno,* he takes the picture of the deifying God and fits it into two frames: the proofs of the existence of God based on Aristotelian conceptualities and the intricately wrought notion of simplicity. The picture takes on a different aspect in each of these frames, but it is the same picture nevertheless. The Five Ways show how Thomas can use ostensibly philosophical issues to advance his doctrine of sanctification. The treatment of simplicity devolves on the twin foundations of intellect and will, which we will see again as the ordering principles of the doctrine of the Trinity and the anthropology. In the former, God's deifying intentions towards humanity are analyzed in terms of divine intellect and will; in the latter, human intellect and will are shown to have been fashioned on the basis of deifying intentions. Taken as a whole, the theology and the anthropology show the

[20] "Similitudo quaedam unitas est; unum enim in qualitate similitudinem causat."

intent of God's creative work to rest in deification. God destines humanity for grace and glory by constituting us as creatures endowed with the capacity for knowledge and love of God and therefore for deifying communion with God. Over and over again, throughout the *Summa*, Thomas returns to these basic insights, never allowing the reader to lose sight of the identity of God as self-giving and transcendent, or to forget humanity's destiny to participate in this divine life. In view of this particular structure of Thomas 's doctrine of God, theological anthropology, Christology, and the connection between them, it is no exaggeration to say the *Summa* lacks a question on deification because the subject of its every part is deification.

# MATTER AND THE UNITY OF BEING IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS*

GRAHAM J. MCALEER

*Loyola College*
*Baltimore, Maryland*

SAINT THOMAS TELLS US that a day will come when the sun and the moon will be obscured, inducing dread amongst all people; this is a sign of the Second Coming. At this time, there will be a general resurrection, when the souls of all people who have ever lived shall be reunited with their bodies. This event is made possible through the whole of creation being reordered to God. Conforming to God, the human soul will receive the power to order its own body completely, to harmonize the elements that constitute its body, and to satisfy fully the desire of prime matter for form. In satisfying the natural appetite of matter for form, the soul, which is the form of the body, restricts the potentiality of matter for forms other than itself so that the human person remains bodily, and perpetually, free from corruption. When general resurrection occurs, all matter is reconciled with form, and the complete unity of all being is achieved.

All of this, however, is only possible if matter in its most profound metaphysical status is thoroughly ordered to form. The argument of this essay shall be that it is St. Thomas's concept of the *concreatum* that secures for him an analysis of matter and

'I would like to thank Jos Decorte, Jennifer DeRose, and Steven J. Sherwood for their help with this essay. A shorter version of this essay was read at the Twentieth International Conference on Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies at Villanova University on 16 September 1995.

form that sustains the metaphysical hope that the desire of matter for form can ultimately be satisfied. I thus want to show that underlying Thomas's theory of the material composite is a concern to establish a metaphysical foundation for resurrection. Crucial to this undertaking, I shall argue, is a concept of matter in which the desire of matter is structured, from its very inception, by the promise of its satisfaction by form. That matter and form have been created together in the *concreatum* is the guarantee of this promise, a promise made possible most fundamentally by the fact that form gives matter its act of existence. This is to say that Thomas 's theory of material composition is at once a theory of matter and a theory of desire: form gives being to matter, but, as shall be seen, form also gives to matter understood as a principle of desire its nature as a desire of some particular kind. Since what kind of desire matter comes to be cannot be separated from the form with which it exists in the composite substance, it is possible to say that the satisfaction of desire by the desired object is promised at the very inception of the desire.

The importance of Thomas's account of substantial composition to his theology cannot be overstated, I think. Thomas tells us that peace consists in desire coming to rest in the object of desire *(pax consistit in quietatione et unione appetitus)'* and that the very concept of peace *(ratio pacis)* demands that desire be able to come to rest in that object without any impediment. [2] In other words, the concept of peace is based on the promise that desire can attain its desired object. Without such a promise, there could be no hope in the Christian faith: no hope that there will be the peace of all things having rest in God. Moreover, without hope there can be no desire, for hope fortifies and

[1] *STh* II-II, q. 29, a. 2, ad 3. Unless stated otherwise all citations to the works of Saint Thomas are based on the Marietti editions.

[2] "Et ideo necesse est quod omne appetens appetat pacem, inquantum scilicet omne appetens appetit tranquille, et sine impedimento pervenire ad id quod appetit, in quo consistit ratio pads, quam Augustinus definit 'tranquillitatem ordinis'" (ibid., q. 29, a. 2).

sustains desire.[3] Thus, were there to be no hope of rest in God[4] there could be little love of God, for, as Thomas explains, we do not desire so intensely those things for which we have no hope *(non enim ita intense desideramus quae non speramus).*[5]

As a contrast with the metaphysics of Averroes immediately brings home what is at stake for Thomas in his theory of matter, and what his position on the material composite accomplishes, I want first to demonstrate that in the metaphysics of Averroes there is always a disjuncture between God and matter. Averroes describes the desire of prime matter as that which can never be satisfied by any form and thus cannot be satisfied by God either. Indeed, his treatment of the celestial realm is governed by a similar logic, one that is equally incompatible with a metaphysics of unity.[6] Thus, whereas Thomas speaks of the material composite as a *concreatum,* Averroes speaks of it as a *congregatum.*[7] According to Averroes, substantial composition issues when the substance of matter is perfected by form,[8]which perfection only augments the being that prime matter already has independently of form;[9] in consequence, the substance of prime matter always

[3] "Ad *tertium* dicendum, quod spes causat vel auget amorem, et hoc ratione delectationis, quia delectationem causat; et etiam ratione desiderii, quia spes desiderium fortificat" *(STh* 1-11, q. 27, a. 4, ad 3).

[4] "Proprium ac principale spei objectum est ipsa aeterna beatitudo" *(STh* 11-11, q. 17, a. 2).

[5] *STh* 1-11, q. 27, a. 4, ad 3.

[6] The only extensive treatment of matter in Averroes, a very interesting and rare treatment in that it goes far beyond superficialities to philosophical issues, is the article by Alfred L. Ivry, "Towards a Unified View of Averroes' Philosophy," *The Philosophical Forum* 4 (1972): 87-113. In very many ways, my interpretation of Averroes on matter is quite opposed to that oflvry.

[7] *In II De anima, Averrois Cordobensis Commentarium magnum in librum Aristotelis De anima,* ed. F. Stuart Crawford (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 2:130; 7:139; *In VIII Metaphysicorum,* vol. 4, fol. 211r, E.

[8] "ldest, et materia est substantia que est in potentia; forma autem est substantia per quam perficitur hec substantia que est in potentia forma" *(In II De anima,* 2:131). The fact that Averroes speaks of matter being *assimilated* to form might indicate that matter has some measure of being independent of form. He writes, "istud subiectum, quia recipiet formam, assimilatur ei, quod est in actu, et quia dimisit earn assimilatur ad non esse" *(In VIII Metaphysicorum,* vol. 4, fol. 211r, E).

[9] "Potentia autem reducitur ad materiam, de qua est possibile ut fiat congregatum ex ea et ex forma, scilicet compositum. Potentia enim, quae est in materia, est super individuum compositum ex ea et ex forma" *(In XII Metaphysicorum,* vol. 26, fol. 310v, M).

retains an independent being even when the substance of form is educed to constitute a composite substance with matter. [10] To conceive of a composite substance in this manner, according to Thomas, destroys any rigorous account of substantial unity: the unity of the composite is only properly secured if prime matter has its very being from the act of existence that comes to the composite through substantial form. I shall argue that the *congregatum* as a conception of substantial unity issues from Averroes's description of form as external to the desire of matter. More, I shall argue that Averroes's understanding of composition reflects a more general consequence of his metaphysics: namely, that matter prevents, by its very nature, an ultimate synthesis of the principles of being, which in turn entails that matter always remains a source of anguished finitude to the creature.

In contemporary philosophical theology, Paul Ricoeur has argued that theology is to be explored "in accordance with the norm of eschatology." [11] In particular, he asks, "How can we interpret the Resurrection in terms of hope, of promise, of the future?" [12] Ricoeur's question guides this present essay, and I would like to show that his answer to this question is not entirely satisfying. Resurrection is treated in many of his articles, some explicitly theological, others philosophical. He insists, however, that any hermeneutics of hope that is theological must rely upon a prior philosophical exploration of the dialectic of desire and spirit. [13] Philosophically, he argues, hope is best explored in terms

[10] Prime matter is a substance that can be perfected in actuality through substantial forms which exercise its potentiality. Averroes certainly thought that substances that are in act can be further perfected in act by subsequent substantial forms without loss of their own peculiar substantiality. This may be seen explicitly in his account of the four elements. See my "Augustinian Interpretations of Averroes with Respect to the Status of Prime Matter," *The Modern Schoolman* 73 (1996): 159-72. Thus, there should be even less reason for him to balk at the idea that a substance in potency could be further perfected in its being and substantiality.

[11] Paul Ricoeur, "Freedom in the Light of Hope," in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 404; cf. Paul Ricoeur, "Hope and the Structure of Philosophical Systems," in *Figuring the Sacred* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1995), 204.

[12] Paul Ricoeur, "Freedom in the Light of Hope," 405-6.

[13] Paul Ricoeur, "A Philosophical Interpretation of Freud," 161.

of a "semantics of desire" in which inchoate desire ("the archaeology of desire") is transformed into an ordered love of God ("teleology of spirit") through a deep wish for unity ("totalization").[14] Ricoeur notes that every philosopher has to face the problem of the relation between desire and meaning, and, accepting Freud's position that desire has a meaning anterior to spirit, he posits a "mixed discourse" of constituents that belong to "different levels of coherence and two universes of discourse.ms Employing this same dialectic of desire and spirit with respect to alienation and redemption,[16] he understands this "mixed discourse" as a "terrible battle for meaning" in which "timid" hope must cross a desert of "mourning."[11] While spirit (teleology) strives towards synthesis, desire (archaeology) "pulls us back and insinuates the whole backward drift of affectivity."[18] Ricoeur takes from Leibniz[1.] the idea that though desire constantly seeks out new meaning it is incapable of realizing these meanings; Leibniz, like Freud, understands meaning and desire to constitute quite distinct orders. It is this ontological separation of the order of desire from that of spirit that leads to a Christian vision in which hope must traverse a desert of mourning.

Though Ricoeur identifies Leibniz, and elsewhere Kant,2° as the source of his own theory of desire, he could just as well have identified Averroes, for he and Ricoeur share an ontology that ultimately issues in a desire for God that cannot find satisfaction

[14] Ibid., 174-76; cf. "Freedom in the Light of Hope," 418.

[15] Ricoeur, "A Philosophical Interpretation of Freud," 167, 169.

[16] Paul Ricoeur, "The Image of God and the Epic of Man," in *Truth and History*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 121-23; cf. "Freedom in the Light of Hope," 423.

[17] Ricoeur, "A Philosophical Interpretation of Freud," 176; cf. "Freedom in the Light of Hope," 422.

[18] Ricoeur, "A Philosophical Interpretation of Freud," 173.

[19] For Ricoeur, it is Leibniz who has most accurately captured the relationship between desire and culture when he writes: "The action of the internal principle which brings about the change or passage from one perception to another may be ti.ilim.It is true that appetite may not always entirely attain the whole perception toward which it tends, but it always obtains something of it and arrives at new perceptions" (ibid., 169).

[20] Ricoeur, "Freedom in the Light of Hope," 417.

because desire and God are not intrinsically linked, being of two distinct orders of meaning. Having recognized that the "mixed discourse" of desire and culture is a repetition of Averroes's own version of the "mixed discourse," the *congregatum*, Ricoeur shall be seen to share with Averroes a metaphysics of desire that is incapable of sustaining hope in bodily resurrection.

This study has as its *philosophical* aim to demonstrate that the Thomistic theory of desire can sustain hope in the Christian belief of the bodily resurrection, while the metaphysics of desire that Christian thinkers like Ricoeur and Leibniz[21] in fact share with Averroes cannot do so (and one might wonder about other theories of desire dominant in much of poststructuralist thought). *Historically*, I want to show that the theory of desire employed by Ricoeur has an antecedent in the works of Averroes which St. Thomas would have known. I limit myself, therefore, solely to the Latin Averroes and the ideas in his texts that Latin authors might have embraced or rejected. I hope to add to our understanding of Averroes's account of matter[22] and to explore his theory of desire, which has never been treated to my knowledge, as well as to challenge an evident consensus that Averroes and Thomas, but not the Augustinians, largely agree about the nature of matter.[23]

## I. PRIME MATTER AND DESIRE IN THE LATIN AVERROES

According to Averroes's cosmology there is an deep alienation within the world.[24] Commenting on Aristotle's description of

[21] At least, for the Leibniz rendered by Ricoeur. It should be noted that Leibniz furnished Maurice Blondel with the notion of the *vinculum*. In Blondel's theory of the material composite, the *vinculum* plays a similar role to Thomas's *concreatum*.

[22] As the bibliographies compiled for the *Bulletin de Philosophie mediivale* 30 (1980), 32 (1990), and 35 (1993) show, no detailed textual studies have yet appeared with respect to the theory of matter in Averroes.

[23] I have tried to show elsewhere that this interpretation is not obviously correct. See my "Augustinian Interpretations of Averroes."

[24] Remi Brague has noted that the Middle Ages saw various theologically inspired interpretations aimed at mitigating Aristotle's depiction of the alienation of the world from God. The argument of this essay is that Averroes adopts the position of Aristotle while Thomas articulates a theory of desire to overcome this alienation. See Remi Brague, "Le destin de la «Pensee de la Pensee» des origines au debut du Moyen Age," in *La question de Dieu selon Aristote et Hegel*, ed. Thomas de Konninck and Guy Planty-Bonjour (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991) 153-86.

prime matter as that which desires form, in book 1 of the *Physics,* Averroes states that there is a natural desire in matter *(desiderium naturale)* for form which is the cause of material things being open to generation and corruption. [25] He explains that matter has a desire for form after form because it does not have a form of its own *iforma propria):* [26] "And what Aristotle says is evident. For if there were not something here not having a form, there would not be something here desiring form after form." [27]

At the center of Averroes's metaphysics of matter is the natural desire of prime matter for form that can never be fully satisfied by any form. In the passage that describes Averroes's account of the natural desire of matter there is a very evident theological dimension to the discussion. [28] Prime matter has a natural desire for form, which is, Averroes says, a desire for the divine. Forms are the proxies of God (Averroes and Thomas agree that in desiring form matter in fact desires the divine); [29] since no form can arrest the desire of matter for any great length of time, however, it must follow that the desire of matter cannot be satisfied by God either. According to Averroes, the divine is present in the world through form and the perfection form brings. [30] Every nature, except prime matter, has an actualization that, once attained, is its complete assimilation to the divine *(secundum*

[25] *In I Physicorum,* t. 81, fol. 46r, C-D.

[26] Ibid., t. 69, fol. 40v, L; t. 79, fol. 45r, C; *De substantia orbis,* c. 1, fol. 3v, L; *In II De anima,* ed. Crawford, t. 2, p. 130.

[27] "Et hoc, quod dixit, manifestum est. Quoniam, si non esset hie aliquid non habens forma, non esset hie aliquod appetens formam post formam" *(In I Physicorum,* t. 81, fol. 46r, F). All citations from the works of Averroes are drawn from the Iunta edition unless otherwise stated.

[28] "Et dixit: 'Quoniam, quia est hie aliquid divinum,' etc. Idest, et quia privatio accidit materiae de necessitate, et est haec perfectio divina maxima, cui omnia entia appetunt assimilari et ex qua appetunt acquirere secundum quod natura eorum potest recipere, dicimus nos quod materia, secundum quod accidit ei privatio est innata appetere se assimilari primo principio secundum quod potest, et hoc est appetere receptionem formae" *(In I Physicorum,* t. 81, fol. 46r, C-D).

[29] "Sed omnia similantur Deo, qui est actus purus, inquantum habet formas per quas fiunt in actu; et inquantum formas appetunt, divinam similitudinem appetere dicuntur" (Aquinas, *ScG* II, c. 43).

[30] *In XII Metaphysicorum,* t. 55, fol. 340r, A.

*quod natura eorum potest recipere).* Prime matter, on the other hand, while it desires to be assimilated to the divine, and so happily receives any form as the presence of the divine, is not a kind of being with a nature that can realize its actualization, and thus no form can perfect the being of prime matter. It does not have a form of its own and therefore it is always beyond the provenance of the divine. This failure of any and every form to satisfy the desire of prime matter, which is a failure of the divine, leads Averroes to speak of prime matter as marked by a necessary privation: without any structure to a satisfactory actualization by form, such being can never attain a completion of its nature and thus suffers a primordial lack *(diminutionem contingentem sibi).*[31] Hence, privation accrues to prime matter *from necessity-not* because prime matter has privation as a part of its essence,[32] but because it does not have an essence able to receive the divine. There is then, according to Averroes, a primordial fracture within being.

Averroes speaks of order issuing from the Prime Mover[33] because all things have a desire for God.[34] While St. Thomas would certainly agree with Averroes that God is the source of order[35] he would not at all agree with Averroes as to the extent and completeness of this divine order. For Thomas, God in being *ipsa bonitas, veritas pura, ipsum esse* is the exclusive origin of order and nothing falls outside of his provenance *(impossibile est quod aliquid contingat praeter ordinem divinae gubernationis).*[36] Crucially, for Thomas, if the unity of being is to be preserved all things must have their being from God as the sole source of being

[31] "Omne enim ens, ut dictum est, diligit se permanere. Sed materia diligit induere formam post aliam propter diminutionem contingentem sibi" (In *I Physicorum,* t. 81, fol. 46r, F); ibid., t. 79, fol. 4Sr, C.

[32] *In I Physicorum,* t. 81, fol. 46v, F-G.

[33] *De substantia orbis,* c. 2, fol. 6v, L; *In VII Metaphysicorum,* t. 9, fol. 160r, C.

[34] *De substantia orbis,* c. 6, fol.13r, A; ibid., c. 4, fol.lOr, F-fol.lOv, G; *In II De* caelo, t. 71, fol. 146r, A. Goffredo Quadri speaks of this order as "une echelle de plaisirs"; see his *La philosophie arabe dans* l'*Europe medievale des origines* a *Averroes,* trans. from Italian into French by Roland Huret (Paris: Payot, 1947), 252.

[35] *III Metaph.,* lect. 11, n. 487.

[36] *STh* I, q. 103, a. 7; *De sub. sep.,* c. 14, n. 129; *II Sent.,* d. 18, q. 1, a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 39, 42.

*(ipsum suum esse).*[31] This universal cause makes it possible that all oppositions can ultimately be overcome.[38] The logic of desire in Averroes, according to Thomistic strictures, entails that the effects of an agent go beyond the intention of the agent, leading inevitably to monstrous consequences [39] and an anguished finitude. This is so because Averroes does not believe that God is the sole source of being, and does not believe that prime matter has its origin in God.[40] Of course, Thomas would agree that matter does not have a form of its own, but he does not accept Averroes's position that the natural desire of matter for form issues from a principle that exists eternally through itself and is co-primordial with God.

Prime matter is its own kind of being, a nature after some fashion,[41] a substance [42] whose essence is not potentiality as such

[31] *II Sent.,* d. 1, q. 1, a. 1.

[38] "Similiter etiam qui invenerunt duorum particularium effectuum contrariorum duas causas particulares contrarias, nesciverunt reducere causas particulares contrarias in causam universalem communen. Et ideo usque ad prima principia contrarietatem in causis esse judicaverunt. Sed cum omnia contraria conveniant in uno communi, necesse est in eis, supra causas contrarias proprias inveniri unam causam communem; sicut supra qualitates contrarias elementorum invenitur virtus corporis caelestis; et similiter supra omnia quae quocumque modo sunt, invenitur unum primum principium essendi, ut supra ostensum est (quaest. II, art. 3)" *(STh* I, q. 49, a. 3).

[39] "Unde, si aliquis effectus consequitur dispositionem materiae et intentionem agentis, non est ex materia sicut ex prima causae; et propter hoc videmus quod ea quae reducuntur in materiam sicut in primam causam, sunt praeter intentionem agentis, sicut monstra et alia peccata naturae" *(ScG* II, c. 40).

[40] Miguel Cruz Hernandez, *Abu-l-Walld Ibn Rushd (Averroes): Vida, obra, pensamiento, influencia* (Cordova: Caja de Ahorros, 1986), 155-59; Barry S. Kogan, *Averroes and the Metaphysics of Causation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1985), 191; Quardi, *La philosophie arabe,* 222; George F. Hourani, "Averroes Musulman," in *Multiple Averroes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978), 25-26; Michel Allard, *Le rationalisme d'Averroes d'apres une etude sur la creation,* vol. 15, Bulletin d'etudes orientales (Damascus: Institut Frarn;ais de Damas, 1954), 50; Ivry, "Towards a Unified View of Averroes' Philosophy," 103. Exceptions to this consensus include: P. Manuel Alonso, S. J., *Teolog{a de Averroes* (Madrid: Instituto 'Asfn Palacios,' 1947), 300; and Kassem Mahmoud, "La philosophie d'Averroes et ses rapports avec la Scolastique latine," *Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Filosofia Medieval* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979), 211.

[41] "Antiqui enim ignoraverunt quod inter non esse purum et esse purum est medium aut aliqua natura" *(In I Physicorum,* t. 78, fol. 44v, G); ibid., t. 68, fol. 40r, F.

[42] *In I Physicorum,* t. 70, fol. 41r, D; *In II De anima,* ed. Crawford, t. 2, p. 130; *In VII Metaphysicorum,* t. 8, fol. 159r, A; *In VIII Metaphysicorum,* t. 4, fol. 21lr, B.

*(subiectum est substantia non potentia, neque privatio)* [43] but is said rather to receive potency. [44] Most crucially, Averroes's metaphysics claims that prime matter is not profoundly related to God because it is through itself that it exists. [45] Averroes speaks of two eternal causes of generation and corruption: the agent of such change (ultimately God), and that *(aliquid)* from which *(ex quo)* such change issues. [46] These causes are said to exist *in re* and to be ontological primitives, which structure all other substances. [47] The independent existence of prime matter as an eternal principle is clearly affirmed in a number of passages in the Latin works of Averroes known in the thirteenth century. In his commentary to book 7 of the *Metaphysics,* Averroes writes,

> "And I say that matter, etc." That is, I understand by matter that which is *existing through itself,* what is neither a quality, nor a quantity, nor something of the other categories; because it is in potency all of those things which are according to the ten categories, as has been made clear in the *Physics.* [48]

[43] *In I Physicorum,* t. 70, fol. 4lr, E-F; *De substantia orbis,* c. 1, fol. 3v, L-M.

[44] *In XII Metaphysicorum,* t. 18, fol. 304v, l.

[45] "Et potentia istius declarationis est talis quia forma praecedit secundum substantiam et esse materiam. Et materia perficitur per illud quod est perfectum secundum actum, non secundum potentiam. Ideo est necesse ut actus sit perfectior potentia et prior ea in esse. Deinde dixit: 'Et similiter in aliis' etc., id est: Et similiter est de aliis potentiis, nisi potentia, quae est in prima materia" *(In IX Metaphysicorum, Das Neunte Buch Des Lateinischen Grossen Metaphysik-Kommentars van Averroes,* ed. Bernhard Biirke [Bern: A. Francke, 1969] t. 16, p. 60).

[46] "Quoniam si generatio est semper, necesse est ut sit aliquid, quod agat generationem primo, et quod sit ingenerabile, et aliquid, ex quo sit primo generatio, quod est etiam non generabile. Deinde <licit: 'et ut sint principia istorum,' etc. Idest, necesse est enim ut principia generationis non sint generabilia cum nihil fiat ex nihilo neque in infinitum" *(In III Metaphysicorum,* t. 12, fol. 52r, B); *In II Metaphysicorum, In Aristotelis Librum II metaphysicorum commentarius,* ed. Gion Darms, Thomistiche Studien, vol. 11 (Freiburg: Paulusverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1966), t. 6, pp. 61-62.

[47] "Deinde <licit: 'cum sciverimus causas eius simpliciter.' Et intendit, ut mihi videtur, causas existentes in re, primas, non compositas, et sunt prima materia, et ultima forma: quae sunt praeter primam materiam, et ultimam formam cuiuslibet rerum naturalium sunt materiae compositae, et formae compositae" *(In I Physicorum,* t. 1, fol. 6r, E); *In III De anima,* ed. Crawford, t. 5, p. 410.

[48] "'Et dico materiam,' etc. Idest, et intelligo per materiam illud, quod *est existens per se,* quod est nee quale, nee quantum, nee aliquid aliorum praedicamentorum: quoniam est in potentia omnia ista, secundum decem praedicamenta, ut declaratum est in *Physicis" (In VII Metaphysicorum,* t. 8, fol. 159r, D); the emphasis is mine.

This same insistence on the absolute existence of matter *(quad est existens per se)* occurs in his commentary on book 5 of the *Metaphysics:*

Further he says: "an element is common, etc." That is, since the definition of an element is that said before about which we say that it is manifest that a true element is common to all composites. It is the first out of which all things are composed and *is existing* in each of them and is that into which all things are dissolved. Whatever is that element must be the cause of all the others, and this is what he says is prime matter. [49]

Prime matter exists in each of the four elements and is posited as a foundation common to all of their transformations. This statement about the nature of matter also confirms that the potentiality of matter issues from something peculiar to the nature of matter itself and to nothing else. The same idea is found elsewhere. For example, when Averroes insists that the *esse* that belongs to matter is different from that being which belongs to any of the ten categories, he says, "it has been made clear that prime matter is the substratum to all of the ten categories and that its being *(esse)* is other than the being *(esse)* of any of these others." [50] A similar and even stronger passage is to be found in his dense and brilliant *De substantia orbis:*

And therefore matter has no form of its own and has no nature existing in act; but its substance is in potency and by this fact matter receives all forms. But potency, by which this substratum is substantiated, also differs from the nature of the substratum that is substantiated by this

[49] "Deinde dicit: 'Et elementum est commune,' etc. idest: et cum diffinitio elementi sit ilia praedicta quam diximus, manifestum est quod verum elementum est commune omnibus compositis, quod est primum ex quo componuntur omnia, et *est existens* in unoquoque eorum et in quo dissolvuntur omnia: et istud elementum debet esse causa aliorum elementorum. Et hoc quod dixit est prima materia" *(In V Metaphysicorum, Averrois in Librum V metaphysicorum Aristotelis commentarius,* ed. Ruggero Ponzalli [Bern: A. Francke, 1971], ed. Ponzalli, t. 4, p. 89); the emphasis is mine. "Elementum enim non dicitur de causis extrinsecis et dicitur de intrinsecis et dignius de materia" (ibid., t. 4, p. 83).

[50] "Deinde dicit: 'est enim aliud,' etc. Idest, declaratum est enim subiectum esse omnibus praedicamentis decem: et quod suum esse est aliud ab esse cuiuslibet eorum" *(In VII Metaphysicorum,* t. 8, fol. 159r, E).

potency, in this, that potency is said in respect of form: this substratum, however, is *one of those beings existing through themselves and one eternal element* of those beings existing through themselves, of which beings it is a substance in potency.s[1]

From these passages, it is clear that Averroes argues both that prime matter exists through itself and that form cannot constitute the being of prime matter.

Thus, prime matter does not have a form of its own, and its nature exists eternally through itself. It has a desire for form but this desire has not actually been created by God; the desire precedes the actuality of God, and is co-primordial with this actuality.[52] If there is a desire that does not have its origin in God, then one has a metaphysical dualism.[53] The Averroistic world is thus stricken by an eternal dualism: the divine is incapable of perfecting all of reality and a profound alienation infuses being. Thomas certainly does not find any comfort in such a metaphysical conception: "Certain people have asserted that the substance of the world

si "Et ideo nullam habet formam propriam et naturam existentem in actu: sed eius substantia est in posse: et ex hoc materia recipit omnes formas. Sed posse, quo substantiatur hoc subiectum, differt etiam a natura subiecti quod substantiatur per hoc posse, in hoc, quod posse dicitur in respectu formae: hoc autem subiectum est *unum entium existentium per se, et elementum unum aeternum,* existentium per se, quorum substantia est in potentia" *(De substantia orbis,* c. 1, fol. 3v, L-M); the emphasis is mine.

*si* Cf. Cruz Hernandez, *Abu-l-Walld Ibn Rushd (Averroes),* 159. Since Cruz Hernandez acknowledges that "la materia es tan eterna como el Primer motor," I do not understand how he can confirm the research of Asfn Palacios that Thomas and Averroes agree (1) about the sense in which God governs the world and (2) that from the unity of the world it is possible to demonstrate the unity of God. While the argument of my essay casts doubt on (1), Thomas explicitly attacks (as does Giles of Rome) the position of Averroes's theory of celestial matter as destroying the unity of the world *(STh* I, q. 66). For Cruz Hernandez's comments see pages 259-61 of the above-cited work. Alfred Ivry has made a tortuous attempt to reconcile Averroes's metaphysics with a philosophy of unity while recogniZing that Averroes posits matter as a principle coeternal with God; see his "Towards a Unified View of Averroes' Philosophy," 102-8.

s[3] A number of commentators have noted that a profound and ultimate dualism is characteristic of Averroes's metaphysical thought: Salomon Munk, *Des principaux Philosophes arabes et de leur doctrine* (Paris: «Vrin-Reprise»-J. Vrin, 1982); Quadri, *La philosophie arabe;* and Gerard Verbeke, "L'unite de l'homme: saint Thomas contre Averroes," *D'Aristote a Thomas d'Aquin: Antecedents de la pensee moderne* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990).

might not be from God; and this is an intolerable error of theirs; and therefore from necessity it must be refuted."[54] For Thomas, any metaphysics that fails to affirm the creation of heaven and earth is to be roundly rejected as against faith.[55] In Thomas's cosmology, God is the source of the being of both prime and celestial matter and the power of God extends to both;[56] in Averroes's cosmology, there are two original principles, the one desiring, the other the object of that desire. Yet if the object of the desire is not at the very foundation of that desire, thinks Thomas, there is no reason to suppose that the two can ever achieve a complete union-and this will be the insight that Ricoeur needs so desperately. Thomas's thought here is simple: if there are two distinct principles of being eternally existing through themselves and ordering the world, there is absolutely no reason to think that God could order the other principle to Himself.

In Averroes, God cannot reach down into the very depths of being and make His presence felt; desire is eternally cut off from God. In fact, the presence of God in the world is especially restricted in the thought of Averroes. In his cosmology, the celestial realm is populated by celestial animals. But the body of the celestial animal is a kind of matter that is in act,[57] and nowhere in the texts of the Latin Averroes is it said to desire. The actuality of celestial body is quite independent of the actuality of the celestial soul conjoined to it; this means that the actuality of the celestial body stands in opposition to the actuality of the unmoved mover. More accurately, perhaps, the celestial soul desires the prime mover but the celestial body has no desire of any kind whatsoever. It does not then desire God, but is *indifferent* to God; the fifth element is a complete and eternal nature of itself and only moves because it is the subject of a celestial soul that desires its own completion.[58] The celestial soul must drag this

[54] "Quidam enim posuerunt quod substantia mundi non sit a Deo; et horum est intolerabilis error; et ideo ex necessitate refellitur" (*STh* I, q. 46, a. 2, ad. 1).

[55] Ibid., q. 46, a. 2.

[56] Ibid., q. 46, a. 1, ad 3; ibid., q. 105, a. 1.

[57] *In I Physicorum,* t. 79, fol. 45, D.

[58] *In XII Metaphysicorum,* t. 41, fol. 325r.

body along as the soul seeks to become more completely like God. A hopeless finitude, therefore, also marks the celestial animal: the desire of the celestial soul is always thwarted by the indifferent body to which it is conjoined, and, as a result, an ultimate union through imitation of God is forever withheld.

Thus the logic of desire in the terrestrial realm is repeated in the celestial realm. In both, the logic is incompatible with a metaphysics of unity. It is clear that the forever restless desire of prime matter and the indifference of the fifth element in the metaphysics of Averroes shatter completely the hope of a final moment when all being shall be at peace in an ultimate union with God. The perpetuity of desire without satisfaction, which is reflected in Averroes's acceptance of the eternity of the world, is a rejection of that metaphysical hope which is able to sustain a belief in bodily resurrection-a belief not held by Averroes, of course. He denies that a bodily resurrection of a composite of form *and prime matter* is possible; for such a composite, only a temporary participation in the conditions of immortality is possible.

## II. THE CONCREATED STATUS OF FORM AND MATTER ACCORDING TO THOMAS

A principal aim of Thomas 's theory of matter is, I would claim, to confront and refute Averroes's position on desire and hope. Note that Averroes is not mentioned in Thomas's exposition: he is neither set up as a target, nor drawn upon as an authority for the Thomistic position. In fact, Averroes is never cited as an authority for Thomas 's theory of prime matter and potentiality,[59] and he is seldom referred to with respect to other

[59] He is not mentioned at all in those pages where Thomas gives his most subtle treatment of the nature of prime matter, VII *Metaphys.,* lect. 2. Again, though he is not mentioned by name, Averroes's position that potentiality is not the essence of prime matter is explicitly rejected by Thomas in his commentary on book I of the *Physics.* There is a reference to Averroes in the very early *De principiis naturae* when Thomas renders prime matter as that which has *esse incompletum.* However, the reference is consigned to the alternative readings in the critical apparatus by both the editors of the Leonine Commission and by John Pauson. See *De principiis naturae,* ed. *J.* Pauson, Textus Philosophici Friburgenses (Fribourg: Societe Philosophique; Louvain: Editions E. Nauwelaerts, 1950), 80.

issues centering around the concept of matter.[60] Saint Thomas had to reject Averroes's conception of matter as monstrous and, because it induced a hopeless finitude in the creature, destructive of faith. The doctrine of the general resurrection specifically denies that the world is eternal and asserts, to the contrary, that desire has to find its rest in God at some time.[61] For Thomas, metaphysics must include the principles whereby finitude is removed in a final unity of all being with God.[62]

Love is the foundation of desire[63] and in all things there is an *amornaturalis.*[64] For Thomas, the desire of matter for form,[65] like all desire, is but an instance of the order oflove *(ordo amorum).*[66] Love is a *vis unitiva*[61] which, because it strives to convert the one loving into the beloved,[68] is a power that binds matter and form together in a profound unity.[69] When the form of a thing is in another perfectly then that thing in which the form has come to

[60] Thomas does call upon Averroes as an authority when discussing the status of the desire of matter for form *(De Pot.,* q. 4, a. 1, ad 2). Thomas notes here that Averroes in his commentary on book 1 of the *Physics* states that the desire of matter for form is not an action of matter *(non est aliqua actio materiae)* but is rather a disposition of matter *(quaedam habitudo materiae adformam, secundum quod est in potentia ad ipsam).* This use of Averroes leaves undetermined the relationship between the authors on the problems of the origin and character of natural desire.

[61] "Optima autem gubernatio est quae fit per unum. Cujus ratio est, quia gubernatio nihil aliud est quam directio gubernatorum ad finem, qui est aliquod bonum. Unitas autem pertinet ad rationem bonitatis, ut Boetius probat, per hoc quod sicut omnia desiderant bonum, ita desiderant unitatem, sine qua esse non possunt; nam unumquodque intantum est, inquantum unum est. Uncle videmus quod res repugnant suae divisioni quantum possunt, et quod dissolutio uniuscujusque rei provenit ex defectu illius rei. Et ideo id ad quod tendit intentio multitudinem gubernantis, est unitas, sive pax" *(STh* I, q. 103, a. 3).

[62] "Et ideo mundus hoc modo innovabitur, ut abjecta omnis corruptione, perpetuo maneat in quiete" *(STh* suppl. III, q. 91, a. 5).

[63] *STh* 1-11, q. 27, a. 4, ad 2; ibid., q. 29, a. 6, ad 2.

[64] III *Sent.,* d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 (vols. 3 and 4, ed. M. F. Moos [Paris: Lethielleux, 1933-47)). I have found Joseph de Finance's work *Etre et agir,* 2d ed. (Rome: Librarie Editatrice de l'Universite Gregorienne, 1960) to be invaluable in understanding Thomas's position on the nature of the desire of prime matter.

[65] I *Phys.,* lect. 15, n. 136; I *Metaphys.,* lect. 1, n. 2; *De Pot.,* q. 4, a. 1, ad 2.

[66] *STh* 1-11, q. 27, a. 1.

[67] Ibid. I, q. 70, a. 2, ad 3; q. 36, a. 1.

[68] *In De div. nom.,* c. 4, lect. 2, n. 296.

[69] III *Sent.,* d. 27, q. 1, a. 1; I *Sent.,* d. 10, q. 1, a. 3, sol.

be is perfectly assimilated to its being and no longer tends towards its end, but desires to remain at rest in that end.[70] If the assimilation is as yet incomplete, which is said by Thomas to be a case of something having in itself the form of an end and of a good in potency *(aliquid habet in se formam finis et boni in potentia),* it continues to tend towards that form as its good. This is the case with prime matter *(materia dicitur appetere formam, in quantum est in ea forma in potentia).*[71] In other words, prime matter has a constant desire for the divine but unlike in Averroes's metaphysics, this desire can ultimately be satisfied by the divine. Indeed, in some sense this desire has always been partially satisfied by God from its inception: for it is a condition of desire that everything desires what in some way or other has a similitude with itself,[72] and prime matter, though radically different from God, nevertheless possesses some similitude of God.[73] This similitude can be seen in Thomas's rendering of the material composite as a *concreatum.*[74]

Through the notion of the *concreatum,* Thomas can argue both that prime matter is only a principle of pure potentiality or desire[75] and that it is always determined to some *ratio*[76] or "way of being possible" *(ratio possibilitatis)*[77]—that is, determined to

[70] *De Verit.,* q. 5, a. 9, ad 7.

[71] Ibid., q. 22, a. 1; *In De div. nom.,* c. 4, lect. 9.

[72] I *Sent.,* d. 3, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1.

[73] *In De div. nom.,* c. 4, lect. 2, n. 297; *ScG* I, cc. 25 and 29.

[74] "Materia prima non existit in rerum natura per seipsam; cum non sit ens in actu, sed potentia tantum; unde magis est aliquid concreatum, quam creatum" *(STh* I, q. 7, a. 2, ad 3); III *Metaphys.,* lect. 9, n. 453; *De Pot.,* q. 3, a. 1, ad 12.; q. 4, a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 38, 43, 47; ibid. IV, c. 47; *STh* I, q. 13, a. 1; q. 44, a. 2, ad 3; q. 45, a. 4, ad 3; *Le "De ente et essentia,"* ed. M.-D. Roland-Gosselin, Bibliotheque Thomiste, vol. 8 (Kain: Le Saulchoir, 1926), 8.

[75] Thus Thomas argues in *De Veritate* that prime matter as an insensible nature *(natura insensibilis)* does not have in it anything inclining *(aliquid inclinans)* but is only in some fashion a principle of inclination *(solummodo inclinationis principium) (De Verit.,* q. 22, a. 4).

[76] Thomas argues that though prime matter is always the same with respect to the kind of being it is, namely, *ens in potentia,* it can be many with respect to its possible *rationes.* Cf. I *Phys.,* lect. 15, n. 131.

[77] Thomas writes, "sed diversae materiae seipsis distinguuntur secundum analogiam ad diversos actus, prout in eis diversa ratio possibilitatis invenitur" (II *Sent.,* d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3).

some specific kind of desire or some specific manner of potency *(diversum modum potentiae)*[78]—by the form with which it is concreated. The essence of matter does not come to be essentially different in different concreated substances of matter and form, argues Thomas; only the way of being possible of that essence is rendered differently through the essences of the concreated substances. The consequence of this position is that matter is always and already a principle of desire structured by form, a principle whose way of being possible, whose very character and identity as a desire of some kind, is ascribed through form and the act of existence *(potentiae diversificantur secundum diversitatem actuum ad quos sunt).*[79]

The relations within the *concreatum* bespeak an intensification of the dependence of matter on form. Potency is specified[80] through act, says Thomas, which determination ensures that there is no moment when there is simply desire but always and already an enstructured desire of some kind or other: terrestrial or celestial in the case of material composites, finite[81] and glorified in the case of material composites that are also human persons. Thus, whether a substance is corruptible or incorruptible depends not on matter as a principle of pure potentiality or desire but on the power of the form to maintain itself in being by neutralizing (or profoundly channeling) the potentiality of matter[82] and educing a certain kind of desire. Desire, therefore, is always co-constituted and has its possible satisfaction as a part of its very structure. It is only this structure of desire, where the promise of satisfaction is found at the inception of the desire,

[78] *STh* I, q. 66, a. 2, ad 2.

[79] "Subiecto enim est eadem: et hoc est quod dicit, quod id quod subiicitur est idem, qualitercumque sit ens (quia scilicet non est ens actu, sed potentia). Non est autem idem secundum esse vel rationem: *aliam enim rationem et aliud esse accipit prout est sub diversis formis, et etiam secundum hoc ipsum quad ordinatur ad diversis formis;* sicut corpus est aliud ratione secundum quod est aegrotabile, et aliud secundum quod sanabile, licet sit idem subiecto" (I *Gen.*, Iect. 9, n. 72); the emphasis is mine. II *Sent.*, d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3; *De Pot.*, q. S, a. 3.

[80] III *Sent.*, d. 12. q. 2, a. 2.

[81] II *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 4, sol.

[82] *De sub. sep.*, c. 8, n. 86; c. 6, n. 63; *STh* I, q. 9, a. 2; VI *Metaphys.*, lect. 3, n. 1211; *De Pot.*, q. 3, a.17, ad 2.

that can support faith. That desire has its origin in God, and that it can be satisfied by God is the foundation of metaphysical hope.

This theory of desire has its ontological basis in two metaphysical principles, the first of which is rooted in the second: (I) matter is essentially ordered to form; (2) matter has its being from the act of existence. Thomas tells us that matter is essentially ordered to form *(materia per se habet ordinem ad formam*),[83] that potency is nothing other than a certain order to form *(potentia nihil aliud est quam quidam ordo ad actum),*[84] and that the principle of desire is nothing other than an ordered tending towards form or perfection *(nihil igitur est aliud materiam appetere formam, quam eam ordinari ad formam ut potentia ad actum).*[85] This essentially ordered state of matter to differing acts of being invokes such a state of dependence in existence (and Giles of Rome would take Thomas to task over this)[86] that prime matter is always enstructured by form *iforma quodammodo est in materia, in quantum habet aptitudinem et ordinationem ad ipsam)*[87] and thus, that there never is desire plain and simple but always desire of some particular kind.

Whatever character prime matter as the principle of pure potentiality or desire comes to have is dependent upon the kind of act of existence it receives, which comes to matter and desire through the other principle of the composite, form. This is the yet deeper ontological principle upon which Thomas's theory of desire is elaborated. Thomas denies that matter could be separated from form [88] and held apart in existence by God.[89] Matter is

[83] X *Metaph.,* lect. 11, n. 2131; *STh* I, q. 66, a. 2, ad 4; I *Phys.,* lect. 15, n. 138; I *Gen.,* lect. 6, n. 62; II *De gen.,* lect. 8, n. 234.

[84] II *De an.,* lect 11, n. 366; "Cum esse in potentia, nihil aliud sit quam ordinari ad actum" *(De malo,* q. 1 ad 2).

[85] I *Phys.,* lect. 15, n. 138; II *De an.,* lect. 7, n. 315; *ScG* II, cc. 23, 40.

[86] Thomas 's argument did not satisfy Franciscan thinkers either. For them, the notion that matter was a principle of being meant that it could not be dependent for its own existence upon form. See Gonsalvus Hispanus, O.F.M., *Quaestiones disputatae et de quolibet,* ed. P. Leonis Amoros, O.F.M., Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica, vol. 9, (Quaracchi, 1935) q. 14, ad 4.

[87] *In De div. nom.,* c. 4, lect. 9.

[88] *ScG* II, c. 43; *STh* I, q. 45, a. 4, ad 3; *De Pot.,* q. 4, a. 1; *ScG* II, c. 47; *Le "De ente et essentia,"* p. 33; *Quodl.* 3, q. 1, a. 1.

[89] *Quodl.* 3, q. 1, a. 1; *ScG* II, c. 22. Cf. Cajetan, *In De ente et essentia* (Turin: Marietti, 1934), c. 5, q. 9, p. 127.

never created in isolation from substantial form and indeed the term of creation is always a substance in act.[90] Form gives *esse simpliciter* to prime matter and *esse simpliciter* is the term of creation: [91] *Creare autem est dare esse.*[92] Unity, Thomas insists, is marked by a single act of existence,[93] and thus he renders the composite as two principles of being, matter and form, and the act of being, the *esse.* All of these together go to form an individual composite substance or a thing and none of them alone are substances or things. Indeed, if the notion of the *concreatum* is to make any sense, says Thomas, not only must matter not have its existence through itself,[94] but matter must be neither a thing (it is *in potentia ad rem)*[95] nor a substance. [96] If it is, the idea of the *concreatum* is artificial. This is a most crucial point, for it distinguishes Thomas not merely from Averroes but from other Scholastic thinkers, both Franciscans and, more generally, Augustinians.

Thomas specifically applies his theory of matter and substantial composition, which we have now seen is in fact a theory of desire, to the problem of bodily resurrection. According to Thomas, the desire of prime matter is ultimately satisfied when the human soul is beatified and by grace is infused with the power to satisfy completely the potentiality of prime matter. Resurrection, a time when the world will exhibit the ministry of the Creator *(exhibere ministerium Creatori),*[91] will consist in God reordering the desire of prime matter by establishing a new conformity between the soul and God. Because the soul is the form

[90] *ScG* IV, c. 47; *STh* I, q. 44, a. 2, ad 3.

[91] *ScG* II, c. 21.

[92] ISent.,d.37,q.l,sol.

[93] *STh* I, q. 4, a. I.

[94] "Materia enim per se non potest esse separata a singularibus, quia non habet esse nisi per aliud" (ill *Metaphys.,* lect. 9, n. 453); *STh* I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 3; *Quodl.* 3, q. 1, a. 1; *ScG* II, c. 22.

[95] I *Phys.,* lect. 15, n. 132.

[96] "Materia autem et fonna, quae est principium actionis in agente, non sunt substantiae nisi inquantum sunt principia substantiae compositae" (VII *Metaphys.,* lect. 6, n. 1386); I *Phys.,* lect. 15, n. 132.

[91] *STh* I, q. 64, a. 11, ad 3.

of the body this reordering of the soul also means that prime matter receives a new *ratio possibilitatis.*

Thomas explains that generation typically arises from a form that freezes *(ligare)* the potency of matter by the act of determining the matter to itself.[98] In their natural state, material forms cannot perfectly freeze the potentiality of matter, and when the matter is determined to another form, the inhering form must release the matter and fall into corruption.[99]

With resurrection, however, because the soul is immutably subject to God *(conformatur Deo)*[100] so the body is immutably subjected to the soul.[101] In this new conformity to God, prime matter through its concreated form receives a new kind of desire for that form and only for that form. In this conformity the finitude of the human subject is overcome. Such a possibility is ruled out in Averroes, for no substantial form could ever complete the desire of prime matter for long, since its being has no formal structure at its foundation. Thus, not even God can satisfy the desire of prime matter: God is but one more form among others. It is the forever restless desire of prime matter that thwarts the total presence of the divine and puts being asunder. The ultimate satisfaction of all desire by God, a final moment of perfect peace when all being will be united and reconciled under the ministry of the Creator,[102] is metaphysically impossible in Averroes's thought.

## III. CONCLUSION

Resurrection, as the ultimate destiny of the human person and all of creation, is the measure of Thomistic metaphysics.

[98] "Et ideo in corporibus illis manet eadem potentia ad formam aliam quae nunc inest, quantum ad substantiam potentiae; sed erit ligata per victoriam animae supra corpus, ut numquam in actum passionis exire potest" (Ibid. suppl. III, q. 82, a. 1, ad 2).

[99] Ibid. I, q. 50, a. 5.

[100] Ibid., q. 43, a. 5, ad 2; II *Sent.,* d. 19, q. 1, a. 2, sol.

[101] II *Sent.,* d. 19, q. I, a. 2; *STh* suppl. III, q. 82, a. 2; III, q. 56, a. 2; *De Verit.,* q. 13, a. 4; *De Pot.,* q. 5, a. 10; *STh* suppl. III, q. 82, a. 1, ad 1; *De Pot.,* q. 9, a. 10.

[102] "Una quidem perfecta, quae consistit in perfecta fruitione summi boni, per quam omnes appetitus uniuntur quietati in uno; et hie est ultimus finis creaturae rationalis, secundum Psal. CXLVII, vers. 14: 'Qui posuit finis tuos pacem'" *(STh* II-II, q. 29, a. 2, ad 4).

Thomas, as we have seen, has articulated a metaphysics capable of sustaining hope in bodily resurrection through his concept of the *concreatum:* a description of desire wherein form gives to the principle of desire its very being and structure and thus implicates itself thoroughly in the desire; one can say that it offers itself to the desire and in so doing promises desire its satisfaction. Ultimately, of course, it is God who orders all desire. Every inclination, whether natural or willed, is nothing other than a certain pressure *(impressio)* from God just as, Thomas tells us, the inclination of an arrow to a determinate target is nothing other than a certain pressure from the archer *(sicut inclinatio sagittae ad signum determinatum nihil aliud est quam quaedam impressio a sagittante* ).[103] In this sense, prime matter has a desire which is always a determinate pressure from God and expressive of God's order. In Averroes, however, for whom the material composite is a *congregatum,* the desire of prime matter is not structured through form at its inception; rather does it continually approach and withdraw from form. One might say it has the object of its desire outside of itself. As we have seen, this character of desire results from Averroes's conception that desire does not have a formal structure at its root and therefore that it cannot be satisfied by any formal structure.

It will be recalled that Ricoeur's philosophical theology employed the notion of desire as a "mixed discourse" in which the constituents of desire and spirit relate to one another as do the parts of the material composite in Averroes's *congregatum* and not as in Thomas's *concreatum.* Ricoeur speaks of "timid" hope because his theory of desire is unequal to the task of sustaining a belief in bodily resurrection and condemns the creature to an anguished finitude. By contrast, the metaphysical hope of St. Thomas is equal to both a philosophy of finitude and a philosophy of totality. The Thomistic theory of desire can both sustain the central Christian belief and critically address themes and theories in contemporary philosophical theology and, more generally, philosophical anthropology.

[103] Ibid. I, q. 103, a. 8.

# ST. THOMAS, LYING, AND VENIAL SIN

LAWRENCE DEWAN, O.P.

*College Dominicain*
*Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

IS IT GOOD TO TELL a harmless lie in order to save a life? Immanuel Kant held that it is very bad, for even though the lie does no immediate harm to the individuals involved, the liar is doing all he can to undermine the basis of law and contracts.[1] Thomas Aquinas, following St. Augustine's lead, had a much less severe judgment in the matter. While he held that all lying is bad, what he called a "sin" *(peccatum),*[2] nevertheless a

[1] Cf. Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). She includes in an appendix (pp. 285-90) an excerpt from Immanuel Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives," from *The Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy,* ed. and trans. Lewis White Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). Kant clearly regards any lie as what Thomas would call a "mortal sin." Kant says:

> Truthfulness in statements which cannot be avoided is the formal duty of an individual to everyone, however great may be the disadvantage accruing to himself or to another. If, by telling an untruth, I do not wrong him who unjustly compels me to make a statement, nevertheless by this falsification, which must be called a lie (though not in a legal sense), I commit a wrong against duty generally in a most essential point. That is, so far as in me lies I cause that declarations should in general find no credence, and hence that all rights based on contracts should be void and lose their force, and this is a wrong done to mankind generally.
>
> Thus the definition of a lie as merely an intentional untruthful declaration to another person does not require the additional condition that it must harm another, as jurists think proper in their definition *(medacium est falsiloquium in praeiudicium alterius).* For a lie always harms another; if not some other particular man, still it harms mankind generally, for it vitiates the source of law itself. (286)

Obviously this is to say that any lie is against the common good, and so is what Thomas would call unjust and mortally sinful.

[2] We might note *STh* I-II, q. 71, a. 1: "Properly 'sin' *[peccatum]* names an act which lacks order *[actum inordinatum],* just as the act of a virtue is an ordered and due *[debitus]* act" (1088bl0-13; all pagination references are to the edition of the *Summa theologiae* published in 1941 by the College Dominicain, Ottawa).

harmless lie to save a life is only a venial sin, not a mortal sin. Still, some interpreters of Thomas would like to eliminate even this stricture, and to do so, they sometimes attempt to redefine the event of which Thomas is speaking. [3] I am afraid that, in so doing, they tend to undermine our identification of species of sin. They cast doubt on the validity of moral taxonomy. I wonder if this is not, in part, due to a failure to understand the nature of venial sin. Accordingly, I propose here to recall some features of Thomas 's doctrine of venial sin, and see how it applies to the discussion of lying.

## I. VENIAL SIN

The distinction between venial sin and mortal sin is not directly about species of sin. What is in kind a venial sin can be done in such a way as to make it mortal, and what is in kind a mortal sin can be done in such a way as to make it venial. However, there are kinds of sin that by virtue of their very kind are mortal, and kinds that are venial. [4] A mortal sin is one that goes contrary to the inclination to the true ultimate end, eternal beatitude. A venial sin is one that is not thus contrary. The result of a mortal sin is that the spiritual principle of life within the person, namely, grace and charity, is eliminated. Accordingly, the person does not have the inner resources to live spiritually. Such a sin has, as its appropriate punishment, perpetual banishment from beatitude. On the other hand, a venial sin does not eliminate or even decrease charity, and so one can repair oneself spiritually. The appropriate punishment is of limited duration. [5]

[3] *The Newsletter of the Center for Thomistic Studies*, Houston, Texas, in 1994 reported a Ph.D. dissertation by Austin Rockcastle, entitled *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Nature and Morality of Lying*. It said that, using the sort of "speaking *contra mentem*" without intention to deceive exemplified by an actor in a play, Rockcastle argued that such exceptions could allow for speaking *contra mentem* to a would-be murderer. This shows the sort of odd twist in readings of an otherwise quite clear doctrine to which this issue gives rise. Thomas certainly would not call such speech to a would-be murderer anything more or less than a lie that is a venial sin.

Cf. for example Kenneth W. Kemp and Thomas Sullivan, "Speaking Falsely and Telling Lies," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 (1993) [Annual Supplement: ACPA Proceedings]: 151-70. They try to make the acts under consideration "not assertions" (166).

[4] *STh* I-II, q. 88, a. 2.

[5] Ibid., q. 72, a. 5.

Thomas views the entire moral life as the movement of the rational creature towards union with God in the beatific eternal life.[6] The acts that move us in that direction are those which are in accordance with reason, whereby we are in God's image.[7] Thus, the entire moral enterprise is seen as enlivened by charity: that is, the love of God as source of beatitude, the love of oneself as capable of union with God in beatitude, the love of one's neighbor as capable of association with us in beatitude.[8]

God is the ultimate end.[9] Creatures are "for the ultimate end."[10] Thus, if one acts in such a way as to give a creature the status of the ultimate end, one commits a mortal sin.[11] If one treats a creature according to its true status in the scheme of things, there is no sin.[12] Where, then, does venial sin come in? One can tend towards a creature in a way that is somewhat disorderly, and yet not make it the ultimate end. One retains one's love for the true ultimate end (see Appendix 1),[13] even though one tends towards a creature in a somewhat disorderly way-disorderly, that is, from the viewpoint of reason.

[6] Ibid., I, q. 2, prologue (lla28-29) characterizes the entire Second Part as "concerning the movement of the rational creature unto God *[de motu rationalis creaturae in Deum]."*

[7] Ibid., 1-11, and 1-11, q. 5, a. 7.

[8] Ibid., 11-11, q. 26, aa. 2, 3, and 4.

[9] Ibid., 1-11, q. 3, a. 8.

[10] This is true even of the created person destined for beatitude. Thus, in charity one loves oneself as a being pertaining to God (ibid., 11-11, q. 25, a. 4 [1545b16-23]):

> We can speak of charity as regards its own proper nature, according as it is a friendship of man with respect to God primarily, and consequently with respect to those things which have to do with God. Among which things, also, is the man himself who has the charity. And thus, among other things which one loves out of charity, as pertaining to God *[quasi ad Deum pertinentia],* one loves even oneself out of charity.

[11] Ibid. 1-11, q. 88, a. 2.

[12] Ibid. 11-11, q. 64, a. 1 (1756b5-7): "no one sins by the fact that he uses something for that for which it is [intended] *[nullus peccat ex hoc quod utitur re aliqua ad hoc ad quod est]."*

[13] Ibid. 1-11, q. 88, a. 1, ad 3: "he who sins venially adheres to the temporal good, not as someone [there] finding ultimate satisfaction *[non utjruens],* because he does not establish the goal in it; but rather as someone making use of it *[sed ut utens* 1 *relating {himself} to God, not actually but habitually."* Th. Deman, O.P., in his article on sin, "Le peche," in *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique,* ed. A. Vacant et al. (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ane, 1933) t. 12, col. 140-275, at col. 237-44, discusses at some length the question of the ultimate end one has in view in committing sins venial in kind. All one's

Reason is the key to moral life, because it constitutes the proper nature of man. A thing is good inasmuch as it acts in accordance with its nature, and so man is good inasmuch as he is reasonable.[14] And reason itself determines right action by considering the natures of things and their proper roles, one with respect to another. We are supposed to treat things, including ourselves, in accordance with their natures.[15] Indeed, reason is that whereby

actions must be done for the sake of an ultimate end. In venial sin, one is not doing something that can advance one towards the ultimate end. Nevertheless, one cannot be acting for any ultimate end other than the true one; else it would be mortal sin. Thomas holds that one acts for the true ultimate end, taken not actually but habitually. Thus, at *STh* II-II, q. 24, a. 10, ad 2, on whether charity can undergo diminution, Thomas is led to speak about a type of love for a creaturely good that is merely venial sin and so does not diminish charity; in connection with it, he says: "that which is loved in venial sin, is loved on account of God *[propter Deum amatur]* habitually, even though not actually *[habitu, etsi non actu]."* And Thomas addresses the issue in a more *ex professo* fashion at ibid. I-II, q. 88, a. 1, ad 2 and ad 3, as quoted above. Deman focuses on someone who consciously commits the venial sin, considering that it is "only a venial sin." However negative this outlook, it does take into consideration one's own status regarding the ultimate end.

[14] *STh* I-II, q. 71, a. *2* (1089bl6-44):

> The nature of each thing is primarily *[potissime]* the form in accordance with which the thing obtains its species.
>
> But man is constituted in a species through the rational soul.
>
> And so that which is against the order of reason is properly against the nature of man inasmuch as he is man; but what is in accordance with reason is in accordance with the nature of man inasmuch as he is man.
>
> But the good of man is to be in accordance with reason, and "the bad of man is to be outside accordance with reason *[praeter rationem],"* as Dionysius says, *On the Divine Names* 4 [no. 32 (PG 3:733)].
>
> Hence, human virtue, which makes a man good, and renders his deed good, is in accordance with the nature of man, inasmuch as it is in accordance with reason; and vice is against the nature of man, inasmuch as it is against *[contra]* the order of reason.

Notice that *contra* and *praeter* here do not seem to differ greatly; of course, Thomas is restricted by the words of the quotation from Dionysius, which text actually has (in the translation of Johannes Sarracenus): "est malum ... animae praeter rationem"; cf. Thomas, *In De div. nom.* 4.22 (ed. Pera, Rome and Turin, 1950: Marietti, text no. 247).

[15] See especially *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 12 (2185bl4-30):

> In every order, [what is] worst is the corruption of the principle on which the others depend. Now, the principles of reason are those things which are according to nature; for reason, those things being presupposed which are determined by nature, disposes the others according as is suitable. And this is apparent both in speculative and in practical matters. And thus, just as in speculative

we are united to God,[16] and our treatment of natures as they deserve constitutes already a social relation to the author of nature.[17]

Thus, Thomas teaches that all acts of injustice, acts that truly harm our neighbor, such as murder or theft, are mortally sinful. They are against charity. They do not treat the neighbor according to his proper nobility in the divine scheme.[18]

Suppose we contrast a mortal and a venial sin. One act of simple fornication (i.e., non-contraceptive reproductive activity by people who are not married at all) is a mortal sin, because it is against the welfare of the child who could be conceived: such a child, having no father, will be handicapped as regards its entire life. On the other hand, one act of overeating is a venial sin. It is the expression of an excessive appetite for food, that is, an

> matters an error concerning those things the knowledge of which is naturally implanted in man is most serious and most unseemly; so also, in matters of action, to act against those things which are determined by nature is most serious and most unseemly. Therefore, because in those vices which are against nature man transgresses that which is determined by nature concerning the use of sexuality, thus it is that in this matter this sin is most serious.

[16] Ibid. 1-11, q. 100, a. 2 (1260a42-51):

> the community to which the divine law orders is that of men with God, whether in the present or in the future life. And therefore the divine law proposes precepts concerning all those things through which men are well ordered towards communication with God. But man is conjoined to God by reason or mind, in which there is the image of God. And therefore the divine law proposes precepts concerning all those things through which the reason of man is well ordered.

[17] Ibid. 11-11, q. 154, a. 12, ad 1; Thomas is replying to an objector who thinks that sexual sins against nature are less grave than such things as adultery, since the latter hurts others, whereas a sexual sin against nature does no harm to another:

> just as the order of right reason is from man, so also the order of nature is from God himself. And therefore in sins against nature, in which the very order of nature is violated, injury [*iniuria]* is done to God himself, the Orderer of nature. Hence Augustine says, in *Confessions* 3 [cap. 8 (PL 32:689)]:"Disgraceful acts which are against nature are everywhere and always to be detested and punished, such as were those of the people of Sodom; which, if all peoples performed them, all would be held in the same guilt of crime by divine law, which did not so make men that they might make use of themselves in that way. *Indeed, that very society is violated which ought to be between us and God,* since the very nature of which he is the author is polluted by the perversity of carnal desire." [Italics mine]

[18] Ibid., q. 59, a. 4.

appetite not in accordance with reason. However, one such act does no great harm, and certainly not for the whole of anyone's life (see Appendix 2).[19]

Accordingly, when Thomas distinguishes between mortal and venial sin, the contrast is great. Indeed, he tells us that there is an infinite difference between them:

> sins do not differ infinitely on the side of the turning towards the changeable good (in which the substance of the act consists); but they differ infinitely on the side of the turning away [involved]. For some sins are committed *by turning away from the ultimate end,* whereas some [are committed] *by disorder having to do with those things which are for the end.* Now, the ultimate end differs *infinitely* from those things which are for the end.[20]

Furthermore, confronted with an adversary who cites Augustine's definition of sin (a thought, word, or deed against the eternal law), an adversary who argues that since what is against the eternal law is mortal sin, all sin is mortal sin, Thomas replies that the word "sin" is said *analogically* of mortal and venial sin. Venial sin does not correspond perfectly to the idea of sin. Just as "a being" is said of both substance and accident, but of substance by priority, of accident merely in a secondary way, so also "sin" is so said of the mortal and the venial. Venial sin is not *"against* the eternal law" *[contra legem].* Thus, Augustine's definition applies properly only to mortal sin. Venial sin is "out of step" with law *[praeter legem],* since law always prescribes that things be done according to reason. Venial sin lacks the reasonableness that law promotes. Still-and this should be stressed-no law *prohibits* venial sin, even though it is not something *licit.* As Thomas says, "someone sinning venially does not do what the law prohibits, or fail to do that to which the law by precept obliges."[21]

[19] Ibid., q. 154, a. 2, ad 6.

[20] Ibid. I-II, q. 87, a. 5, ad 1 (italics mine); and we are told at I-II, q. 88, a. 4 (1196b21-24), "Not all the venial sins in the world can have as much liability for punishment as one mortal sin."

[21] Ibid., q. 88, a. 1, ad 1; to understand how Thomas can say that venial sin is not prohibited by law, yet is "illicit," remember that *illicitus,* as in such crucial texts for our purposes as 11-11, q. 110, a. 3, ad 4 (1996a20), means not "against the law," but rather "not a thing which should be done" in a more general way; Iicet is not cognate with *lex,* but appears closer to the *lib-* in *liber.* One is not altogether free to do what is illicit.

In this same line of thinking, we should hesitate even to say that venial sin is "bad." At least, we must recognize that "bad" is said in different ways. Thus, Thomas tells us: "venial sins do not exclude the spiritual good, which is the grace of God or charity. Hence, they are not called 'bad,' unqualifiedly *[malum simpliciter],* but in a qualified sense *[secundum quid]."* [22]

A further gauge of the proper weight to be assigned to venial sins is the teaching that, for them to be forgiven, there is not even need that one think of them individually. Any actual charitable movement of the mind towards God includes the repudiation of all such "being out of step" with the divine plan. Still, one ought to have the ambition to cut down on such sin; otherwise one stands in danger of failing. Repeatedly sinning venially is seen as a "disposition" toward mortal sin.[23]

## II. LYING

How does lying stand with respect to sin, mortal and venial? Here Thomas distinguishes between two intentions on the part of the speaker: (1) the intention to say what is false, and (2) the

For the distinction between *contra legem and praeter legem,* see also II-II, q. 105, a. 1, ad 1 (1971b44-46): "Venial sin is not disobedience, because it is not against the law *[contra praeceptum],* but rather [is] out of step with the law *[praeter praeceptum]."* And the same vocabulary is at work in I-II, q. 74, a. 9 (1124b40-46).

It is clear in II-II, q. 110, a. 4, ad 1, and especially in ad 2, that Thomas does not regard all lying as against the law.

[22] Ibid. I-II, q. 78, a. 2, ad 1.

[23] Ibid., q. 88, a. 3 deals with the sense in which venial sin "disposes" to mortal. Cf. also 3, q. 87, a. 1, ad 1. This whole article, on the need for repentance if venial sin is to be remitted, is of great interest. One must have more than just the existence of the *habitus* of charity (habitual displeasure with such sin, identified with the virtue itself), for the remission of such sin. However, one need not think of individual sins and be sorry for them singly. One must have a *virtual displeasure,* that is, an actual movement of the affection towards God and things divine, such that whatever would occur that would retard one from that movement would be displeasing, and one would be sorry for having done it, even if one does not actually think about it.

This is important in placing venial sin within a wholesome spiritual life. One should not be satisfied to have done such a thing. One ought to have the purpose of preparing oneself for reducing venial sin; otherwise, there would be danger of failing, since the appetite for improving would desert one, or the appetite for removing the impediments to spiritual progress, both of which are venial sins (ad 1).

One need not have the purpose of abstaining from all such sins, collectively (an impossibility), but one should have the purpose of abstaining from them individually.

intention, by so doing, to deceive someone. It is the first that is formal (i.e., essential) for the lie. The second is the lie's proper perfection, so to speak (something distinct from, but normally accompanying, the essence).[24]

Thomas teaches that every lie is a sin, using the word *sin* to cover both venial and mortal. The reason is that words are naturally ordered to the manifestation of truth. Accordingly, to use words to express the false is an abuse of nature. In no circumstances, then, is a lie licit. Thomas makes the argument very carefully, so as to arrive at a universal ban on lying:

> that which is in itself bad in kind, can in no way be good and licit, because in order that something be good, it is required that all [factors] rightly concur: "for the good is from the complete cause, while the bad is from any particular defect," as Dionysius says in *On the Divine Names* 4 [no. 30 (PG 3:729)].
>
> But a lie is bad in kind. For it is an act falling upon undue matter, for *since spoken words are naturally signs of thoughts, it is unnatural and undue that someone signify by speech that which he does not have in mind.* Hence, the Philosopher [Aristotle] says in *Nicomachean Ethics* 4 [7 (1127a28)] that "the lie is in itself bad *[pravum]* and to be avoided; the true is good and praiseworthy."
>
> Hence, "every lie is a sin," as Augustine also says, in the book *Against the Lie* [1(PL40:519); 21 (40:547)].[25]

[24] Ibid. 11-11, q. 110, a. 1, discussing "whether the lie is always opposed to the truth [i.e. to the virtue of veracity]?": "Now, the proper object of manifestation or enunciation is the true or the false. But the inordinate intention of the will can bear upon two items, one of which is *that the false be enunciated,* the other is the proper effect of false enunciation, viz. *that someone be deceived"* (1992b13-20). Now we begin to envisage the act as a whole:

> If, therefore, these three concur, i.e. that that which is enunciated is false, and there is present the will to enunciate what is false, and also the intention of deceiving, then there is falseness materially, because the false is said; and formally, because of the will to say what is false; and effectively, because of the will to give a false impression. However, the intelligible aspect: "lie" is taken from the formal falsity, i.e. from the very fact that someone has *the will to enunciate the false.* Hence, the lie [mendacium] is named from this, that it is "said contrary to the mind" *[contra MENtem DICitur].* (b20-32)

[25] Ibid., q. 110, a. 3: the Ottawa editor includes references to *Enchir.* 18 (PL 40:240) and 22 (40:243).

It is notable that Thomas stresses in this argument the natural character of words as such. In the much earlier Quodl. 8, q. 6, a. 4, he speaks merely of words having been "devised" [inventa] in order to be signs of what we have in mind (though the doctrine is the same).

This article is the occasion for Thomas to treat of the perennial "Gestapo question": what is one to say to the murderous agent of an unjust regime, asking about the presence of a victim one is hiding in one's house? His answer is quite simply that one ought not to lie, no matter what the consequences. He indicates that evasiveness should be exploited, but lying is not a thing to do. The argument of the objector interestingly tries to compare lying to amputation for health:

> The lesser evil is to be chosen so that one avoid the greater evil, as for example the medical practitioner amputates the member lest the entire body be corrupted. But it is a lesser harm that someone give rise to a false opinion in the mind of someone than that someone kill or be killed. Therefore, a man can licitly lie so as to preserve one [person] from homicide and preserve another [person] from death.

We notice, in this argument, the social character of veracity and lying; it measures the harm one does to one's neighbor by lying.

Thomas replies:

> It is to be said that the lie does not have the character of sin solely from the harm it inflicts on one's neighbor, but [already] from its own disorder, as has been said. But it is not licit *[non licet]* to make use of some illicit disorder *[aliqua illicita inordinatione]* in order to impede the harms and deficiencies of others; just as it is not permitted to steal in order that a man engage in almsgiving, save perhaps in the case of necessity in which all things are in common [ownership]. And so it is not permissible to tell a lie in order that one free another from any peril whatsoever. Nevertheless it is permissible to hide the truth prudently under some dissimulation, as Augustine says in the book *Against the Lie* [10 (PL 40:553); cf. also *On Lying,* c. 10 (PL 40:501)].[26]

We see that the conception of the lie as a sin is very much tied to the right use of things (i.e., use in conformity with their own natures). Just as one should not allow one's appetites (e.g., one's anger or one's desire for wealth)[27] to be out of line with the rea-

[26] *STh* 11-11, q. 110, a. 3, obj. 4 and ad 4.

[27] See ibid., q. 158, a. 3 (2203a44-bl), on anger, and q. 118, a. 4 (2022a38-52), on avarice, as venial in kind.

sonable, so one ought not to allow one's speech to be out of line with its reasonable condition. [28]

But is every lie a *mortal* sin? Definitely not. Reminding us that a mortal sin is an act contrary to the charity by which we love God and our neighbor, Thomas presents a discussion in which we can see the many possibilities involved in lying. We can see mortal sins of lying, (1) considering the lie just in itself, or (2) considering the further intention one has in lying, or (3) considering some incidental feature of the situation.

Most important for our topic is the presentation of the lie "just in itself." Thomas will present a hierarchy of types of lie. It seems that the word *lie*, from the viewpoint of moral taxonomy, requires the same sort of care as does *soul* in Aristotle's *De anima*. *Soul* does not name one kind of thing only, but a hierarchy of forms, some more perfect than others. [29] So too, here, there is a hierarchy of lies. To consider the lie "in itself," one looks directly at what it talks about: *"ex ipsafalsa signijicatione,"* from the false meaning itself. Suppose one lies about God. That is a mortal sin. Suppose one lies about the nature of things, or about moral formation. That is a mortal sin, though less grave. Suppose one lies about a contingent truth, such that the person to whom one speaks is not harmed by it. That is a venial sin. [30]

We see, then, that it would be wrong to say, "lying is only a venial sin." There are types of lie that are mortal sins, and there is a type of lie that is a venial sin.

This hierarchy should be related to Thomas 's conception of the proper perfection of the human mind. Thomas himself does not make this comparison in the text of the question on lying, but I believe it is the relevant, and indeed crucial, background. It is not simply knowledge of any contingent fact that constitutes

[28] These sorts of abuses of nature are analogous to what one finds in the criticism (ibid., q. 154, a. 12) of those sins of lust which are against nature, but in that latter case the matter is intrinsically grave.

[29] *Aristotle, De anima* 2.3 (414b20-415a15).

[30] *STh* II-II, q. 110, a. 4 (1997a31-b10).

what properly perfects the mind.[31] Rather, it is (1) the truth about God, the author of reality; (2) truth about the permanent features of reality (the species of things, the objects of science); and (3) truth about morals: these are the things we naturally desire to know. Thomas presents Adam, prior to the Fall, as perfect in the order of knowledge of science and morals (though not yet at the ultimate goal). Yet Adam was not thought to know "how many pebbles are at the bottom of this or that stream."[32] So also, in teaching about the communication among angels Thomas distinguishes carefully between the speech that is properly called "illumination" and the speech that is "merely speech." The former communicates truth concerning God and the nature of things. The latter speaks merely of what depends on the will of this or that creature.[33]

Thus, lies about things that pertain to the proper perfection of the human mind are against justice and charity. They are mortal sins. A lie, on the other hand, that is false concerning contingent truth not pertaining to the person addressed is a venial sin. It is

[31] See especially ibid. I, q. 12, a. 8, ad 4:

> the natural desire of the rational creature is to know all those things that pertain to the perfection of the intellect; and these are the species and genera of things, and the natures [rationes] of them, which anyone seeing the divine essence will see. But to know other singulars, and their thoughts and deeds, does not pertain to the perfection of the created intellect; nor does its natural desire tend towards that, nor again to know those things which are not yet, but which can be made by God. **If** nevertheless God alone were to be seen, who is the fountain and principle of all being and truth [qui est fons et principium totius esse et veritatis], that would satisfy the natural desire to know, which would seek nothing else, and would be happy.

[32] Ibid., q. 94, a. 3 (587al-4).

[33] Ibid., q. 107, a. 2. Cf. also 11-11, q. 60, a. 4, ad 2, on whether, in judging the conduct of persons, what is doubtful ought to be interpreted for the better: **It** is said that in judging about things *(de rebus),* as distinct from judging persons *(de hominibus),* one ought to take care to judge them precisely as they are. However, in judging of persons, one ought, if possible, to judge the person favorably. Does this not reflect on the one who judges, when mistaken, as being an inept judge? Thomas says:

> As for the man who judges, the false judgment by which he judges favorably of someone does not pertain to what makes his intellect bad *[ad malum* intellectus ipsius], just as it does not pertain essentially [secundum se] to the perfection of [his intellect] to know the truth concerning contingent singulars; rather, it [the favorable judgment] pertains to good inclination.

a disorder merely touching on a created good, a thing "for the end" *(adfinem)* and not the ultimate end. It is the conception of the mind and its proper perfection that allows us to assess the gravity of this sin, and find it "venial."

It is only after he has presented the types of lie that are, in themselves, mortal and venial that Thomas raises the question of the further intention, that is, an end in view beyond the lie itself. It is here that we have the famous triad of lies: malicious, jocose, and officious (or out of kindness). Obviously, lies that aim to injure are mortal sins, but lies that are in themselves venial, and are performed to amuse, are venial. And *even less grave* than the comic lie is the kind lie, where one's motive is actually to help someone. This should be underlined. The so-called officious lie-the lie out of kindness, the lie to save lives-is of even less moral importance than the comic lie which, by the way it is told, is meant to deceive no one.

Lastly, to leave nothing out, Thomas reminds us that there is always the possibility of a situation that will turn any lie into a mortal sin (e.g., if it could cause scandal under the circumstances).[34]

Most illuminating is his treatment of the Egyptian midwives, who lied to Pharaoh in order to save the male infants of Israel from death. He treats this first in the discussion of whether every lie is a sin. The Book of Exodus tells us that God rewarded the midwives by building them houses.[35] Surely they were not rewarded for sin! Thomas replies that they were rewarded for their reverence for God and benevolence toward the Israelites. They were not rewarded for the lie itself, which followed upon this good will. In this Thomas is echoing St. Augustine.[36]

[34] Ibid. II-II, q. 110, a. 4 (1997bl1-32).

[35] Exodus 1:21. Modern translations generally say that God gave the midwives "families" or "a posterity" or "descendents." However, the Vulgate has it that God built them houses: "Et quia timuerunt obstetrices Deum, aedificavit eis domos."

[36] *STh* II-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 2. Cf. St. Augustine, *On the Psalms,* vol. 1 (Psalms 1-29), Ancient Christian Writers 29, translated and annotated by Dame Scholastica Hebgin and Dame Felicitas Corrigan, Benedictines of Stanbrook (New York: Newman Press, 1960), 53-55: "To speak of what is, is to speak the truth; to speak of what is not, is to tell a lie [Si enim hoc dicitur quod est, verum dicitur; si autem hoc dicitur quod non est, mendacium est (PL 36:85)] (p. 53). Augustine remarks:

However, much more is said in the context of the question, Is every lie a mortal sin? An adversary, contending that every lie is a mortal sin, appeals to St. Gregory. The idea is that the good will of the midwives would ordinarily merit for them an eternal reward. However, they receive a terrestrial reward. Thus, the lie must be the occasion for losing the eternal reward, and so must be a mortal sin (and if even such a lie is a mortal sin, what lie is not?). Thomas, in his reply, denies that the midwives lost their eternal reward. Rather, for their good will they did merit eternal life. Thus St. Jerome has interpreted the "houses" as an eternal dwelling-place. Thomas even opines that they might have received terrestrial houses as a reward for the lie itself (that is how Gregory ought to be interpreted). Thomas had already said, in an earlier discussion of rewards, that merely terrestrial goods are not "rewards" properly so called. But he definitely sees the midwives as meriting eternal life, and the lie does not deprive them of that.[37] This is in keeping with his doctrine that venial sins do not eliminate or even diminish charity and grace.[38]

> Many lies are apparently told out of kindness, not malice, the object being someone's safety or advantage; such were the lies told by the midwives in Exodus who gave a false report to Pharaoh in order to save the male infants of Israel from death. But eyen here what is praiseworthy is not the action but the motive. since those who merely tell lies such as theirs will deserve in time to be set free from all dissimulation. for in the perfect not eyen these are to be found Let your speech be Yea, Yea: No, No, we are told. And that which is over and above these is of evil. Not without reason does Scripture elsewhere declare: The mouth that belieth killeth the soul, in order to teach us that no perfect and spiritual man is free to tell a lie to save this transitory life either for himself or another, since its loss does not kill the soul. (53-54, underlining mine)

However, he goes on to say:

> If this is at present beyond us, we must at least admit of lies only in strict necessity. We may then deserve to get rid even of white lies, if we do no worse, and receive strength from the Holy Ghost to make light of any suffering for truth's sake ....
>
> To sum up: there are two kinds of lie which are no great crime but not exactly free from sin, the lie spoken in jest, and the lie spoken to render some service. The lie spoken in jest does very little harm, since it deceives nobody. The man to whom it is told knows it is only banter. And the second lie is all the less offensive because it means well. (54)

[37] *STh* 11-11, q. 110, a. 4, obj. 4 and ad 4. The earlier discussion is I-II, q. 114, a. 10 and ad 2.

[38] See ibid. 11-11, q. 24, a. 10:

If we apply this solution to our modern question about lying to the Gestapo to save the Jewish family we are hiding, the answer of Thomas is that we should not tell a lie, even a harmless lie. To do so would be a venial sin, and one should never commit a venial sin, no matter what good might come of it. However, given the human condition, most good people, most saints (we might even say), will tell the lie, that is, will commit the venial sin.[39] For their charity, which consists in their good will toward their neighbors, God will reward them with eternal

> Similarly also, neither can charity be diminished by venial sin, neither effectively nor meritoriously. Not indeed effectively, since it does not touch charity itself. For charity is with respect to the ultimate end; but venial sin is a disorder with respect to those things which are for the end. But the love of the end is not diminished by the fact that someone commits some disorderly act *[inordinationem]* regarding those things which are for the end; for example, sometimes it happens that some weak people, while they love health very much, still behave in a disorderly fashion as regards the keeping to a diet; so also in the speculative sciences, false opinions regarding those things which are deduced from the principles do not diminish certitude concerning the principles ....
>
> Similarly also, venial sin does not *merit* the diminution of charity. For when someone is delinquent in a minor matter, he does not merit to suffer detriment in a major one. For God does not turn himself away from man more than man turns himself away from him [God]. (1538a52-b22)

Thomas adds that one can call "indirectly, diminution of charity" the disposition to corruption of charity which is brought about by repeated venial sin.

[39] In ibid. I-II, q. 74, a. 9 and in *De Malo* q. 7, a. 5, it is asked about venial sins in the *ratio superior,* that is, reason considering the eternal or divine law, and, by deliberation, having the last word on what we do. The latter text, at Leonine edition lines 191-98, reads:

> [Concerning deliberation] But when something is accepted [i.e. chosen] which does not exclude the [true ultimate] end, but nevertheless without it one comes to the end in a better way, because in some respect it retards from the end or disposes to the contrary of the end, then it is a venial sin: for example, when someone speaks an idle word *[verbum otiosum],* even deliberating that it is a venial sin disposing to a mortal sin and is in some respect deficient *[deficiens]* from the rightness of justice which leads to God.

This would pertain to my scenario in which I say that I am going to lie to save a life. Such saying would pertain to deliberation about venial sin, and, as terminating in the choice of the lie, would be itself a venial sin. *Teaching* people that it is *not* a venial sin (i.e. no sin at all), or that it is a mortal sin, would be a mortal sin; in other words, knowingly teaching a false doctrine as to the nature of lying would be a lie that is contrary to charity and justice.

life. It is even possible that for the venial sin God might reward them with some terrestrial goods, though that is hardly of interest to such people.

## III. REALLY BAD?

Now, thus far my aim has been to show how minor a moral fault a venial sin is, and this venial sin in particular. I did say that venial sins could only be called "bad" in a qualified sense of the word. However, to the extent that I have succeeded, the question arises: is a venial sin really bad in *any* sense? Might we not say that the person *should* lie to the Gestapo? Might it not be a terrible moral fault not to tell the lie? And it is the answer to this challenge which seems to me to show the importance of the entire question of venial sin. For the answer turns on one's fundamental conception of the moral life. One must have firmly in view the project of friendship with God, a friendship to be perfected by action according to reason. One is dealing with an almighty and universally provident God. He is the author of nature. We humans come upon an already given scene, and our role is to cooperate with the author of nature. The rejection of mortal sin is obvious. The rejection of venial sin is the extension of the same primary project to every nook and cranny of our existence. We should refuse to perform any act that misuses the nature that is given into our charge (which ultimately includes the whole material universe). [40]

The temptation to think that we would be morally at fault for not telling the lie to save a life arises from quite a different moral scenario. Of course, it plays on our quite reasonable and wholesome love of human life.[41] However, it arises from a conception of the moral agent as much more "an engineer of reality" than a co-operator with the author of reality. It acknowledges certain given "ends or goals of life," but sees less than it should of the givenness of nature and natures.

To fill out the appropriate picture of our moral life, and the

[40] *STh* I, q. 96, aa. 1 and 2.

[41] Cf. nevertheless ibid. I-II, q. 2, a. 5: human corporeal existence cannot be the goal of the human being.

zone to which venial sin pertains, it is necessary to recall certain doctrines concerning the condition of Adam before the Fall, that is, the state of "original justice" or "innocence." Thomas conceives of this state of grace as one in which, as long as the mind of man remained properly subordinate to God, the lower powers of man would be rightly subordinate to the higher powers. Accordingly, in that state, venial sin was impossible. This is because sins venial in kind have their origin in a certain insubordination of the sense appetites. [42] For example, in the Gestapo case, we may lie because we "just cannot stand the thought of those good people dying"; such an event would be just too sad. Thus, venial sins are conceived of in the light of the perfect condition of the human being, in which there can be no flaw in the functioning of the lower appetites in their order to our higher nature. In other words, it is necessary to view the human being as capable of very great moral perfection, if one is to take seriously the sort of fault that is venial sin. This is to say that venial sin is part of the doctrine of human nature as a fallen nature. Somewhat in the same line of thought, we see that a pure spirit, an angel, simply cannot commit a venial sin. Only one sin of the angel was possible, and that had to be a mortal sin.[43] The venial sin is thus a problem typical of the human being in the fallen state. It corresponds to the nobility of the human calling, and the wounded character of our nature.

From what I have said, the question should arise, to what

[42] Ibid., q. 89, a. 3. Cf. ibid., q. 71, a. 2, ad 3; the third objection points to the prevalence of vice among human beings. Surely what is against human nature will not be found to prevail among humans? Thomas answers:

> in man nature is twofold, viz. the rational and the sensitive. And because through the operation of sense man comes to the acts of reason, therefore more people follow the inclinations of sensitive nature than the order of reason; for there are more who attain *[assequuntur}* to the beginning of a thing than who follow through *[perveniunt]* to its achievement. But it is from this that vices *and sins occur among human beings, that they follow the inclination of the sensitive nature against [contra] the order of reason.* (Italics mine)

Though the argument concerns mortal sin primarily, it is a most important consideration of the rationale of the existence of sin in the human race. It should help us in our conception of the psychology of sin.

[43] Ibid., q. 89, a. 4.

extent is this a doctrine that pertains to moral philosophy, as distinct from Christian theology? [44] Without the doctrines of the state of original justice and of the Fall, one might simply judge that such disorder in human behavior is an inevitable failing of human nature. One might think, then, that it is something to avoid if possible, but not something to take very seriously in the moral life. This is certainly, I would say, a much better, more reasonable, view than that proposed by Kant.

Kant's approach seems far too abstract. Thomas's distinction between what does and what does not constitute the perfection of the human intellect makes good sense. Once the reality of a "lie about contingent truth" is isolated for consideration, one can then raise the question of one's intention in telling the lie. There is a world of difference between lying in such matters harmlessly to save a life, and lying for commercial advantage or other unjust reasons.

Thomas, contrasting his own approach in morals with that of Aristotle, notes that Aristotle calls "bad," properly, whatever is harmful to other people, and so he said that the prodigal person is not "bad." The same is the case with other actions that do no harm. Thomas says that he himself calls "bad," more generally, everything that is repugnant to right reason. [45] Also interesting, when cataloguing the acts of law (viz., to command, to forbid, to permit, and to punish), Thomas says of "permission," "But there are some [acts] which, as to their kind, are [morally] indifferent; and with respect to these, the law has [the role] of *permitting."* But he immediately adds: "And all those acts, also, can be called 'indifferent' which are either slightly good or slightly bad *[vet parum bani vet parum mali]."* [46] We should remember Thomas's doctrine that the law does not prohibit the venial sin. Still, the venial sin, for example, the harmless lie, is not *properly* a morally "indifferent" act. It is flawed from the viewpoint of reason.

[44] We should also remember what Jacques Maritain called "moral philosophy, adequately taken" ("la philosophie morale adequatement prise"): the need moral philosophy has, for its own proper full development, to be supplemented by divine revelation even as regards the order of specification. Cf. Maritain, *Science et sagesse* (Paris: Labergerie, 1935), 288-345.

[45] *STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 9, ad 2.

[46] Ibid., q. 92, a. 2 (1217a29-33).

## IV. CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, I will simply say that reflection on the conception of venial sin cannot be neglected, if one wishes truly to assess the morality of the harmless and indeed helpful lie. Kant's contention that such a lie is "a wrong done to mankind generally" should be rejected. With St. Thomas and St. Augustine, we do not approve of such a lie, but we do say, to others and to ourselves, that if refraining from such lies

> is at present beyond us, we must at least admit of lies only in this sort of necessity. We may then deserve to get rid even of these lies, if they alone remain, and receive strength from the Holy Ghost to make light of any suffering for truth's sake.[47] (See Appendix 3)

## APPENDICES

1)

In connection with the Holy Eucharist and its reception, there are good texts on the distinction between habitual charity and actual charity, so that while one does not have the spiritual refreshment of the sacrament, one can still have the grace from the sacrament; this is important for the question, can one sin venially and love God charitably?

The text I have in mind is *STh* III, q. 79, a. 8. Thomas asks whether venial sin impedes the effect of the Eucharistic sacrament. Speaking of actually exercised venial sin *fprout sunt actu exercita],* he says:

[47] Augustine, *On the Psalms,* 1:54 (on Ps 5). Here I have revised the translation, quoted earlier. The Latin reads:

> [He is speaking of avoiding lies of the description: Multa quidem uidentur pro salute aut commodo alicuius, non malitia, sed benignitate mendacia.] Si autem hoc nondum potest, uel sola huius necessitatis habeat mendacia, ut etiam ab istis, si sola remanserint, liberari mereatur et Spiritus sancti robur accipere, quo quidquid perpetiendum est pro ueritate contemnat.

Augustine wrote these commentaries (on Pss. 1-32) in 392, the year after his ordination to the priesthood, and three years before he became bishop (see *On the Psalms,* 1:5-7) He is commenting on verse 7: "Thou wilt destroy all who speak a lie." Presenting the lie as the contrary of the truth, he is quick to deny that the lie has any nature of its own. It partakes of nonbeing, not of being.

venial sins do not totally impede the effect of this sacrament, but [do so] partially. For it has [already] been said that the effect of this sacrament is not only the obtaining of habitual grace or charity, but also a certain actual refreshment of spiritual sweetness. This latter is impeded if someone comes to this sacrament with a mind distracted through venial sins. But it does not take away the growth in habitual grace or charity.

And in the reply to the first objection we read:

he who approaches this sacrament with an act of venial sin eats spiritually in habitual fashion, but not actually. And so he receives the habitual effect of this sacrament, but not the actual.

We thus see that habitual action, "going through the motions" to a certain extent (where that involves no disrespect), results in a growth in grace and charity, at the habitual level: that is, one obtains an increase in one's readiness to act charitably. Thus, what one does habitually, one really does, and one really derives benefit from it. This helps us to get the picture of ourselves as caught in venial sin, and yet as habitually ordered towards God as source of beatitude (even though what we are actually doing does not have such a character as to advance us actually towards beatitude). There is nothing in what we are doing that points us towards an ultimate end other than God, the object of beatitude. We are loving God as ultimate end, not actually, but habitually.

2)

While sins can be venial or mortal depending on factors having to do with the sinner himself, what I wish to get at is the venial sin, as so determined by the very nature of the act. The following text *[De Malo* q. 7, a. 1 (Leonine lines 335-62)] seems to me especially helpful. Thomas says:

In another way, it comes about that some sin is contrary or is not contrary to charity from the very type of the act, which is from the side of the object or matter which is contrary or not contrary to charity. For just as some food is contrary to life, for example a poisonous food, whereas some food is not contrary to life, though it imposes an impediment as regards the right condition of life, for example fat food and not easily digestible food, or else, if it is suitably digestible, because it is not taken in due measure; so also, in human actions, something is found which of itself is contrary to charity towards God and neighbor: viz.

those things by which are taken away subjection and reverence of man to God, as blasphemy, diabolic activities, and things of that sort; and also those things which do away with the association *[convictum]* of human society, for example theft, murder, and such; for human beings cannot live socially together where such things are perpetrated randomly and indifferently. And these are mortal sins in their very type, no matter with what intention or disposition of the will they be done. But there are some [actions] which, though they contain an inordination, nevertheless do not directly exclude either of the aforementioned: as, *for example, that a man tell a lie not concerning the Faith, nor tending to harm one's neighbor, but to delight him or even to aid him, or if someone goes to excess in food and drink and other such. Hence, these are venial sins in their kind or type.* [Italics mine]

Notice this inclusion of drink. We might note that Thomas changed his mind about the seriousness of excessive drinking when the beverage can cause drunkenness. Thus, in *De Malo* q. 2, a. 8, ad 3 and q. 7, a. 4, ad 1, drunkenness is venial in kind, whereas in *STh* I-II, q. 88, a. 5, ad 1 and II-II, q. 150, a. 2 (which is directly on the topic), it is very explicitly mortal in kind. However, he still mentions venial sins of overindulgence in beverages generally.

*3) Disputed Questions*

When I put the question to a philosophical (and decidedly Christian) friend, he said he would be inclined to think one might be culpable for not telling the lie. The only answer to that is the *natural* status of speech.

He asked whether there is not reason to abuse a nature in extreme circumstances. This might well be what the philosopher without revelation should say, at least as regards lying about contingent truth, a rather minor abuse of a nature. The lie becomes inconsiderable in the setting of the saving of a life.

I am saying that there is a criticism to be made of the lie, but that most people will tell the lie, and that it is not gravely wrong. They are in the position of the midwives.

Someone asked me why I could not use the lie as a form of self-defense, just as I would use a gun. The only answer is that some things qualify as legitimate weapons, the sort of thing one can use to defend oneself, so long as one uses it moderately.

Words used as lies are not suitable weapons. Words might be used as weapons, as when I shout to frighten someone. But the lie is using the word in a bad way to scare someone off. It would be somewhat similar, or analogous, to committing fornication as a means of avoiding death. (However, that would be a mortal sin, and lying about contingent truth in a harmless way is a venial sin.)

Why is an amputation good and a little life-saving lie bad? I believe the answer must move along the lines of self-defense. Amputation is presented in terms of part and whole. Still, prominent in its explanation is the responsibility one has for one's own health *(STh* II-II, q. *65,* a. 1). And this is prominent in the presentation of self-defense (ibid., q. 64, a. 7).

The answer, then, seems to lie in the reply to the question, concerning self-defense, why one cannot commit adultery or fornication, or any other mortal sin, to save one's life. Thomas replies:

> the act of fornication or of adultery is not *ordered* to the conservation of one's own life by necessity *[ex necessitate],* the way the act [is] from which sometimes homicide follows. (Ibid., q. 64, a. 7, ad 4)

All the more, there is a certain *natural necessity* in the relation of parts to whole that justifies amputation. But there is not the same relation of lying to saving the life of oneself or one's neighbor. The lie may not be a mortal sin, but it is something not to be done.

# ON AFFIRMING A DOMINICAL INTENTION OF A MALE PRIESTHOOD

GUY MANSINI, 0.S.B.

*Saint Meinrad School of Theology*
*Saint Meinrad, Indiana*

RECENT EXAMINATION of the Church's exclusion of women from presbyteral orders has focused in large part on the theological intelligibility of the exclusion. Granted the fact of the "constant and universal tradition of the Church," theologians have sought to explain its theological significance, and, in fact, have located it precisely in the order of "significance": a male priest more fittingly communicates the agency, both historical and present, of Christ in the constitution of the sacrament of the Eucharist. Furthermore, the maleness of Christ, as well as male-gendered designations of God, are bound up with the signification of the transcendence of God to the created order.[1]

"Granted the fact"-largely, the fact of the constant tradition has been granted, notwithstanding skirmishes over such matters as Junias in Romans 16 and the status and function of deaconesses.[2] The demand of the argument has therefore been as follows: even supposing the "constant and universal tradition of the Church" in this matter, we cannot tell whether this tradition is properly *theological* or not unless we can discern why the

[1] I will mention here only Benedict Ashley's "Gender and the Priesthood of Christ: A Theological Reflection," *The Thomist* 57 (1993): 343-79, which is especially comprehensive as to the entire gamut of questions involved.

[2] So for instance the draft study paper of the CTSA, "Tradition and Woman's Ordination: A Question of Criteria," *Origins* 26, no. 6 (27 June 1996): 90-95, raises no questions about the fact of the constant exclusion of women from presbyteral orders.

tradition of exclusion is a "good thing," as opposed to an accident of human history having nothing to do with revealed truth and the communication of grace. It is not enough simply to appeal to the material fact of the tradition of the exclusion of women. It is but a dead fact unless we can discern in it some soul of theological intelligibility.

When such intelligibility is provided, however, the argument promptly returns to the question of the tradition and, specifically, its foundation. Grant the intelligibility of the exclusion delimited in the "iconic" argument and in such appeals to presbyteral action *in persona Christi* as we have seen over the years: still, it can be alleged, there is no reason to maintain the tradition, intelligible as it may be, unless we know that this tradition is willed by Christ. There can be lots of intelligent arrangements of things in the Church that nevertheless are not functions of the divine or dominical will. The bare example of Christ (i.e., "he didn't, in fact, call women to be of the Twelve") is a brute fact. Why take it, as does *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*, as indicating the Lord's will and intention? Is it, too, rendered "non-brute" by the theological intelligibility delimited just above? If it is applied to the example of the Lord from outside of it, so to speak, as something stuck on, then we are no closer to a discernment of dominical intention. And apart from that, it may be urged, the tradition, intelligible as it may be, is not normative. [3]

The relation of the intention of Christ to the theological intelligibility of the exclusion of women from presbyteral orders, then, is the same as its relation to the fact of the constant tradition. They are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for asserting that the exclusion is intended by Christ. If Christ willed the exclusion, then it will follow both (a) that there is a constant tradition of not ordaining women and (b) that there is some theological intelligibility to the exclusion. For (a) it must be that

[3] There is also question raised about the constancy in the tradition of the expression of the intelligibility which the exclusion is alleged to have; so the CTSA's "Tradition and Women's Ordination," 91-92. But supposing that some past explanations, or the earliest explanations, of the exclusion appeal to an inferiority of women to men that cannot be sustained, it is hard to see that this implies anything against either the correctness of current explanations that make no such appeal or the possibility of dominical intention.

the Church remains faithful to dominical intention concerning her substance. And (b) the Lord could have no arbitrary intentions touching the substance of the Church. If there is no theological point to the exclusion, therefore, he could not have intended it. Still, to assert the intention of Christ on the grounds of (a) and (b), either alone or together, is to fall prey to the fallacy of affirming the consequent.

It seems that nothing will satisfy except some more direct argument manifesting the intention of Christ. It is my intention here to show how such an argument might be made. 1\vo difficulties stand in the way. First, since this manifestation can hardly be expected to appeal to an express intention of the Lord, some sense has to be given to an appeal to an "implicit" intention. [4] Second, such an argument evidently assumes that the Lord intended both an apostolic ministry in the Church and, indeed, the Church. It supposes that he instituted the Church and her ministry.

It is perhaps with this second matter that we locate the concealed but real sticking point for many who have difficulty with the Church's teaching and practice excluding women from orders. They find it preposterous to impute any intention on this matter to the Lord because they have been taught by a skeptical fundamental theology that it is preposterous to impute any intention to the Lord concerning the Church at all, and this notwithstanding the straightforward teaching of the Church that, together with her ministry in its current and lived form, she has indeed been instituted and willed by Christ. [5]

All that F. P. Fiorenza, for instance, feels himself able to defend is that the Church is in dynamic continuity with Jesus of Nazareth, not that she is instituted by him. That is, the Church does the things and says the things that Jesus did and said. There is a continuity of teaching and praxis. That is all that can be critically historically asserted, and so that is all that Fiorenza feels

[4] I mean to bracket here Manfred Hauke 's controverted reading of 1 Corinthians 14:37 in his *Women in the Priesthood?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 363-90.

[5] See for instance *Lumen gentium,* 18ff., and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* nos. 763-66, 874.

himself able to assert theologically.[6] F. A. Sullivan, to take another instance, tries to elide the question: he downplays the importance of any "mere act of institution" by Jesus of Nazareth, and prefers to concentrate on the Church as the "fruit" (effect) of the Paschal Mystery.[1] And relative to the ecclesial form of the apostolic ministry, Sullivan defends the divine, but not the dominical, institution of the monarchical episcopate.[8]

My own position wili become clear in what follows, but it will perhaps be helpful for me to state some matters of principle at the outset. First, the statement that Jesus of Nazareth founded or instituted the Church is a statement that, while in principle falsifiable by history, is not such as to be wholly accessible except to faith. History can falsify, or support, but not establish it. Supposing it true, however, that all that critical historical studies can establish is "dynamic continuity" between Christ and the Church, there is no reason to take that as a limit, as Fiorenza does, to what in faith we confess the historical Jesus did and intended.[9] On the contrary, the critical establishment of probable continuity provides just what is needed from historical science, no more, no less, to assert in faith that Jesus of Nazareth founded the Church. To state this another way: critically established "dynamic continuity" provides rational warrant for seeing such things as the celebration of the Last Supper and the election of the Twelve as acts of foundation.[10]

[6] F. P. Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 168: "Something is divinely instituted to the degree that it mirrors the relations between Jesus and the Church as normatively described in the New Testament." But the New Testament is not interested in the relation of"foundation" (131); the only normative relations are those of continuity of praxis and preaching. See especially his reading of Matthew 16 (141-46).

For the notion of "dynamic continuity," see A. Cody, "The Foundation of the Church: Biblical Criticism and Ecumenical Discussion," *Theological Studies* 34 (1973): 3-18.

[1] F. A. Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 9, 21, 69-70.

[8] Ibid., 182-84.

[9] It is true that Fiorenza says as much (82-83), but I think he in fact decides that the absence of an historical demonstration of foundation means that we cannot assert it even theologically.

[10] This is different, evidently, from holding that historical reason all by itself establishes foundation on the basis of such things as the institution of the Eucharist and the election of the 1\velve.

The exclusion of women from priestly orders has the same sort of status, it seems to me, as does the statement that Christ founded the Church.

Second, I do not think there is any distinction to be made between the divine and dominical institution of the Church, her ministry, structure, sacraments, etc. But this Christological matter will best emerge only later.

Since we can hardly speak of an intention to exclude women from presbyteral orders unless we can defend in some way that these orders themselves are intended by Christ, I offer a general reconstruction of the constitution of the Church's ministry relative to the "intention" of Christ. This is largely coincident, evidently, with the relation of the monarchical episcopate to the intention of Christ. This section will have the advantage, I hope, of indicating the way to allay skepticism as to the foundation of the Church generally, as well as showing us how the argument is to be constructed as bearing on the exclusion of women. Second, the argument as bearing on women is picked out in detail. Third, I anticipate some objections to the idea of "implicit intention."

## I. THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH 'S MINISTRY

If such things as the monarchical episcopate and the exclusion of women from orders cannot be tied to an express dominical word, either before or after the resurrection, how can we speak of Christ's intending these things at all? How can the Church teach that "he willed that their [the apostles'] successors, the bishops namely, should be the shepherds in his Church"? [11]

The Church can do so according to some such story as the following, in which the priestly ministry of the Church is seen to be constituted in the concatenation of the following temporally discrete moments.

On the "criterion of dissimilarity," see Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1973), chapter 4, and on the relation between faith and history, chapter 5. See also the third proposition of the International Theological Commission's "The Consciousness of Christ Concerning Himself and His Mission," *International Theological Commission: Texts and Documents, 1969-1985* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 311-13, and note the appeal to "ecclesiastical-dogmatic" exegesis (306).

[11] *Lumen Gentium,* 18 (Flannery edition).

A. The Lord Jesus before his passion, death, and glorious resurrection chose twelve apostles whose function is: (1) to signify the fullness of the eschatological gathering of Israel set afoot by the Lord; (2) in the future Kingdom, to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28); (3) even before the Paschal event, to help effect the gathering of Israel by preaching the same message as that of the Lord, namely the nearness of the Kingdom (see the missioning in, e.g., Matt 10; Mark 6); and (4) after the Paschal event, but signified prior to it, to bind and loose on earth in a way effective for heaven (Matt 18:18; cf. Matt 16:19).

The third function derives from the first: the 1\velve are truly signs because they help bring about what they signify. And the fourth derives from the second: for it is according as one recognizes Jesus now that he is recognized by the Lord in the eschaton (Luke 12:8), and so it is according as one conforms to the witness of the 1\velve that he is saved, and therefore also, the witness and preaching of the 1\velve must even now be authoritative and normative. If one thinks that the sayings that indicate (2) are plausibly historical, then it seems that the sayings indicating (4) are so also, for there is no great leap from one to the other: eschatological fate depends on present faith, just as in Luke 12:8.

B. On the night before he died, the Lord further charged the 1\velve (5) to celebrate the Supper as a memorial of him and his mission.

C. The Risen Lord showed himself to the corporation of the 1\velve and so gave them the further function (6) of witnessing to the inauguration of the Kingdom as already effected by his redeeming passion, resurrection, and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and (7) of baptizing (Matt 20); and (8) of forgiving sins Gohn 20). One could say that (7) and (8) are contained in (6): witnessing to the forgiveness of sins effected by Christ and to the gift of the Spirit is not some abstract announcement, but is consummated in the communication of forgiveness and the Spirit in baptism.

As confirmed and consolidated by the resurrection and their function of witnessing to the resurrection (6): (3), itself a

consequence of (1), founds the post-resurrection preaching function of the apostolate; (4), itself a consequence of (2), and in conjunction with (7) and (8), founds their ruling or shepherding function in respect to that visible gathering of those destined to the Kingdom, namely the Church; and (5), again in conjunction with (7) and (8), founds their responsibility for the Christian cult.

D. The late-first-century Church (as the Gospel of John witnesses) discerns in the complex of A, B, and C an intention of the Lord that those whom the Lord sends as in (3) are themselves sent with the power to send, even as was he Gohn 17:18; 20:21). For the gospel as we have it envisages a time when the 1\velve will die Gohn 21:2lff.). Furthermore, the Third Letter of John, written by an "elder," is addressed to a Gaius, who is a leader of some sort, and speaks of Diotrephes, another leader, probably a proto-bishop. There is also witness to the same intention in the First Letter of Clement (44). It is, furthermore, implausible to suppose that the Lord thought that eleven disciples would be sufficient to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). These indications do not necessarily mean, however, that we have to impute to the pre- or even post-Paschal Lord a signifying of this intention that is more than implicit. We should, however, be quite clear about the fact that the late-first-century Church was in a better position to discern the intentions of the Lord than we are.

E. In the Holy Spirit, the late-first-century Church also determines that the commissioning or sending of further witnesses by the apostles or their collaborators occurs by the laying on of hands, as evidenced by the Pastorals. This is simply a cultic and sacramental way of signifying access to a sacramental ministry that has responsibility for the Christian cult.[12] Such congruence

[12] "Sacramental ministry" is meant here in the sense picked out by Cardinal Ratzinger on the basis of such texts as Matthew 10:40 and John 15:5: "a ministry … in which the human being on the basis of divine communication acts and gives what can never be given or done on the basis of human resources is in the church's tradition called a *sacrament";* see his "Biblical Foundations of Priesthood," *Origins* 20, no. 19 (18 October 1990): 312.

suggests the unfolding of what is implicated, implicit, in the original establishment of the apostolic ministry.

F. The monarchical episcopate emerges in the late first and early second century as an institutional response to docetism and gnosticism, and so is to be ascribed to the work of the Holy Spirit of Christ. This emergence is a determination of the reality of apostolic office as already constituted by the Lord, both pre- and post-Paschal (A, B, C), and as already understood by the Church (D) and regulated by the Church (E). It is a way of structuring apostolic ministry within the local Church. Can we say that it, too, is implicitly intended by Christ? In the Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the monarchical episcopate appears as a sort of (non-demonstrative) deduction from an appreciation of the reality and requirements of the unity of a local Church: the unity of faith and love; the unity of worship around "one altar"; the unity of local presbytery and Church as imitating the unity of the apostles under Christ and of all things under God the Father. If such unity can be ascribed to the intention of the Lord (John 17:21), then so can the means to achieve it. The formation of the monarchical episcopate as well, then, can be understood to be implicitly intended by the Lord.

G. Also in the second century, when the question arises of ordaining or not ordaining women, the Church consciously and of set purpose does not, and on the basis of an appeal to the intention of the Lord. Therefore, etc. But of this last more later.

## II. THE INTENTION TO EXCLUDE WOMEN FROM ORDERS

Sections D through G above appeal to the notion of an "implicit" intention. The nature of this appeal has now to be clarified; the condition of rightly appealing to it has now to be stated.

The notion itself was introduced by the 1993 "Clarifications" of the second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. [13]

[13] *Origins* 24, no. 17 (6 October 1994): 303.

The sacramental ministry is something positively intended by God and derives from the will and institution of Jesus Christ. This does not necessarily imply a direct and explicit action by Jesus in the course of his earthly life. A distinction needs to be drawn between what Jesus is recorded as saying and doing, and his implicit intentions, which may not have received explicit formulation till after the resurrection, either in words of the risen Lord himself or through his Holy Spirit instructing the primitive community.

There are explicit, formulated intentions, and unformulated but still real intentions implicit in what is explicitly formulated and actually done. Granted this distinction, part-but only part-of the argument in section F, for instance, runs as follows: Whatever can be imputed to the Church's determination in the Holy Spirit of apostolic office, and as required for its existence, can be imputed to the Lord's intention, express or implicit; but a monarchical episcopate can be so imputed; therefore, it can be imputed to the Lord's intention. But since there is no direct or explicit word or action of Jesus so signifying, it must be ascribed to an implicit intention. The key idea is that whatever is required for the existence of an institution is a means to the end of the existence of the institution, and that he who wills the end wills (and intends) the means. In willing the existence of apostolic office, the Lord willed what is required for its existence.

It may be objected that this argument simply identifies without warrant what the Church in fact decided with a decision in the Holy Spirit and an intention of the Lord. This however is not so, and the above formulation captures but part of the argument. There must be some word or action in which the implicit can be seen to be contained. That is a condition of responsibly appealing to an implicit intention. So, with regard to the monarchical episcopate, the alleged warrant consists in the sort of things St. Ignatius evokes, like the presidency of the Lord over against the apostles, or more simply the implied concern that a teacher-the Teacher-has for his students to remain in his teaching and so be of *one* mind. In other words, the Lord has so to indicate the shape of the end that the means settled on by the Church really do suggest themselves as the requisite means. For here, after all, the "means" are not extrinsic to the "end," but rather are more

simply specifications of it, or internal articulations within it. It is more like figuring out how an artist intended to complete a portrait than it is like figuring out what road to take to the county seat.

Is there any similar warrant, however, when it comes to the exclusion of women from orders? Yes, there is. It consists in the convergence of two things. First, there must be an appreciation of apostolic ministry as rightly described as ministry *in persona Christi*, as "representing" the Lord, on the basis of such texts as Matthew 10:40, "He who receives you receives me."[14] Second, there must be an appreciation of the dominical adoption of the sexual symbolism of the Old Covenant in such sayings as Matthew 9:15 ("Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?") and the story of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt 25).[15] As L. Ligier observes, in virtue of the incarnation the nuptial symbolism of the Old Testament passes from the order of figures to that of reality, and acquires a sacramental sense.[16] But the point I emphasize here is that this symbolism is applied by the Lord to himself. The convergence of these two things-apostolic mission as an extension of the mission of Christ and Christ's understanding of his mission in terms of the nuptial symbolism of the Old Covenant-permit us to see his example of electing only men to the 1\velve as instinct with an "intention." These are the "explicit" things in which the Church can discern an "implicit" intention.

It will be observed that the "implication"-either for the monarchical episcopate or for the exclusion of women-is pretty loose. From what the Lord is taken to have done and said, there is no strict demonstration of either of these things. This should not surprise us. Presumably, we have learned that the development of doctrine is not really conformable to any of the various

[14] See Ratzinger, "Biblical Foundations," 312, on the mission of the apostles as a continuation of the mission of Christ, such that "someone becomes Christ's voice and hands in the world."

[15] See the further reflections of this symbolism in John 3:29 ("he who has the bride is the bridegroom"); the miracle of Cana in John 2 as an allegory of the marriage of Christ and his Church; and Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:23.

[16] L. Ligier, "Women and the Ministerial Priesthood," *Origins* 7, no. 44 (20 April 1978): 698.

theories of the "theological conclusion." Development, just as it is not anti-historical, is not anti-logical. But neither is logic its adequate instrument. Development of doctrine is theological, and therefore, when it is said that the Church determines things "in the Holy Spirit," the addition is not superfluous or idle. [17]

### III. IMPLICIT INTENTION

I will skip the host of objections of a purely historical and exegetical nature that can be put to the foregoing; such questions, for instance, as to whether the missionary commissioning of the Twelve in Matthew 10 is a retrojection of post-Paschal practice, or as to the relation of the "Twelve" to the "apostles," or as to the anti-hierarchical character of John, or as to the presidency of the Eucharist, etc. This ground has been dug, churned, shelled, mined, and booby-trapped for a long time now. I suppose everyone knows the issues and knows his or her own mind on them.

I turn rather to objections to the form of the arguments and, especially, to the notion of an implicit intention.

The utility of the distinction between an express and an implicit intention is that it lets one take with all seriousness the relative probabilities, as determined by a consideration of texts, times, and cultures, of someone being able to ask questions about office in the Church. The relevant questions cannot be formulated prior to the practical situations that generate them. Prior to the situations that call for discernment and decision, it is neither prudent, possible, nor necessary for the Lord to give direction. It is not prudent, for one does not effectively teach in the absence of real questions. It is not possible, for one cannot formulate answers to unaskable questions. It is unnecessary, for it is enough for the Lord: (1) to establish the reality of office; and (2) to send his Spirit onto the Church.

The point of the distinction might be put as follows. If the historian says, "There is no evidence of an express intention of Jesus

[17] For the distinction of logical and theological accounts of development, see Jan H. Walgrave's magisterial *Unfolding Revelation: The Nature of Doctrinal Development* (London: Hutchinson, 1972).

of Nazareth relative to such things as the episcopate, the laying on of hands, and the exclusion of women," that is fine. On the other hand, if it is thence to be concluded that Jesus of Nazareth did not intend these things at all, and that therefore they are human inventions, and that consequently they may be revised, that is something else. But it is the ascription of these things to an implicit intention that takes account of the absence of evidence for an express intention.

At this juncture, it is to be emphasized that an implicit intention is being taken to be an unexpressed but actual intention. One may, for instance, express his will of an end but not express his will of the means. "I want to go to the store." "Are you taking the Ford or the Chevy?" "The Chevy; the Ford doesn't have any brakes, remember?" In expressing an intention to go to the store, we may say that the intention to take the Chevy was already implicitly present. Again, in expressing one's will of some reality under a general description, one may implicitly intend a specification of that reality, which specification would come to light under appropriate questioning.

There is, however, another way one might want to analyze an implicit intention. [18] "I want to go to the store." "You'd better take the Chevy, since the Ford is unreliable." "Thanks, I didn't know that; I'll take the Chevy." We might say here, too, that there was an intention to take the Chevy already present in the intention to go to the store. Evidently, however, the cognitive situations of the one intending at the time he first speaks are quite different in the two cases. In the second, there is a real ignorance, and the settled intention to take the Chevy is present only potentially or virtually. For the sake of clarity, let us limit "implicit intention" to the first case, and call the second "virtual intention."

Now, it might be objected that, for such matters of Church order as are in question here, there is no reason to impute more than a virtual intention to the Lord. What warrants imputing an actual, implicit intention to him? Are we not rather going beyond what historical considerations can deliver? Doesn't taking it in

[18] See for instance St. Thomas's notion of implicit faith in, for example, *Summa Theologiae* 1-11, q. 2, a. 5.

this way in fact mean that one is not taking the relative probabilities of someone being able to ask and answer questions about office seriously? And, in any case, why would we want to take it as an actual, implicit intention?

To answer the last question, there is in the first place a very simple dogmatic reason for doing so. When the Church teaches that the Lord instituted the Church and her ministry, then, without proof to the contrary, this should be understood to mean that he knew whereof he intended. The appeal to a virtual intention does not in fact preserve the meaning of "intention." What it really does is to assert a counter-factual: If he knew such and such, then he would have intended and willed thus and so. But in fact, he didn't know such and such, and so, really and truly, he had no intention thus and so. I think it would be very difficult to sustain such an understanding of the Church's teaching about dominical institution over the last nineteen hundred years.

But there is also a Christological reason for taking the Lord's intention to be implicit, actual, and notjust virtual, namely, the traditional imputation to the Lord of an immediate vision of the divine essence. Such a vision entails an actual knowledge of the entire economy of salvation as known by the divine mind and willed by the divine goodness. The grounds upon which one asserts an actual intention of the Lord for a monarchical episcopate or the exclusion of women from orders, therefore, turn out at this juncture to be the grounds upon which one asserts the theorem of Christ's human mind's immediate vision of the divine essence. These grounds are such things as his communication, and so knowledge, of his own divine identity and his knowledge of the nearness of the kingdom of God. Arguably, such things cannot be known by a human mind without "seeing God." [19]

For some, however, such considerations will seem to imply that theology is either dictating to historical science or at least on holiday from it. This is not, I believe, the case. But seeing that it is not depends on distinguishing very carefully between the kind

[19] For the argument, see Guy Mansini, "Understanding St. Thomas on Christ's Immediate Knowledge of God," *The Thomist 59* (1995): 91-124.

of knowledge possessed by historical persons as it is the object of historical science, and the kind of knowledge asserted in the theorem of the immediate vision of God. Such knowledge is "a-thematic," "non-conceptual," "ineffable." [20] The knowledge that is the object of historical science is, on the other hand, quite thematic, conceptual, expressible, and indeed expressed. The attempt to understand faith in the divine identity of Jesus and his communication of it deals in the first kind of knowledge. The historian is left to reach his own judgments about the second kind of knowledge.

The argument in the foregoing has not been: Jesus of Nazareth possessed an immediate knowledge of the divine essence in which the economy of salvation, including matters of the ecclesial and sacramental order, were known; therefore, he knew that the episcopate was to be monarchically determined and that women were to be excluded from orders. It has rather been argued that what the Church determined as to the structure and requirements of apostolic office, thinking to follow the mind of the Lord, depended centrally on what the Lord communicated-expressly, conceptually-but in which communication there can be seen other things not expressed. In other words, there can be no appeal to an intention of the Lord apart from the sort of evidence that would enable one to assert at least a virtual intention: that is, on the basis of what the Lord did say and do, one concludes to what he would say and do if he were in other circumstances. But once this is achieved, and one has accepted the reasons for imputing an immediate knowledge of the divine essence to Christ's human mind, then one passes from the assertion of a virtual intention to the assertion of an actual, though implicit, intention.

Of course, the simple illustration of an implicit intention as given above is not wholly analogous to the case of our Lord. For the illustration remains wholly within the realm of the "conceptual." But a conceptually possessed intention has not been imputed to the Lord. There is indeed an element of virtuality in

[20] See especially B. Lonergan, *De Verba Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1964), thesis 12.

the Lord's intention of the episcopate or of his intention to exclude women from orders. To render his actual intention actually expressible would require not a simple evocation of the concepts and categories involved in the question about orders and Church order, but the acquisition of the concepts and categories involved in being able to ask the question. Nonetheless, this acquisition would serve to render expressible what is already known and intended in virtue of his (human) participation in the divine knowledge of the economy. It would be like finding a language to say what one knows, and not just using a language one already has to say what one knows.

In the introduction, I made critical mention of any position that asserts a divine but not a dominical institution of the Church, orders, etc. It should now be clear why. It should be clear, as well, why there has been little attention in the foregoing to whether we speak of the pre- or post-Paschal Jesus. The immediate knowledge of God's essence, including centrally the plan of salvation and the disposition of the Church, is the same in our Lord before and after the resurrection. Whatever the Lord knew of the divine plan and intended in its fulfillment after the resurrection, he knew and intended before. Further, the content of the divine plan and the disposition of the economy is a content of knowledge common to the Three Persons. Whatever the Holy Spirit inspires with regard to the economy or the disposition of the Church is also known by the Word. And whatever the Word knows relative to this economy and disposition is also known by him through the human mind of the assumed nature.

Indeed, it is usual in the tradition to speak of the Church deciding or discerning what to do and how to act "in the Holy Spirit." This does not mean that the Holy Spirit inspired things of which the Lord knew not. It is rather an indication of the fact that the Church's discernment of what is implicit in what the Lord explicitly said and did cannot be rendered in a syllogism that demonstrates what we used to call a "theological conclusion." The Church's discernment of the mind of the Lord is rather a properly theological act moved by the Holy Spirit. Understanding that such discernment is not strictly measured by

human reason goes for reason in its Scholastic as well as in its historical guise.

It has been my intention here to show how one can assert that the Lord intended the exclusion of women from orders. I have done nothing, I hope, but assemble theological elements and analyses known to every theologian. If there is any merit to the assemblage, it is in the reminder of the relevance of the theorem of the Lord's immediate knowledge of the divine essence, and perhaps, also, of the nature of doctrinal development. [21]

[21] I would like to thank Prof. Lawrence J. Welch of Kenrick Seminary for help with this paper.

# BOOK REVIEWS

*Peter Lombard.* By MARCIA L. COLISH. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994. Pp. 893 (2 vols.). $228.75 (cloth).

The four books of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which received their final form ca. 1158, were the standard theological textbook for several centuries. Friedrich Stegmiiller's *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi* (1947) lists hundreds of extant commentaries, starting within a few years of the completion of Lombard's work (178 commentaries are listed from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries alone); the *Sentences* were used and commented on in the schools of Western Christendom until well into the seventeenth century.

Peter Lombard's work is essentially a compilation of older sources, from the Scriptures and Augustine down to several of Lombard's older contemporaries (such as Hugh of Saint Victor, the *Summa Sententiarum,* and Gratian's *Concordantia Discordantium Canonum).* The importance of this work is not so much its material, since very little of it is original with Lombard himself, but rather Peter Lombard's organization of the material and his ability to present the areas of conflict and controversy while supplying a brief and objective summary of the relevant opinions and his own solutions.

Marcia Colish's two volumes, volumes 41 and 42 in the Brill *Studies in Intellectual History* series, answer two important needs in the study of mediaeval theology: her study makes Peter Lombard's thought accessible in English (since the *Sentences* have yet to be translated into English apart from scattered extracts), and the mid-twelfth-century context of the theological issues the Lombard addresses is presented in each case, with completeness and care. The lengthy bibliography at the end of the second volume is a further welcome part of this work.

In fairness to the author as well as to the mediaeval commentators, Colish's work cannot be classified as a "Commentary on the *Sentences,"* however much it may at first glance appear to be so. The work begins with a biographical introduction, summarizing the sources for information on the life and work of Peter Lombard (ca. 1095-1160), canon and later bishop of Paris, and master of the *Sentences.* The *glossae* on the letters of Saint Paul and on the Psalter are then considered, with emphasis on some of the textual problems of their composition and transmission, along with a presentation of significant themes. Two chapters follow on the theological language and method of the Master, and the remainder of the two volumes presents the *Sentences* section by section. Each topic is considered first in its historical

context (with the state of the question presented by a chronological survey of relevant writers), and then with Lombard's determination and response. The final chapter summarizes, by recapitulation, the highlights of the *Sentences.*

The author takes full advantage of the work of Ignatius Brady and the footnotes in the critical edition produced by the Franciscan editors in Grottaferrata. Colish's work is the first full-scale work in English on Peter Lombard since the completion of the critical edition of the *Sentences* in 1981, and makes many of Brady's findings available to a wider audience.

In particular, Colish does a fine job summarizing the debate on whether consent or consummation makes marriage. The labyrinthine and tortuous development of this question, trying to uphold both scriptural authority (particularly asserting the validity of the marriage between Mary and Joseph) and quite evident human experience, is clearly and succinctly presented. Many of the sources are presented *via* Gratian, however; this may be because they are found most conveniently in that collection. This summary of the question and presentation of Lombard's views may be read with profit by both the expert and the novice.

There are several serious drawbacks to this work, whatever title one may wish to attach to it. The first has to do with the author's rewriting of Lombard. Although most of the work follows the *Sentences* in structure and organization, Colish transposes several portions of the *Sentences* to create her own structure and fit her particular system. The most obvious instance of this is the treatment of sin, which Lombard takes up at the end of book 2; Colish defers her consideration of the final *distinctiones* of book 2 until after she completes her section on Lombard's Christology (book 3 of the *Sentences).* She does not mention this transposition, and the unwary reader who is not attentive to the footnotes will think that Lombard's structure follows this arrangement. A significant insight into Lombard's thought is thus lost, since it is not clear from Colish's work that Lombard links part of his treatment of the virtues and the vices with creation and the fall (in book 2) rather than with Christology (book 3).

There are other and less important, although still annoying, instances of rewriting the Master. Lines such as "another answer which he could have given here, and which he does not give" (1:381) serve as notice that the author is striking out on her own; while attempting to remain faithful to the text, the reader should be warned and wary of such expeditions.

A second serious drawback is the author's misinterpretation of some of Lombard's writings. In several places, Colish imposes her own modern, and rather anachronistic, categories on Lombard's text; the most obvious of these is with regard the role of women. Colish claims that Lombard holds for the fundamental equality of men and women, that he is opposed to "patriarchy" (2:696), and put together a manifesto for the liberation of women. Colish, "helping" the Master along, even points out several places in which he "missed an opportunity" to strengthen his attack on patriarchy and male

chauvinism, making his work appear to be a treatise of the 1960s rather than the 1160s. However, when the footnotes are investigated, the narrow ledge on which Colish's interpretation of Lombard is perched collapses. Lombard wrote in his *glossa* on Colossians that while man was created in the image of God, woman was created in the image of man (PL 192:282C)-something of a mediaeval commonplace. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Lombard notes that man and woman are *only* equal with respect to the marriage debt: "They are debtors one to the other in this case only, lest there be given an occasion of sin; in all other things the man is superior" (PL 191:1588A). While commenting on that most famous passage in 1 Timothy on women keeping silence in churches, Lombard marshals almost all of the scriptural texts possible in a lengthy catena to show the subordinate status of women (PL 192:340-342). He singles out the *Cataphrygae* for special refutation, since they claimed that women could be ordained to the diaconate: "quod contra auctoritatem est" (PL 192:346A). However much Colish may wish the Lombard to champion the fundamental and radical equality of women, in marriage or in the Church, it still remains the case that he was a man of his time, and interpreted these scriptural *loci* very much along the lines of the traditional consensus.

A final drawback of these volumes has to do with Colish's language. It is usually rather vivid and sometimes entertaining; nevertheless, this rhetoric is often used at the expense of clarity. After all, what precisely is "a theological flying Dutchman" (1:224)? Some of her images are not particularly apt and also used incorrectly, such as "bill of attainder" (1:373); some references are simply anachronistic-does Ivo of Chartres really require "marriage counseling" (2:667)?

Colish draws a sharp and what to her must be a self-evident distinction between canonical ("legalistic") and pastoral, a distinction unknown in the twelfth century and one that would have been roundly rejected by the canonists of that age, who certainly felt that they *were* being "pastoral" in their writings. Colish makes a dangerous and arbitrary distinction, for example, between Rolandus as a theologian and Rolandus as a canonist (1:65-68), and then classes him as a "disciple of Abelard" (1:326), for which there is not a significant amount of evidence. The citations and references to canonical texts, such as Gratian, are often garbled, do not follow the standard forms of citation, and are unusable (such as 2:590 n. 313 and 591 n. 315). Colish also sidesteps the issue of how much of Gratian Peter Lombard in fact knew; the date and the authorship of the *De penitentia* are still subjects of controversy, and assertions based on Gratian's authorship must be given in a qualified manner.

Given the size and the complexity of this project, there are many avenues that are left untravelled. Perhaps the biggest disappointment is that there are only infrequent and scattered references to the later commentaries on the Master (such as 1:261, where Colish points out that the notion of the Holy

Spirit as charity in his mission to men was later rejected by Thomas Aquinas and other thirteenth-century Scholastics); their absence, however, is completely understandable given the length of the book even without this extension. Furthermore, however, many arguments are made from silence- notoriously the weakest form of argument. Thus, sexual equality in marriage is extrapolated from Lombard's silence (2:656), and Colish claims that Lombard holds that the penitent is the minister of the sacrament of penance (2:760), which Lombard never states in so many words. Peter Lombard in the *Sentences* does not hold that the minister of the sacrament of anointing is a bishop, as Colish contends (labeling this "idiosyncratic," 2:613), although he does mention that the oil must be consecrated by a bishop (which was certainly the practice in Lombard's time, as in the Latin Church until recently). Further, when Lombard lists the seven grades of holy orders, he does not present cantor or prophet *(vatis)* among them, but adds them afterwards as something of an appendix. Colish writes that Lombard was "unique" in listing the cantor as an office or dignity (2:625), despite the fact that Lombard's sources (Isidore's *Etymologiae* and Hugh of Saint Victor's *De sacramentis)* both do so, along with Gregory the Great.

In spite of some confusion in its presentation, however, this work's strong points outweigh its weaknesses. The broad strokes and the breadth of the consideration make it particularly useful as a way of approaching the *Sentences* for the first time; the presentation of the historical context and the state of each theological question synthesizes quite a lot of material that is scattered over many books and articles; and were this the book's only contribution it would still be of great value. The work as a whole, while flawed in scattered details and occasionally giving in to the (relatively understandable) tendency to rewrite Lombard, or at least appeal from Lombard to "Lombard better informed" (so that his opinions may always agree with the author's own), is certainly magisterial in its own right and must earn for its author the title of *sententiaria*.

W BECKET SOULE, 0.P.

*Blackfriars*
*Cambridge, England*

*Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God.* By EUGENE F. ROGERS, JR. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995. Pp. xvii + 248. $34.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-268-01889-8.

This remarkable book makes a complex and detailed case for a bold yet modest thesis: there is convergence between Aquinas and Barth on natural knowledge of God. The thesis is bold because it will strike many students of

Aquinas and Barth as counter-intuitive. This is the very reason Rogers's case must be complex and detailed. And yet, despite this complexity, Rogers's thesis is ultimately quite modest and persuasive-even for those like myself who will quibble with details.

Rogers has "three audiences and two agendas" (c. 1). He addresses an evangelical reading of Thomas to Catholics, an Anselmian (as I will call it, although Rogers does not) reading of Barth to Protestants, and a theological reading of Thomas (one that aims "to consider nothing God-forsaken") to neo-pragmatists in religious studies departments. Rogers only addresses the first two audiences directly, leaving open a variety of interesting questions about how the convergence for which Rogers argues would function in the modern university.

Thus, Rogers's two agendas are "first to interpret Thomas, and also to compare him to Barth" (5)-the first agenda taking up two-thirds of the book. Thus, part 1 offers a reading of *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 1, aa. 1-10 under the hypothesis that "the more Aristotelian [sacred doctrine] is, the more scriptural it is, and the more Aristotelian it is, the more christoform it is" (9, 17). Part 2 tests this hypothesis by studying the full context of Aquinas's commentary on Romans 1:20. Part 3 takes up Thomist and Barthian objections, gives (Rogers's account of) Thomas's replies, and concludes with "The Common Thomas of Barth and Vatican I."

Let me reconsider Rogers's argument in three phases. First he aims to "displace" (xiii) what I will call The Standard View of Aquinas and Barth on natural knowledge of God. On the one hand, although Aquinas and the tradition climaxing in Vatican I warrant natural knowledge by appeal to Romans 1:20, the true home of Aquinas's position (says The Standard View) is the propositions of Thomas's *Summae* rather than his scriptural commentaries; the Five Ways are the paradigms of claims to natural knowledge of God (6, 10). This Standard View presumes, further, that Aquinas "divides human knowledge into two domains, one accessible, one inaccessible to reason" (205). Still further, such natural knowledge is read as providing "foundations" for revealed knowledge (ibid.), resulting in "the notorious two-story Thomism of the handbooks" (52; cf. 11, 44, 109)-a Thomism that related nature and grace as autonomous and extrinsic to each other (28f.; 55f.). On the other hand, according to The Standard View Barth rejects such natural theology-along with the *analogia entis*, and similar philosophical grounds for faith. This Barth pursues a focus on God's self-revelation by insisting that God reveals himself in hiddenness, in an ever-actual dialectic. (Rogers also sometimes speaks of "vulgar Protestantism" or the "hyper-Protestant" [107, 186]; this is seemingly not Barth but truncated views of the Reformation where grace is sheer rival to nature.)

On this View, once one is clear on such oppositions between Aquinas and Barth, there is not a great deal to talk about on this matter, except to redescribe the basic opposition in numerous ways (Catholic versus

Protestant, analogy versus dialectic, analogy of being versus analogy of faith, grace perfecting nature versus grace sublating nature, etc.).

Rogers seeks to "displace" such readings of Aquinas and Barth. However, he keeps "explicit engagement with rival readings to a minimum," seeking "to shift the burden of proof' rather than "to demolish alternatives" (xiii). Rogers knows that he is issuing a minority report, harnessing heretofore dispersed readings: his own teachers Victor Preller and George Lindbeck; Continental interpreters of Thomas like Otto Herman Pesch and Michel Corbin; and contemporary English-speaking philosophers and theologians like Alasdair Macintyre, David Burrell, and Bruce Marshall. The history of this counter-tradition has yet to be written; it would reach back at least into Barth's study of the *Prima Pars* in the 1920s and those German Catholic theologians who studied Barth (e.g., Erich Przywara and Gottlieb Sohngen). But Rogers is the first one to bring together and extend the threads of this counter-tradition, yoking them in the cause of actual "convergence" between Aquinas and Barth on the issue of natural knowledge of God.

How does he shift the burden of proofif not by demolishingthe alternatives? A second stage of his argument is a re-reading of Aquinas that is at once genetic and logical. Relying on Michel Corbin, Rogers argues that Thomas's arguments shifted between the writing of the *Summa contra Gentiles* (1259-64) and the *Summa Theologiae* (1266-73). The former provides some evidence for the kind of "two-story" reading of Thomas; the latter does not. (Given the disputed dating of the Romans commentary, Rogers offers no hypotheses "about the influence of the *Summa* on the Romans commentary or vice versa" [12-13].)

But Rogers does not hang his argument on the historical point (xi-xii). His main argument is that we need to reverse The Standard View's tendency to view Aquinas's Scripture commentary as accidental to the more substantive questions of the *Summae.* Hence the importance of part 1 (on the *Summa Theologiae)* and part 2 (on Aquinas's Romans commentary). The central argument of part 1 is that *STh* I, q. 1, aa. 1-10 "has a circular structure according to which article 1 demands something foreknown about the end ... that article 10 supplies, and article 10 sets up a structure of scriptural authority upon which article 1 has already depended" (55). Rogers makes his case by arguing that, in these initial questions, Aquinas simultaneously and consecutively interprets Aristotle's *scientia* while bending and breaking it to conform to *scientia Dei et beatorum.* "Sacred doctrine assumes scientia as Christ assumes flesh" (40, underlining Rogers's).

This part of Rogers's argument is sure to stir debate, for he offers a reading of how creation ex nihilo and classic Christology bend and break (perfect and exceed, we might also say-although Rogers insists that no single metaphor will do [50]) Aristotle's *scientia.* But the central gain for Rogers's argument is

that he shows how the *Summa Theologiae's* own claims about Scripture require us to give Aquinas's Scripture commentaries a priority over the *Summa.*

In part 2, then, Rogers shows how Aquinas's reading of Paul's Letter to the Romans depends on a reading of Paul's story as a "vessel of election" (Acts 9:15). Thomas reads the first verses of Romans as displaying Paul as an exemplary case of knowledge of God (99). The crucial passage (Romans 1:20: God's "invisible nature ... has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made") is "nested" in a structure of governing assertions (104ff.) at once Christological, Trinitarian, and attuned to the diverse circumstances of the Gentiles who are said to know God without thanking God. Their natural knowledge of God is "a self-consuming artifact" (108, 126, 128)-or "merely detained cognitions, or cognition so called by courtesy" (129).

The re-reading of Barth centers on Barth's reading of Anselm as well as his reading of Paul in the 1956 commentary on Romans (not to be confused with Barth's earlier commentaries on this epistle). This is the Barth who used the medieval Anselm against the Enlightenment. Anselm's approach was faith seeking understanding by offering "an intratextual or intrasystematic account of the necessity of God's existence," conceding nothing to the non-believer who concedes nothing (137). Further, this is the Barth who read Romans 1:20 as implying an "objective knowledge of God" (198), who insisted that there were "secular parables of the kingdom," who wrote that he "would gladly concede that nature does objectively offer a proof of God, though the human being overlooks or misunderstands it" (206), and who (I would add) said that Vatican I's teaching that we *can* know God by the natural light of reason "is not in itself absolutely intolerable as an interpretation *in meliorem partem" (Church Dogmatics* [1940], vol. 2, part 1, pp. 79-84).

As Rogers warns from the beginning, the reading of Barth is not as detailed as the reading of Aquinas, both because the book would have been too long and because "the interpretation of Barth is (I think) less controversial than the interpretation of Thomas" (xii-xiii). "Less controversial," of course, unless one agrees with Barth. That is, Rogers argues against The Standard View of Aquinas in favor of a more evangelical Aquinas. But he does not so much argue against The Standard View of Barth as imply that Barth's dialectical arguments against natural theology sit uneasily with the more Anselmian Barth. Rogers seemingly stands between those who argue that Barth was and remained a fundamentally "dialectical" theologian (e.g., Bruce McCormack) and those who argue that Barth changed "from dialectic to analogy" (e.g., at least sometimes, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Hans Frei). This is, I think, a not unreasonable place to stand. For example, it explains both why Barth could offer a minimal assent (or non-dissent) to Vatican I's *posse,* and why Catholics rarely notice this. But, although not unreasonable, it will prove no less controversial than the reading of Aquinas.

A third stage of Rogers's argument uses these re-readings of Thomas and Barth to argue for "convergence." By "convergence" Rogers means that both have "just such a pattern of argument as Paul executes first and Barth and Thomas follow, as it were, at a distance"; they converge in what they read Paul saying about natural knowledge of God in Romans 1 (8, 201). Rogers exemplifies what he means by "convergence" rather than offering an abstract definition. But his use is not inconsistent with the use of the notion in some recent ecumenical discussions. Here "convergence" indicates movement towards, not arrival at. Thus, "convergence" is not complete consensus or agreement. It also does not mean that oppositions vanish. It means that oppositions are re-located as no longer at the center of things. Rogers knows that "large and important differences remain between Thomas and Barth," although "they are differences that distinguish different human beings on the side of the angels rather than one on the side of the angels and one on the side of the Antichrist" (201).

For example, Rogers proposes that Protestants and Catholics have offered different solutions to Kant's split between subject and object, mind and body/world. Protestants like Schleiermacher and Barth accepted the split, but, seeking to protect "God's independence and grace's gratuity," Barth insisted that God is a subject irreducible to any object and therefore Revelation is in no way deducible from human consciousness (209-10). Those Catholics who did not "turn to the subject," on the other hand, rejected the split of subject and object and insisted on "the human creature's integrity and grace's universality" (211-12). Rogers seems to imply that Thomas's focus on grace's universality and the creature's integrity can embrace Barth's rightful insistence on God's independence and grace's gratuity in the way that latter concerns cannot embrace the former. A supporter of BHrth, I presume, could argue the opposite. But if Rogers is right, this argument could take place without each side excommunicating the other, for they interpret Paul in convergmg ways.

Thus, Rogers's central claim is that, once we cut through stereotypical readings of Aquinas and Barth, and marshal readings based on what the two actually said, we can say that both agree in their interpretations of Romans 1:20-and we can say this without denying that their theologies are different and opposed on a range of other issues. This is what I mean when I say that Rogers's thesis is modest: he is claiming that Aquinas and Barth essentially agree on how to interpret Romans 1:20, and their respective Aristotelian and Kantian theologoumena should not distract from their basic agreement on this score.

There are questions that remain at this third stage of Rogers's argument. Perhaps most importantly, what does it imply for communities that share Aquinas's and Barth's theology of natural knowledge? Is "convergence" enough to make us regard the issue of natural knowledge as no longer Church-divisive? Or is "convergence" only enough to bring us back to genuine

debate, this time without condemnations based on unwarranted stereotypes? Rogers wisely leaves such issues open. It is more than enough to have resisted the cliches, analyzed the texts with such care, and shown us a way through a seeming impasse. Rogers's book will be an indispensable part of the future debate on Aquinas, Barth, and natural knowledge of God.

*JAMES]*. BUCKLEY

*Loyola College*
*Baltimore, Maryland*

*The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman,* vol. 7. Edited by GERARD TRACEY. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Pp. xxvi + 550. $95.00 (cloth).

C. S. Dessain began editing and publishing Newman's twenty thousand extant letters and his diary entries thirty-five years ago, beginning with the Roman Catholic period, 1845 (vol. 11 of the projected thirty-one volume series). Fr. Dessain died as volume 31 went to press. Gerard Tracey, Dessain's successor as archivist of the Birmingham Oratory, coedited the first six volumes of the Anglican period and now, as sole editor, gives us volume 7, covering the important years 1839 and 1840. What I wrote years earlier regarding Dessain's scholarly editorship *(The Thomist* 38 [1974]: 372-75) is equally applicable to Tracey's editing of this volume.

Newman's autobiographical *Apologia* of 1864 and Anne Mozley's 1890 edition of selected Anglican-period letters that Cardinal Newman put into her hands-she was sister to the Mozley brothers who had married Newman's sisters Harriett and Jemima-had been the best windows on the events of 1839 and 1840 from primary sources. Tracey's volume is now the definitive window. Not only does Mozley's edition present a small portion of Newman's letters, whereas Tracey presents everything extant, including the diary entries, Mozley also cut off portions of letters. For example, Newman wrote a letter of spiritual direction to Ms. Mary Holmes on 19 July 1840; Anne Mozley has the letter, but the opening paragraphs are excised, where Newman wrote of the consequences of sinning and of God's punishment of those God still loves-important issues to be sure!

For more than a century the *Apologia* (114, 116) has been the normal window through which to view the eventful happenings of these years in Newman's spiritual odyssey. During the summer of 1839 he studied the fifth-century Monophysite controversy and said, "I saw my face in that mirror, and I was a Monophysite"; in August he was handed Nicholas Wiseman's article on Augustine and the Donatists, and Augustine's anti-schismatic recipe, *securus judicat orbis terrarum,* "kept ringing in my ears." These 1864 words

of Newman are a retrospective; he had lived through the subsequent explosive impact of those 1839 perceptions and viewed matters accordingly. The Tracey volume gives us a more realistic feel for the events, for we are viewing Newman day by day during those unsettling times. We see matters arise, fade, perhaps to rise again, perhaps overtaken by other events. In a phrase, we get what Newman himself desiderated in knowledge of this kind: we get a real apprehension of his unfolding life and its issues.

For example, the Monophysite alert was in reality more muted, with only a 12 July letter to Frederic Rogers noting "two things ... very remarkable at Chalcedon-the great power of the Pope ... and the marvelous interference of the civil power" (104). In 1839 Newman saw this exercise of civil power as a rejoinder to the Roman charge of an Erastian Anglican church, and the exercise of papal power supplied him ammunition against the liberals in his own church. Only some years later did he see the import of these events at Chalcedon, such that the contending parties (the papal party, the Monophysites, the Eutychians) mirrored respectively the Roman Catholics, the Anglicans, and the Protestants. Newman's "via media" Anglo-Catholicism began to look suspiciously like a heresy itself, hence Newman's reference in the *Apologia* to seeing one's Monophysite face.

If Newman's study of the Council of Chalcedon had an initially more muted effect, the appearance of Fr. Nicholas Wiseman's 1839 *Dublin Review* a1iicle on the Donatists apropos Anglicanism was absolutely unnerving, as the *Apologia* expresses and as the letters confirm. The article was put into Newman's hands by Robert Williams, a Tractarian who already suspected Anglicanism to be in wrongful schism, when Williams visited Newman and walked to Littlemore with him on 19 September. Three days later Newman wrote to Frederic Rogers that "I have had the first real hit from Romanism.... It has given me a stomach-ache .... At this moment we have sprung a leak ... . This is a most uncomfortable article on every account" (154). To his sister Jemima he termed the Augustinian argument against schism to be "fonnidable" and "calculated to do harm, considerable harm" (187).

Newman's fear was that the Wiseman argument would tip those Anglo-Catholics already sitting on the fence to convert to Rome. From this moment on Newman urged his Tractarian colleagues that John Keble must write the Anglo-Catholic rejoinder. Keble never did, and it never became clear in the letters and diaries why not, and why Newman took up the challenge.

As Newman wrote to friends about the Wiseman article, we can detect his emerging position: (a) Anglicans are in a minority position, as were the Donatists, but the current Roman Church is as pale a reflection of the patristic Church as we are (206). (b) We charge Romanism with lacking in those very Church principles that we desiderate in ourselves (197). (c) Rome uses duplicity to convert us, "holding out tales for the nursery ... and physic concealed in jam .... Who can but feel shame when the religion of Ximenes, Borromeo, and Pascal is so overlaid?" (198).

Newman's response to Wiseman appeared as "The Catholicity of the Anglican Church" in the *British Critic* (Jan. 1840)-now in *Essays Critical and Historical* (2:1-73)-followed by the retraction he added when he republished this article as a Roman Catholic. Newman's letters from 1839 make clear that his foreboding focused prophetically on the charge of schism, and it is not surprising that his 1871 retraction indicts Anglicanism more with being in schism, being out of catholicity as it were, than with being non-apostolic. That is why Newman came to see Augustine's words, *securusjudicat,* as palmary and as the easier way to decide which Church body is in the right and which is in the wrong.

It would be remiss to leave unmentioned the prominent role publishing played in Newman's thinking and in Tractarian strategy. During these two years Newman edited the *British Critic,* which he took over when Hugh James Rose became ill and which he handed over to his brother-in-law Tom Mozley in 1841. The letters are filled with Newman's attempt to gin up articles, not just essays to fill pages but essays to urge "church principles," as the Tractarians termed their agenda. He worked with Keble and Pusey on editing *The Library of the Fathers;* this series of translations of early Church theologians was meant to show Anglicans the primitive integrity and vivid spiritual life of patristic Christianity. Furthermore, he republished his earlier *British Magazine* articles as the *Church of the Fathers,* telling his friend John Bowden that it "is regularly strong meat. I suppose I must expect a clamor" (202). Newman wanted to transform his Church, and to that end he utilized every possible form of print media.

For those whose interests in Newman focus on *Grammar of Assent* and topics in the philosophical foundations of religion, Newman's 1840 letters to his brother Frank, which had not been printed in the Mozley edition, are important indicators of his early thoughts on such topics. Frank was in the midst of drifting from the Plymouth Brethren to an unbelieving rationalism when the brothers reconnected after a silence of some years. The letters of 22 October (412-15) and IO November (436-42), too nuanced to summarize here, must be consulted for ideas such as these: "Men judge in religion, and are meant to judge by antecedent probability much more than by external evidences, and that their view of antecedent probability depends upon their particular state of mind" (438); "I conceive that if a man rejects such a mere preponderance of probability, this is a proof that he has no great desire to attain the truth in the matter at hand; and his fault becomes a moral one" (414).

Newman's letters often give instructive hints to the meanings and intentions of his published writings, as in this comment to colleague J. F. Christie about *P.S., IV.-* [sermons 3, 7] "are the two on which the whole volume turns. I meant the whole to be on that one subject, how mercy and judgment can be reconciled" (25).

I share an astonishment. On 27 February 1841, not two months after the last of Newman's letters and diary entries in this volume, Tract 90 appeared.

"Ninety" was a pivotal moment, as is well known and as Newman at the time thought. But there is not one hint, even as late as December 1840, that "Ninety" is on the horizon. The letters abound, to be sure, with Newman's apprehension that the Movement was stirring up "catholic" aspirations for which the Church of England provided in a far weaker fashion that the Roman Church might. He wrote "Ninety" to argue that the 39 Articles tolerated Anglo-Catholic sentiments vis-a-vis the preponderant Protestant ethos of the Anglican Church. I can only conclude that Newman's decision to write "Ninety" came suddenly.

Gerard Tracey has provided excellent footnotes as well as the germane portions of letters sent Newman that occasioned his responses. Thumbnail biographies are provided of all persons mentioned. Some materials too extensive for the footnotes are included as appendices.

Just over the horizon of Newman's life, in 1841, are the three great blows, as he termed them: the melting away of the *via media* theory, the episcopal condemnation of Tract 90, and the coestablishing of a Jerusalem bishopric involving Protestant heretics. I await eagerly Gerard Tracey's next volume. If it is like this one, it won't disappoint.

EDWARD JEREMY MILLER

*Gwynedd-Mercy College*
*Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania*

*Narratives of a Vulnerable God: Christ, Theology and Scripture.* By WILLIAM C. PLACHER. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994. Pp. xix+ 188. $14.99 (paper). ISBN 0-664-25534-5.

The basic thesis of this book is that Christianity proclaims a vulnerable God who has revealed himself in the story of Jesus Christ. In the light of this norm we Christians are called upon to review our attitudes, actions, and institutions to see where we have capitulated to the allure of power and are thus false to the Gospel. Placher divides his study into three parts. Part 1 considers God as vulnerable, eternal, and triune. Part 2 looks at diversities as a sign of vulnerability, in opposition to monolithic consistency as an expression of power. Thus, the diversity of the Gospel narratives mediates the lack of a coercive order, though still within the parameters of a meaningful and referential discourse. Jesus himself is present to us as a non-dominating Savior who wins victory over evil through suffering but he cannot be presented to others either as a motive for the passive suffering of oppression or for Christian intolerance in the face of pluralism. Part 3, finally, applies these principles to Christian existence in the Church, the Church's relation to the world, and the relation of Christian theology to the academic public.

The author endeavors to imitate the model he sets before us by being vulnerable himself. He acknowledges the privileges that are his as a white, male, middle-class academic; he states his confessional affiliation as Presbyterian; and he describes his intellectual context to be that which is labeled "narrative theology," "post-liberal theology," or "the new Yale school." The argument of the book seems to run in two directions. There is first of all a critique of the way the Church, through connivance in politics, economics, and social affairs, has incorporated a kind of worldly power which perpetuates the hegemony and exclusivity of the world at large. Most of this critique I find to be justly merited, especially by the clerical and academic sectors of the Church, which sometimes in Placher's text seem to count for "Church" almost to the exclusion of the great number of "little" people who are either only nominally involved in such business or who, in their own, often heroic, way, live the Gospel of Love's power despite bad "leadership." The dilemmas posed by the actual situation of the mainline Churches are frankly and fairly faced and some constructive proposals are made relying on Calvin's dictum that "Christians should live as members of a community in which the Word of God is preached and heard and the sacraments are properly administered" (137).

It is clear from both the critique and the proposed remedies what Placher means by "power." It is the actually exercised ability to impose one's self and one's will upon others in a way that denies their rights and their dignity, and forces them to cooperate in a system that profits the powerful and neglects the powerless. In this context it is also clear what he means by "vulnerable" (a word often invoked but never defined). It is the situation of being affected by the unjust exercise of power. In the movement of the first argument, then, power and vulnerability are moral categories describing domination and the suffering of domination. Even here, however, we would do well to recall the words of Martin Luther King: "What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive and love without power is sentimental and *anemic"(Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* [New York: Harper and Row, 1967) 37).

My problems with Placher begin when we look at the second direction of his criticism, that is, when these moral categories are projected onto the biblical description of God and his power. Placher rejects, naturally, such notions of domination, etc., in connection with God, but he implies that the fault lies in the attribution of power to God and the continuance of that attribution in the tradition. He then goes on to speak of the love and vulnerability of God as though these are incompatible with his power. When discussing the terms *person* and *substance* (65) Placher makes a distinction between giving up on the traditional terminology and acknowledging that "the terms themselves do not initially give us much help in understanding." He would have done well to apply that distinction to the term *power* when used of God. It may be that "initially" the term does not help us in understanding God. Distorted

by the Enlightenment's restriction of human action to the imposition of the subject upon other persons and things, "power" has become synonymous with domination and coercion-and coercion, as the *Letter to Diognetus* (7.4) reminds us, is incompatible with God.

Power is the ability to effect change. Biblically, God's power, his ability to effect change, is not domination but generosity. The act of creation itself, when there was nothing to dominate, is the most striking manifestation of this generosity in which God shares himself without losing himself, and in which he crowns humankind with "honor and glory" (Ps 8:6), divine prerogatives, by which we image God and share his breath. On the level of redemption, it is precisely to the slain Lamb that the hymn goes up, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power [*dynamis]* and riches, wisdom and strength *[ischus*], honor and glory [Ps 8] and blessing" (Rev 5:12).

Placher cites approvingly (22 note. 12) a remark of Catherine Mowry LaCugna to the effect that "the denial of real relations to creation in God means only that God's relations to the world are freely chosen." Is not this the secret of God's vulnerability? God is so powerful that he can love to the limit of folly and vulnerability. No one else can. God is so free that he can adjust his actions to the freely willed activity of his creatures without suffering any loss in his freedom; he is so transcendent that he is completely immanent without thereby being identified with creation. When power is made equivalent to domination, freedom to total control, and transcendence to absence, then we have made a caricature of the God revealed in whole plan of salvation whose culminating point is Jesus Christ and the act of love in which he died. When we have once imposed upon God our misunderstanding of such categories, he becomes fearsome indeed. We then need to make God vulnerable according to our image and likeness; we need a God we can "get at." But then our trust is not in his totally unforced and free gift of himself, in his willingness to be affected, but rather in our capacity somehow to affect him; our trust is in ourselves.

There are several chapters in the book that do not much rely on Professor Placher's contrast between power and vulnerability as theological (as opposed to moral) categories, and these are particularly enlightening. I would single out especially chapters 2 and 3, on "The Eternal God" and "The Triune God" respectively. In chapter 2, the question is one of grounding God's vulnerability in his eternity, that is his consistency (he is always the same). Eternity, according to Boethius, is "a perfect possession all at once of limitless life" (31). Eternity is therefore not so much timelessness as a perfect possession of whatever time is when it is freed of the fragmentation that characterizes our time. Placher contrasts human temporality-in Heidegger's understanding, being made up of an irreparable past of lost opportunities, a future of extinction, and a present of fleeting, anxious moments-with the temporality of Jesus whose past is perfectly in accord with the Father's plan, whose

future lies in the culmination of that plan and whose present is thus characterized by self-possession. This is a sort of eternity.

Building on this insight, I would like to offer the suggestion that Jesus' earthly life is an initial "type" or "icon" of eternity for precisely the reasons Placher presents, and this does show us the consistency of the vulnerable God. However, the "perfect possession of limitless life" is not a quality of Jesus "in the days of his flesh" but only of his humanity now that he is completely transformed by the divine action. Even now, this humanity is but a perfect type or "analogate" of the intrinsic eternity of God's nature and *this* eternity of God is the reason why Jesus is eternal at all. What I am suggesting is that Jesus' once non-fragmented and now perfect possession of limitless life is a revelation of God and can be the starting point for a consideration, yet to be undertaken, of what "eternal" means as applied to God. By considering Jesus' manner of possessing time, Placher's reflections have opened up a way to move beyond the conflict between temporality and eternity in a manner that complements the valuable proposals of Hans Urs von Balthasar in *A Theology of History* (reprint, San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994).

This is an honest book that tries to point to the obfuscation of revelation that is being caused by the Church's attachment to dominative power. It should call us to pay attention and change. My criticism of Professor Placher's failure to articulate a more biblical understanding of God's power is meant to enhance, not weaken, his witness.

FRANCIS MARTIN

*Dominican House of Studies*
*Washington, D.C.*

*The Splendor of Doctrine.* By AIDAN NICHOLS, O.P. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995. Pp. x + 159. $18.95 (paper). ISBN 0-567-29271-1.

*The Splendor of Doctrine* forms the first panel of what its author describes as a diptych of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.* This metaphor from the world of art seems an especially appropriate point of departure for this author, for throughout the work he consistently appeals to the aesthetic facet of his reader's nature.

On the first panel of the diptych, the author sketches the contours of the *Catechism* on the Creed. The second panel will render the *Catechism* on Christian practice: the sacramental, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of the faith. In addition, in the sequel the author intends to "investigate and respond to some of the criticisms that have been voiced of the *Catechism's* project,

and/or the way in which it has been effected." It is clear, then, from the beginning, that *The Splendor of Doctrine* represents a perspective quite sympathetic to the *Catechism.* "The Church's concern in the *Catechism,"* the author asserts, is "to hold all the splendors of the faith before us so that we can see the Catholic tradition, and the Christian life, for what they are-a seamless web of beauty, truth and goodness which reflects, ultimately, the very being of God himself." It is precisely because of this perspective that *The Splendor of Doctrine* is able to exploit so well the implications of several of the *Catechisms* achievements.

The first chapter highlights the main themes in Pope John Paul II's apostolic constitution *Depositum fidei.* The author points out the "masterstroke in the pope's preamble," the interrelation of the four books. "The key concept used to bring off this coup is that of the Christian mystery." The unity of God's saving design reveals Christ at its center. Thus Christian belief, worship, action, and prayer are parts of an integrated whole held together in Christ. This Christocentrism is one of the *Catechisms* most conspicuous characteristics. "The mystery of the Saviour forms the living, personal unity of the *Catechisms* four parts: for he is the source of faith, the saving presence in the sacraments, the model of Christian action and the master of Christian prayer."

The author is also concerned with what the pope articulates as one of the primary intentions of the *Catechism:* "the writing of new local catechisms, which take into account the various situations and cultures." He insists that local catechisms based on the *Catechism* are necessary, but should remain faithful to the "full range of doctrinal propositions put forward in the great *Catechism,* diverging from it only in the choice of texts, episodes and examples used to illustrate its truths." "Otherwise," he asserts, "the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* would simply relaunch the churches in communion with Rome on the high seas of relativism, where their last state might be worse than their first."

In the second chapter, the author looks beneath the prologue. He finds several of the perspectives from which the *Catechism* is composed. For example, the *Catechisms* "point of departure is unashamedly theological." It argues forcibly for the renewal of a "doctrinal catechesis." In the world of biblical interpretation, the Sacred Scriptures "are not on all fours with every other text that happens to have come down to us from the ancient world." The principal aim of Catholic exegesis, the author asserts, should be "the deepening of faith."

The remaining chapters take up the content of the first book of the *Catechism* and provide insightful commentary first on revelation and then on each of the persons of the Trinity. Throughout the work the author seems to savor especially the counter-cultural dimension of the *Catechisms* achievement. Within a world he perceives to be largely secularist and relativist, he

suggests that doctrine is splendid and faith is not only an authentic human response to revelation, but the "only adequate response."

> Contrary to its popular reputation as a vague sentiment with distinctly questionable cognitive credentials, faith is an exactly precise attunement of man's subjective faculties-mind and heart-to the divine invitation which revelation comprises. This is not to say, however, that one crucial aspect of the secularist's poor opinion of faith is misplaced, for the text goes on to underline the character of faith as not only obedience (to God) but even submission. In an anthropocentric world, where man is the measure of all things, this is fighting talk. (27)

Within a Church whose diversity at times seems more evident than its unity, he contends that the *Catechism* affirms "the over-arching unity of this community, despite its many tongues." This "is vital to the *Catechism's* whole project, and to meeting the urgent needs of world *Catholicism* at this juncture in time, that we stress the unicity of the language of the Church, while noting that speakers of one language may have many dialects, and, a fortiori, accents."

Taking up another dimension of the theme of diversity in harmony, the author calls upon voices from the modern theological world not cited in the *Catechism,* but who nevertheless resonate with it: von Balthasar on the paschal mystery, Congar and Guardini on ecclesiology, Danielou on primitive Christian symbols, and de Lubac on the social aspects of dogma. He underscores the attempt of the *Catechism* to recall the voices of the Eastern theological tradition as well by incorporating the work of such scholars as Afanas'ev, Kereszty, McPartland, and Noujelm.

In one of the more interesting developments of the book, the author senses the *Catechism's* subliminal appeal to the aesthetic and artistic dimensions of faith. He recognizes that the *Catechism* attracts the heart as well as the mind. He blends the evocative voices of classic, obscure, and contemporary poets with a straightforward summary of doctrine. The lines of Vergil, Dante, Goethe, Manzoni, and Romanos the Melodist combine with verses from Hopkins, Carmichael, Jones, Lewis, and Saint-Exupery to probe the inspirational, more affective potential of the *Catechism.*

In sum *The Splendor of Doctrine* provides an erudite yet accessible introduction to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.* The author's use of the metaphor of a diptych alerts the reader to the aesthetic and evocative potential of the *Catechism.* His careful attention to the *Catechism's* fundamental theological themes is the controlling perspective of the work. It is the author's imaginative presentation of the colors, tones, forms, and shadows of this first panel of the diptych that prompts the reader to anticipate the second.

John E. Pollard

*Office of the Catechism*
*National Conference of Catholic Bishops*
*Washington, D.C.*

*A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and The Mystery of the Eucharist.* By JOHANN AUER. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995. Pp. xxx + 425. $39.95 (cloth), $24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8132-0824-6 (cloth), 0-8132-0825-4 (paper).

This is the third volume to be offered to the English-speaking public of the German series *Kleine Katholische Dogmatik* by Johann Auer and Joseph Ratzinger. The present work (vol. 6), follows the English publication of *Eschatology* (vol. 9) and *The Church* (vol. 8). *Dogmatic Theology* (as the series is known in English) was composed in the theological wake of the Second Vatican Council as a series of textbooks for German theology students. It attempted to fill a gap by offering a coherent compendium of dogmatic theology for use in classroom lectures.

The volume at hand (authored by Auer) consists of two essays, "A General Doctrine of the Sacraments" (1-148) and "The Mystery of the Eucharist" (151-364). The first essay treats the followingthemes of sacramental theology: the concept and nature of sacrament (I); the structure of the sacramental sign (II); the reality and efficacy of the sacraments (III); questions about origin, number, and organic structure (IV); the minister (V); the recipient (VI); sacramentals (VII); and God's Word as sacrament (VIII). The essay on the Eucharist first treats the sacramental sign (I), then turns to the interrelated ideas of Eucharist as sacramental sacrifice (II) and sacrificial meal (III), and concludes with reflections on the adoration of the Eucharist (IV) and the relationship of the Eucharist and the Church (V).

Throughout the series emphasis is laid on the biblical foundations and history of doctrine together with systematic reflection on the coherence of particular doctrines one with another (xi-xii). This methodological attention to Scripture, history, and systematic coherence is meant to serve, not dominate, the theological exposition of the *sacra doctrina* as a whole (xii).

Auer's use of Scripture in the present volume takes several forms. His occasional appeal to "proof' from Scripture (84-85, 259-61, *passim),* is no more than a doctrinal and ecclesial reading of Scripture intended to elucidate the biblical basis for the teaching and practice of the Church (85, 259). Auer also presents examples of critical exegesis. His treatment of the sacramental sign in the Eucharistic mystery begins with a scriptural exegesis of the words of promise and institution. He considers together the bread of life discourse in John, the so-called Petrine and Pauline accounts of the institution, the portrayals of the paschal meal by the Synoptics and Paul, and other NT texts (177-86). The aim of the exegesis is steadfastly theological and ecclesial. For example, here it clarifies the scriptural sign in the context of salvation history so that a vital relationship may be maintained between the concrete, present-day Eucharistic cult and the Eucharistic sign of the Scripture (178).

Historical theology for Auer is a resource for dogmatic theology and is in the service of revealed truth. In other words, his historical reflections never degenerate into romanticism, still less into a dialecticism or evolutionism in which particular expressions of revelation are necessarily provisional. For example, his treatment of the sacramental character imparted by baptism, confirmation, and holy orders is guided by the fact that this is an established doctrine of the Church (70). Historical investigation illumines the consistency with which Christianity has embraced the truth of the sacramental character in various situations and at various stages of development-whether in the early rebaptism controversies, in the struggles against the Donatists, or in the condemnation of the Waldensians (69-70). Historical theology also aids in the fuller and ongoing *systematic* explicitation of this doctrine by identifying the abiding concerns underlying the various historical (and sometimes provisional) formulations of the problem (73-74).

Every systematic reflection on theology must keep in mind the relationship between theology and the human sciences (not excluding philosophy) employed by the theologian. A good example of how Auer understands the normativity of any particular philosophy for expressing the truths of the faith is his handling of the doctrine of *transubstantiation* (198-238). According to Auer, the term *transubstantiation* gives "unique and apt expression" to the saving truth that Christ's sacramental presence is not merely "a subjective matter of faith, not merely an objective sensory reality," but instead a historical truth that actually relates to our "spatio-temporal condition" even if it is a truth that can only be grasped by faith (236). There is no question of "baptizing" any particular metaphysics. Philosophical terms like *transubstantiation* become normative insofar as the Church judges them "valuable dialectical instrument[s] in the service of the uncompromising mysteriological affirmations" of the Christian faith (238).

Having analyzed the methodology of the work, I now tum to its theological contribution. Auer's essay on sacramental theology begins with the affirmation that Christian existence is impossible without the reality known as "sacrament" (1). His theology of the sacraments, based on this affirmation, is further illumined by, and tries to account for, four fundamental problems of human existence: the distinction of body and soul as constitutive principles of the human person, the interdependence of the individual and the community, the distinction of intellect and will as root forces in the human spirit, and the relationship in man of "being" and "acting" such that man is seen as that creature who must "realize himself' in word and deed (1-3).

Auer summarizes the tradition by distinguishing four elements that determine the structure of a sacrament: (1) the external sign perceptible to the senses; (2) the interior reality of grace and efficacy; (3) the institution by Jesus Christ; and (4) the ecclesial dimension of each sacrament, indicated by

their "location" between a minister and a recipient (13-17). The bulk of the essay is an explication of these principal elements.

Auer's own sacramental theology eludes easy categorization. He rejects certain aspects of Scholastic doctrine for (in their accounts of sacramental efficacy, at least) a kind of "sacramental materialism" (ll8). He is sympathetic to the apparently more personalistic accounts given by Rahner and others. Yet he also balks before Rahner's "symbolic" account of the manner of the sacraments' effect in which "sacrament" is understood as the most radical case of "God's word" coming to man. According to Auer, thus understood, the sacramental sign emerges as an absolute Word (in the Hegelian sense), thereby abolishing "the Scriptural polarities between Creator and creature, material world and spiritual world" (81). Instead, on this matter, Auer endorses the position of St. Thomas that the sacramental sign is "a directly human, inner-worldly reality, and hence only a mediate sign of God" (ibid.). Maintaining this polarity bars the way toward either a theistic-supranaturalistic interpretation of grace or a purely anthropocentric-naturalistic one. (Auer's dismissal of Scholastic causal accounts of sacramental efficacy as materialistic or anti-personal should be corrected by Colman O'Neill's well-reasoned defense [in a personalistic context!] of causal accounts in his work *Sacramental Realism* [Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1983]).

Ultimately, although he acknowledges the limits and insufficiency of any one explanation of the sacraments' interior reality and efficacy, Auer favors the principal insights of Odo Casel's mystery theology because they represent the best way to preserve "the central concerns of our time when we are aiming at a new understanding in our sacramental theology and, indeed, in the Church's total doctrine of salvation, and at a deepened liturgical practice" (65). The thrust of mystery theology is that within the locus of the ecclesial "cultus" alone is the full meaning of the reception of the sacraments reached and achieved (67). This is because the recipient of the sacrament realizes his or her existence within the Church by means of a sacramental appropriation of the mystery of Christ. According to Auer, this is the basic view of the sacraments which *Sacrosanctum Concilium* made its own.

In the second essay of the book, Auer attempts to show how, in the sacrament of the Mass, God addresses the whole of "reality" and the "welfare" (salvation) of mankind. He argues that the sacramental sign of the Eucharist is the sign "of the actual aid to salvation that the living God has localized in Jesus Christ himself' (154). In other words, the realist Catholic understanding of the presence of Christ's "body and blood together with [his] soul and divinity" in the Eucharistic species (a presence defined at Trent as *vere, realiter, substantialiter)* is the condition and sure guarantee that the sacrament of the Eucharist is understood as the "actual aid" to man's salvation established by God rather than merely "some indeterminate" aid to salvation (154). Auer's

exegesis of the scriptural basis of the sacramental sign of the Eucharist, as already indicated, shows the connections between the liturgical celebration, the sacrificial (Passover) meal at the Last Supper, and Christ's paschal sacrifice on the Cross. The Mass then can be understood only in light of the Last Supper which in turn takes it fundamental meaning from Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross (279).

This paschal understanding of the Eucharistic liturgy undergirds the heart of Auer's Eucharistic theology, that is, the interrelated conceptions of the Eucharist as "sacramental sacrifice" (the meal-sacrifice) and as "sacrificial meal" (the meal as sacrament). The liturgical action of the Sacrifice of the Mass takes its origin from the command of Christ at the Last Supper. In the context of the Last Supper, Christ may be understood to have instituted "a sacramental rite that was based on the paschal meal" (271). The Church has understood by Christ's action that (a) this sacramental rite was to be performed by the Apostles and their successors, (b) it had a direct relationship (albeit relative) to Christ's absolute, bloody sacrifice on the Cross, and (c) its sacrificial character is indicated by its institution during the sacrificial meal of the Passover (Christ's flesh, offered and eaten, in place of the sacrificial flesh [271-72]). This threefold view excludes the following interpretations: that the Mass is only a subjective memorial celebration, that its essence resides in the ritual destruction of the sacrificial species, or (most common at the popular level) that it is primarily a community meal of brotherhood in the Lord.

According to Auer, the Eucharist is first and last a sacrificial meal (an *Opfermahl),* that is, a sacramental representation of Christ's unique sacrifice in which we participate through a meal, the partaking of the sacrificial offering. This "partaking," due to Christ's presence in the sacrament, constitutes "a genuine sacramental communion with the bodily Lord" (326). Christ's enduring presence in the consecrated species is the basis for Eucharistic adoration, understood as a prolongation of sacramental communion (335-40). This communion is in turn the foundation of Christian charity and ecclesial union among the fellow members of Christ's Mystical Body (341-62).

Besides the doctrinal themes indicated, Auer addresses many pastoral concerns that arise in sacramental (especially Eucharistic) theology, for example, intercommunion, the ritual form of the sacraments, their effects, and their necessity for salvation. As a matter of principle, however, such questions are considered solely in the context of the dogmatic investigations. For Auer, there is no possibility of fencing off dogmatic theology from pastoral theology.

The English-language editions of *Dogmatic Theology,* begun in 1988, meet a situation in which the pluralism of theology and theological method have begun to exert strains on ecclesial unity. Increasingly, the need is felt for basic but thorough textbooks in the sub-disciplines of dogmatic theology

which can provide a foundation of knowledge for a common theological education in seminaries and schools of theology. *Dogmatic Theology* 6, a model of concision and learned objectivity in its presentation, meets that need for sacramental theory in general and Eucharistic theology in particular. An up-to-date English bibliography (organized by chapter) appears at the end of the book, augmenting its usefulness for English-speaking students of theology.

RICHARD C. HERMES, S.J.

*Weston Jesuit School of Theology*
*Cambridge, Massachusetts*