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REVIEWS

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SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS IN THE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *AMORIS LAETITIA*[1]

SERGE-THOMAS BONINO, O.P.

Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum)
Rome, Italy

THE EXERCISE to which I will dedicate myself—namely, the study of the "presence" of Saint Thomas Aquinas in a pontifical text—is a perilous one for a Catholic theologian. It is perilous first of all from the methodological point of view. According to what criteria, indeed, can one identify the presence or influence of St. Thomas in a document such as the postsynodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (March 19, 2016)? I have chosen to limit myself to the explicit references to St. Thomas.[2] But it is clear that this method is reductionistic, for it leaves in the shadows everything in the document that springs from the profound fertilization of general Catholic culture and magisterial teaching that has transpired through many centuries of symbiotic activity with Thomism.

This exercise is additionally and particularly perilous from the point of view of its ends. Indeed, three temptations lie in wait for the Thomist theologian presented with a pontifical text. The first, the mildest, is the effect of a professional deformation on the part of the historian of doctrine. It consists in evaluating the interpretation and use of Thomistic texts by

[1] This article's French original was translated by Dominic M. Langevin, O.P.

[2] I am using "explicit reference" for two possibilities: (1) any quotation, short or long, indicated by quotation marks, coming from a text of St. Thomas, and accompanied by a reference to the source text; and (2) any explicit referral to a passage in a work of St. Thomas.

the Magisterium from the sole point of view of the historical-critical method. Now, while it is undeniable that a magisterial document should show itself attentive to the demands of an exact, scientific exegesis of texts, its end is not to recreate Thomistic doctrines in their most perfect or pristine form. Its purpose is rather to draw upon certain of these doctrines in order to represent the teaching of the Word of God for the benefit of the life and holiness of the Christian people.

The second temptation is to judge the content of a pontifical document in the light of Thomism, that is to say, according to its conformity or not to the teaching of St. Thomas. In a very un-Thomist way, this ignores the fact that a theologian's authority—no matter how great it may be—does not lie at the same level as the Magisterium's authority, for theology receives its object from the Tradition as the Magisterium teaches it. Nevertheless, if the Magisterium has the authority to discern and "declare" the Tradition, it does not create the Tradition *ex nihilo*. The Tradition has a preceding, intrinsic objectivity. If one can use a comparison taken from Aristotelian philosophy of nature, the Magisterium gives the Tradition its form and makes of it a living Tradition, the norm for the faith of today's believers. But the Magisterium informs a matter that is not a pure potentiality, malleable according to its own will, but rather a matter that already presents dispositions such that it is not apt to welcome just any form. The Magisterium cannot simply claim, as is attributed to Pius IX, "I am the Tradition." The logic of Tradition is thus bipolar: it is necessary to discern what truly constitutes the Tradition by the light of the current Magisterium, but it is also necessary to interpret the teaching of the current Magisterium according to the data of the Tradition. Now, the theology of St. Thomas as a scientific elaboration of the Tradition, an elaboration whose high worth has been recognized by the Church herself, is an important witness of this Tradition. Conformity to the teaching of St. Thomas is therefore not without importance when one tries, as one should, to interpret the teaching of the Magisterium by the light of the Tradition. Such conformity is a criterion, among others, that allows one to test and confirm continuity within the living Tradition of the Church.

The third temptation for Thomists falls under the banner of ecclesiastical sociology. It consists in reading the texts of the Magisterium while "counting points," that is to say, searching within the uses that the current Magisterium makes of the texts and theses of the master from Aquino for a confirmation of his theological authority. Related to this temptation is one found among other persons—interested very little in Thomism but aware of his authority in the Church—a temptation, also entirely "political," of paradoxically using this authority in order to fool others about their discontinuous reading of pontifical teachings. In placing apparent "novelties" under the patronage of that paragon of orthodoxy, St. Thomas, they think that they can protect themselves against the reproach of promoting a hermeneutic of rupture.

I will attempt to avoid these various temptations by holding to a very limited objective: to identify and analyze the Thomist doctrines referred to explicitly by *Amoris Laetitia* in order to receive them as an invitation to deepen, as a theologian, those aspects of St. Thomas's thought that seem to possess today for the Magisterium a particular relevance for the life of the Church.

I have therefore identified within *Amoris Laetitia* eighteen explicit references to St. Thomas Aquinas.

	Location in *Amoris Laetitia*	Kind of reference	Source text	Theme
1	Chap. 4, para. 99	Brief quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (108)	*STh* II-II, q. 114, a. 2, ad 1	The virtue of affability
2	Chap. 4, para. 102	Brief quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (110)	*STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 2	Generosity within charity
3	Chap. 4, para. 102	Brief quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (111)	*STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 1	Generosity within charity
4	Chap. 4, para. 120	Citation in a footnote (115)	*STh* I, q. 20, a. 1, ad 3	The unitive nature of love

5	Chap. 4, para. 120	Brief quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (116)	*STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 2	Love as affective union
6	Chap. 4, para. 123	Brief quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (122)	*ScG* III, c. 123	Conjugal love as the highest friendship
7	Chap. 4, para. 126	Paraphrase in the main text with citation in a footnote (127)	*STh* I-II, q. 31, a. 3, ad 3	Joy as an expansion of the heart
8	Chap. 4, para. 127	Brief quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (129)	*STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 3	The price of the loved person
9	Chap. 4, para. 134	Quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (135)	*STh*, II-II, q. 24, a. 7	The infinite increase of charity
10	Chap. 4, para. 145	Citation in a footnote (140)	*STh* I-II, q. 24, a. 1	The moral neutrality of the passions
11	Chap. 4, para. 148	Citation in a footnote (144)	*STh* I-II, q. 32, a. 7	Pleasure
12	Chap. 4, para. 148	Latin quotation and citation in a footnote (145)	*STh* II-II, q. 153, a. 2, ad 2	The worth of conjugal sexual pleasure
13	Chap. 4, para. 162	Citation in a footnote (172)	*STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 1	Generosity within charity
14	Chap. 8, para. 301	Paraphrase in the main text with citation in a footnote (341)	*STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 3, ad 2	Difficulty in exercising an infused virtue
15	Chap. 8, para. 301	Citation in a footnote (341)	*De Malo*, q. 2, a. 2	Difficulty in exercising an infused virtue (?)
16	Chap. 8, para. 301	Quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (342)	*STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 3, ad 3	Difficulty in exercising an infused virtue
17	Chap. 8, para. 304	Quotation in the main text with citation in a footnote (347)	*STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 4	Action deals with contingent realities
18	Chap. 8, para. 304	Quotation in a footnote (348)	VI *Nic. Ethic.* lect. 6	Norms and practical discernment

Eleven of the explicit references are "quotations" of varied length (from two or three words to four or five lines). Eight of these quotations appear in the main text and three in the footnotes. To these quotations must be added seven cross-references. These eighteen explicit references concern a total of twelve paragraphs in the apostolic exhortation (out of 325), but they are concentrated in two chapters: chapter 4, entitled "Love in Marriage" (thirteen references, or almost three-quarters), and chapter 8, entitled "Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness" (five references). They draw especially upon the *Summa theologiae* (fifteen references), but three other texts of the Thomistic corpus are also called upon: the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the *Sententia libri Ethicorum* (*Commentary on the "Nicomachean Ethics"*), and the *Quaestiones disputatae De malo*.

The texts of Saint Thomas to which *Amoris Laetitia* makes reference come especially from the treatise on the passions in the *Prima secundae* (four references) and the treatise on charity in the *Secunda secundae* (five references). In the light of this survey of the material, one can already identify the three Thomist themes that are drawn upon in the teaching of *Amoris Laetitia* and that will constitute the three parts of this article. The first, the most original, is the theme of the passions, whose importance for anthropology as well as moral theology is strongly emphasized by *Amoris Laetitia*. The second is the analysis of love in its different realizations, from sensible passion to the theological virtue of charity. One can already find several references to the Thomist psychology of love in the preceding apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, which also mentions the third Thomist theme that emerges from *Amoris Laetitia*: the necessity of taking account of subjective conditionings in the moral evaluation of a human act in view of a just discernment.

I. THE PASSIONS

In the presentation of the apostolic exhortation to the press that he gave on April 8, 2016, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn rightly drew attention to the theme of the passions.

I think it is important to indicate one aspect: Pope Francis speaks here, with rare clarity, of the role of the *passiones*, passions, emotion, eros and sexuality in married and family life. It is not by chance that Pope Francis reconnects here with St. Thomas Aquinas, who attributes an important role to the passions, while modern society, often puritanical, has discredited or neglected them.[3]

Indeed, in a section entitled "The World of Emotions" (143-46), *Amoris Laetitia* highlights the decisive role of the passions within human existence and especially within the relationships that constitute marriage and family life.

Desires, feelings, emotions, what the ancients called "the passions," all have an important place in married life. . . . It is characteristic of all living beings to reach out to other things, and this tendency always has basic affective signs: pleasure or pain, joy or sadness, tenderness or fear. They ground the most elementary psychological activity. Human beings live on this earth, and all that they do and seek is fraught with passion. (143)[4]

Paragraph 144 underlines the extent to which the Lord Jesus himself, within the truth of his humanity, assumed this "passionate" dimension of the human condition. Saint Thomas is then explicitly referenced in paragraph 145 for his Aristotelian thesis concerning the moral neutrality of the passions, opposed to the Stoic thesis that holds that every passion is in itself morally disordered.[5]

Experiencing an emotion is not, in itself, morally good or evil [footnote 140 here refers to *STh* I-II, q. 24, a. 1]. The stirring of desire or repugnance is neither sinful nor blameworthy. What is morally good or evil is what we do on the basis of, or under the influence of, a given passion. (145)

[3] English translation by the Holy See Press Office in its "Bollettino" of April 8, 2016, "Conferenza Stampa per la presentazione dell'Esortazione Apostolica post-sinodale del Santo Padre Francesco *Amoris laetitia*, sull'amore nella famiglia" (https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2016/04/08/0241/00531.html) . (Trans.: One correction has been made via recourse to the original Italian.)

[4] Translations of *Amoris laetitia* (*AL*) are from the translation on the Vatican website (https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/ documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf).

[5] See *STh* I-II, q. 24, a. 2; III, q. 15; Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, n.f., 61 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002).

Along the line of this integration of the passions within an anthropology and an ethic that are fully human, *Amoris Laetitia* highlights "the erotic dimension of love" (150-52), since conjugal love has the vocation of uniting synthetically, while also arranging in a hierarchy, the different aspects of the affective life of the spouses: sensuality, feeling, and will. Within this context, it is understandable why, in paragraph 148, *Amoris Laetitia* makes reference to question 153 of the *Secunda secundae* (*STh* II-II, q. 153, a. 2, ad 2), where St. Thomas—in a statement that was not routine in the general context of medieval theology—teaches that the sexual act between spouses may be without sin (and even meritorious) since sexual pleasure experienced within the fully human relational context of marriage does not in any way contradict virtue: "the exceeding pleasure attaching to a venereal act directed according to reason, is not opposed to the mean of virtue."[6] Nonetheless, in the same paragraph 148, another reference to St. Thomas draws attention to how an excess harms pleasure itself. In question 32 of the *Prima secundae* (*STh* I-II, q. 32, a. 7), a question consecrated to the causes of pleasure, St. Thomas explains that likeness—even though in itself it is a cause of pleasure—can accidentally corrupt the proper good of the subject. For example, even though food may be a source of pleasure for a person due to the fact that it is consistent with the demands of that person's bodily life, an excess of food can corrupt the body's good and consequently destroy the pleasure of eating.

Joined to this attention to the "passionate" or incarnate dimension of human relations, there is the need—one central to the spirituality of Pope Francis—of incarnating love in gestures and attitudes imbued with tenderness. The "passions" therefore have the vocation of giving flesh to moral forms of acting. The very first reference to St. Thomas in *Amoris Laetitia*, found in paragraph 99, concerns precisely the social virtue of affability

[6] "Abundantia delectationis quae est in actu venereo secundum rationem ordinato, non contrariatur medio virtutis." Quotations from the Latin of the *Summa* are taken from the Leonine edition. English translations come from *Summa theologica*, 3 vol., trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger, 1947-48).

(*amicitia seu affabilitas*), which St. Thomas treats in question 114 of the *Secunda secundae* as a virtue annexed to justice. In article 2, response to the first objection, of this question, St. Thomas in fact draws attention to how—insofar as pleasure, exactly like truth, is necessary for social life—there is a moral duty to procure pleasure and joy for others within social relationships rather than to sadden them through a crabby attitude.

II. Love

For St. Thomas, love is the source of the passions; it is found at the root of all of our other affective movements.[7] Chapter 4 of *Amoris Laetitia*, consecrated to "love in marriage," could therefore only profit from the reflections on love and friendship (e.g., its nature, causes, effects) that St. Thomas develops with great psychological finesse both in the treatise on the passions and in his study on charity considered as a form of supernatural friendship.[8] In fact, in paragraph 123, *Amoris Laetitia* refers to *Summa contra Gentiles*, book 3, chapter 123, within which St. Thomas, in order to justify the indissolubility of marriage, assembles a whole series of arguments (as he has the custom of doing in the *Summa contra Gentiles*). One of these arguments asserts that the conjugal bond is "the highest of friendships." Saint Thomas explains that the man and woman "are united not only in the act of fleshly union, which produces a certain gentle association even among beasts, but also in the partnership of the whole range of domestic activity (conversatio)."[9] Now, "the greater that friendship is, the more solid and long-lasting will it be." Therefore, the highest form of friendship necessarily must also be the longest lasting.

The reflections of St. Thomas on love and friendship are thus one of the sources that enliven the meditation of *Amoris*

[7] See, for example, *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 6.

[8] *STh* I-II, qq. 26-28; and II-II, qq. 23-27.

[9] English translations of *ScG* III are from *Summa contra Gentiles*, *Book 3*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke, 2 vols. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

Laetitia on conjugal love. Love is presented as a "unitive force" (*vis unitiva*), with reference being made to Pseudo-Dionysius and St. Thomas (*AL* 120, n. 115). Conjugal love is, in fact, a "*unio secundum affectum*" (*AL* 120), of the sort that it is by itself a source of unity between the spouses. Already in *Evangelii Gaudium*, the same reference was given to underline how, in love, the other constitutes but one with oneself.[10]

The reflections of St. Thomas on the love of friendship, adopted by the apostolic exhortation, highlight some of its remarkable characteristics. In question 26, article 3 of the *Prima secundae*, St. Thomas sets out to clarify the nuances of the diverse vocabulary of love, such as *amor*, *dilectio*, and *caritas*. With respect to *caritas*, which he connects etymologically with *carus* (precious), he indicates that one of the characteristics of love is to "exalt" the loved person in the sense that the lover recognizes the price, the value, of the beloved. "The love of friendship is called 'charity' when it perceives and esteems the 'great worth' of another person" (*AL* 127). This text of Aquinas was already quoted in *Evangelii Gaudium* in order to affirm, against any ideological instrumentalization of the option for the poor, that authentic love for the poor man is recognizable to the extent that one ties it to that man's very person.[11] In *Amoris Laetitia*, this same text serves, from an analogous perspective, to oppose authentic love against various forms of instrumentalizing another.

Amoris Laetitia also refers two times to a single text of St. Thomas in order to underline another characteristic of the love of friendship: the primacy, from a certain point of view, of its active, self-offering dimension over its passive, receptive dimension (*AL* 102 and 162). In question 27, article 1 of the *Secunda secundae*, St. Thomas explains that charity consists more in

[10] Pope Francis, apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* 199, n. 166.

[11] Ibid. 199, n. 168: "The poor person, when loved, 'is esteemed as of great value' (*STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 3), and this is what makes the authentic option for the poor differ from any other ideology, from any attempt to exploit the poor for one's own personal or political interest." (Translation taken from the Vatican web site: https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf.)

loving than in being loved. The point is illustrated by an example taken from the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle and reused by *Amoris Laetitia*: a mother who accepts to confide her infant to a wet nurse shows by this very fact that she is ready, through love (i.e., for the good of her infant), to renounce, *redamatio*, the return love that she would have the right to expect via the presence of her child. Pope Francis applies the principle to the wife who dedicates herself to her sick husband (*AL* 162), and he shows how this demand of love finds its source and realization in the mystery of Jesus, who gives his life for his friends.[12]

A third remarkable characteristic of the love of friendship, at least under the supernatural form that it assumes as charity, is its capacity to grow to infinity, as St. Thomas explains in question 24, article 7 of the *Secunda secundae*. Here on earth, there are no limits to growth in charity, participation in the infinite love that is the Holy Spirit. *Amoris Laetitia* 134 applies this theme to conjugal love, which should always be developing. Conjugal love entails a love that is properly human, and because of this it cannot possibly always develop except by a distant analogy. But, insofar as conjugal love is informed by charity, it participates to some degree in this indefinite growth.

Finally, in a document entitled *Amoris Laetitia*, it was fitting to invoke St. Thomas in its etymology of *laetitia* (entirely Isidorian but suggestive) via question 31 of the *Prima secundae* (*STh* I-II, q. 31, a. 3, ad 3). *Laetitia* (joy) comes from *latitia* (breadth) since one of the effects of *delectatio* is to expand the heart (*AL* 126).

III. Moral Discernment

Chapter 8, which is at the center of the controversies that surround the reception of the apostolic exhortation, refers five

[12] *AL* 102: "Saint Thomas Aquinas explains that 'it is more proper to charity to desire to love than to desire to be loved'; indeed, 'mothers, who are those who love the most, seek to love more than to be loved.' Consequently, love can transcend and overflow the demands of justice, 'expecting nothing in return' (*Lk* 6:35), and the greatest of loves can lead to 'laying down one's life' for another (cf. *Jn* 15:13)."

times in two paragraphs (301 and 304) to the Common Doctor in order to introduce two fundamental theses of his teaching concerning a human act and its moral evaluation. The first thesis concerns the eminently concrete character of all human action. The action of a human person is localized within the concrete, which is marked by singularity and a certain contingency, of a sort that general moral norms do not suffice for regulating the action. The second thesis is that it is necessary to take account of subjective conditionings in the moral evaluation of an act. Let us begin with this second point.

A) Taking Account of Subjective Factors in Moral Evaluation

Simplifying matters to an extreme, one can say that St. Thomas knew, in his time, how to bring about a balanced synthesis between the objective aspect and the subjective dimension in the evaluation of the concrete, moral action of a person, a synthesis that passed into the common teaching of the Church. The humanism of the twelfth century, which, particularly with Peter Abelard, rediscovered the place of subjectivity, understood that the moral action of a person could not be evaluated solely from the exterior, that is to say, according to its "material" conformity (or lack thereof) to a norm. But the danger—which Abelard did not perhaps always avoid—was to reduce the norm of morality solely to subjective intention.[13] As for St. Thomas, he wished to uphold the subjective factor while also recognizing the determinative place of the objective truth of the act.

From a strict Thomist point of view, therefore, it is entirely legitimate to take account "in pastoral discernment" (and already in moral theology) of "mitigating factors," as does *Amoris Laetitia* in paragraphs 301-3. The voluntary character—and thus the imputability—of an action can be extremely

[13] See Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P., *L'Éveil de la conscience dans la civilisation médiévale*, Conférence Albert-le-Grand 1968 (Montreal: Institut d'Études Médiévales; Paris: Vrin, 1969); and Theo G. Belmans, O. Praem., *Le sens objectif de l'agir humain: Pour relire la morale conjugale de Saint Thomas*, Studi Tomistici 8 (Vatican City State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1980), chap. 2 ("La doctrine d'Abélard").

diminished by various factors that moralists traditionally designate "enemies of the voluntary" (e.g., violence, ignorance, fear). From this accounting for mitigating circumstances, *Amoris Laetitia* believes that it is possible to deduce that "it can no longer simply be said that all those in any 'irregular' situation are living in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of sanctifying grace" (*AL* 301). To support this thesis, the exhortation envisages two cases that, from a Thomist perspective, prove to be rather different from each other. Mitigating circumstances, which limit the voluntary and thus the moral responsibility of someone who performs an objectively bad act, can in the first case be pure and simple ignorance of the norm or just the intellectual difficulty (sometimes considerable) of assimilating this norm due to an unfavorable sociocultural context that spontaneously induces ways of thinking that are objectively contrary to moral truth. But *Amoris Laetitia* adds a second case, that of a person who, even though knowing the norm, can "be in a concrete situation which does not allow him or her to act differently [meaning: to act otherwise than by contravening the norm] and decide otherwise without further sin" (*AL* 301). This is a question no longer of a factor that limits the voluntary or the subjective capacity to decide (which we ordinarily understand as a mitigating circumstance) but of a situation that limits the "objective" choice and that forces the person to choose, between two (moral) evils, the evil that seems to him to be the lesser. Thus, this situation rather resembles what St. Thomas calls *perplexitas* (a moral dilemma). A person is placed in conditions such that it seems—no matter what he does or abstains from doing—that he cannot avoid sin. Now, on this point, St. Thomas seems rather to judge that there cannot exist such a "true" (*simpliciter*) moral dilemma that would oblige a person to do an objectively evil act or, as the saying goes, to choose the lesser evil. Or rather, the dilemma exists, but it is caused by an earlier framework of sin that the person can and ought to renounce.[14]

[14] See St. Thomas Aquinas, II *Sent.*, d. 39, q. 3, a. 3, ad 5: "Simply, no one is in a dilemma [*perplexus*] absolutely speaking; but for a man in a certain place, it is not

In order to support the existence of "'factors . . . which limit the ability to make a decision'" (*AL* 301), *Amoris Laetitia* invokes a thesis of St. Thomas that had already been featured in *Evangelii Gaudium* 171:[15]

Saint Thomas Aquinas himself recognized that someone may possess grace and charity, yet not be able to exercise any one of the virtues well; in other words,

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absurd that, where he is standing, he will be somewhat in a dilemma; for, standing there with a bad intention, whether he does the act that he ought to do according to precept or whether he does not so act, sin is incurred; similarly, even standing there with an erroneous conscience, whatever he may do, sin is not avoided. But man can lay aside an erroneous conscience just as he can lay aside a bad intention; and thus, simply, no one is in a dilemma." See also M. V. Dougherty, *Moral Dilemmas in Medieval Thought: From Gratian to Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). According to Dougherty's analysis, St. Thomas thinks that there indeed exist moral dilemmas but that they are all relative (*secundum quid*). Absolutely speaking, every case of a dilemma is, in the final analysis, the consequence of an earlier action that involves a certain culpability. The Thomist tradition considers therefore that no moral dilemma is legitimately unsolvable, such that a person is never constrained to choose (the lesser) evil. It is clear that the objective complexity of the situation, the fear of consequences, etc., can have an impact on the subjective perception of what concretely should be done. The person may be incapable of seeing how concretely to escape from the dilemma, which could indirectly limit the voluntary character of his evil action. Within the context of *Amoris laetitia* 301, it seems that what is being envisaged is the existence of a moral dilemma that is (objectively?) unsolvable in the case of the "divorced and remarried." If they renounce properly conjugal acts (which are objectively adulterous), they would destroy the psychological, affective balance of their "new family," which would constitute an injustice with respect to children born of this common-law union. They would thus be constrained to choose the lesser evil. Among other difficulties, this reasoning seems to hold as certain that it is impossible for the "divorced and remarried," even with the grace of God, to live in continence in a humanly balanced way.

[15] *Evangelii Gaudium* 171: "Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God's love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives. But this always demands the patience of one who knows full well what Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us: that anyone can have grace and charity, and yet falter in the exercise of the virtues because of persistent 'contrary inclinations' (*STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 3, ad 2). In other words, the organic unity of the virtues always and necessarily exists *in habitu*, even though forms of conditioning can hinder the operations of those virtuous habits. Hence the need for 'a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery.' Reaching a level of maturity where individuals can make truly free and responsible decisions calls for much time and patience."

although someone may possess all the infused moral virtues, he does not clearly manifest the existence of one of them, because the outward practice of that virtue is rendered difficult: “Certain saints are said not to possess certain virtues, in so far as they experience difficulty in the acts of those virtues, even though they have the habits of all the virtues.” (*AL* 301)

Amoris Laetitia, as did previously *Evangelii Gaudium*, explicitly refers to question 65 of the *Prima secundae* (*STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 3, ad 2), in the *Summa*’s treatise on the virtues, and more curiously, to question 2, article 2 of the disputed questions *De malo* (“Whether sin consists only in an act of the will”), where, *salvo meliori iudicio*, I have found nothing that directly concerns the problem at hand. Question 65 of the *Prima secundae* is consecrated to the connection between the virtues. In article 3, St. Thomas defends the thesis according to which, because all the virtues are connected in charity, “which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Col 3:14 in the RSV), the person in the state of grace, who therefore possesses charity, cannot but possess all of the moral virtues, if not in second act then at least in first act (i.e., in the state of habitus: *in habitu*). Nonetheless, there is a crucial difference between the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues. The acquired virtues are put in place by the progressive elimination within the subject of dispositions contrary to the virtuous act in such a way that these, over time, disappear. By contrast, the infused virtues can coexist with dispositions contrary to the virtuous act, dispositions inherited from the past life of sin. This renders much more difficult the exercise of virtuous acts. The infused moral virtues therefore do not always have the ease of the acquired virtues. Supposing that a Don Juan has been miraculously touched by grace and justified by it, he would immediately possess the infused virtue of chastity, but it is probable that he would face difficulties in exercising it due to the contrary psychological and even corporeal dispositions that remain etched in him. As *Evangelii Gaudium* 171 well summarizes, “the organic unity of the virtues always and necessarily exists *in habitu*, even though forms of conditioning can hinder the operations of those virtuous habits.” From this we see the necessity of a great patience toward oneself and others in the course of moral growth in the Christian life. One will immediately note that this thesis of St. Thomas in no way signifies that the state of grace can coexist with an *act* that is gravely contrary to a virtue (a mortal sin) but only that it can coexist with a *difficulty* in actively exercising a virtue. The converted alcoholic probably does not experience, at least initially, any pleasure in sipping an orange juice, but through his infused virtue of temperance he does not thereby abstain any less resolutely from getting drunk. Whatever otherwise may be the case concerning the question of a possible coexistence between, on the one hand, the life of grace, and, on the other hand, voluntary acts that objectively are of a gravely sinful nature (such as adulterous sexual relations) but that may not be mortal sins due to subjective conditionings, this is not directly what the thesis of St. Thomas intends to express.

B) General Norms and Concrete Action

In any case, based upon what Pope Francis himself has said, the essential thesis of Aquinas with respect to moral and pastoral discernment is rather the following:

> I earnestly ask that we always recall a teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas and learn to incorporate it in our pastoral discernment: "Although there is necessity in the general principles, the more we descend to matters of detail, the more frequently we encounter defects. . . . In matters of action, truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail, but only as to the general principles; and where there is the same rectitude in matters of detail, it is not equally known to all . . . The principle will be found to fail, according as we descend further into detail (Et hoc tanto magis invenitur deficere, quanto magis ad particularia descenditur)." (*AL* 304)

Amoris Laetitia refers here to the very important question 94 of the *Prima secundae*, consecrated to the natural law, and more precisely to article 4, which discusses the unity and universality of the natural law. In this article, St. Thomas begins by elaborating a difference between the object of speculative reason and the object of practical reason. Speculative reason bears upon a necessary object: the (common) principles are necessary, as are the (proper) conclusions. In contrast, practical reason bears on an object (human action) that must fit within a reality marked by contingency. The principles, then, possess a certain necessity, but the more one gets down to the conclusions (i.e., the more one approaches the concrete action, which alone is real), the more "play" and contingency there are.

The determination of the practical truth of an action (*veritas vel rectitudo practica*) must integrate a double "relativity" or contingency: subjective and objective. First of all, the objective truth may not be subjectively perceived, for the moral judgment of the subject can be distorted either (1) by the passion that makes the subject see things as he would like them to be or (2) by bad customs, that is to say, by a sociocultural context marked by "structures of sin" that present objectively erroneous moral comportments as normative or indifferent.

But the objective truth of an action can itself vary, certainly not at the level of the first principles of the natural law but at the level of conclusions or applications, which must integrate concrete circumstances, as St. Thomas illustrates with the classic example of the restitution of a weapon to its ill-intentioned owner. The conclusion thus is not true except in the majority of cases (*ut in pluribus*).[16]

[16] *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 4: "Now the process of reason is from the common to the proper, as stated in *Phys*. i. The speculative reason, however, is differently situated in this matter, from the practical reason. For, since the speculative reason is busied chiefly with necessary things, which cannot be otherwise than they are, its proper conclusions, like the universal principles, contain the truth without fail. The practical reason, on the other hand, is busied with contingent matters, about which human actions are concerned: and consequently, although there is necessity in the general principles, the more we descend to matters of detail, the more frequently we encounter defects. Accordingly then in speculative matters truth is the same in all men, both as to principles and as to conclusions: although the truth is not known to all as regards the conclusions, but only as regards the principles which are called common notions. But in matters of action, truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail, but only as to the general principles: and where there is the same rectitude in matters of detail, it is not equally known to all.

"It is therefore evident that, as regards the general principles whether of speculative or of practical reason, truth or rectitude is the same for all, and is equally known by all. As to the proper conclusions of the speculative reason, the truth is the same for all, but is not equally known to all: thus it is true for all that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles, although it is not known to all. But as to the proper

It is therefore clear that the application of general moral norms to action, which is always contextualized, admits a certain flexibility. The prudent man does not govern his actions by contenting himself with mechanically applying general, common rules. Such is the important Thomist thesis that *Amoris Laetitia* has chosen to retain.[17] In contrast, *Amoris Laetitia*

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conclusions of the practical reason, neither is the truth or rectitude the same for all, nor, where it is the same, is it equally known by all. Thus it is right and true for all to act according to reason: and from this principle it follows as a proper conclusion, that goods entrusted to another should be restored to their owner. Now this is true for the majority of cases: but it may happen in a particular case that it would be injurious, and therefore unreasonable, to restore goods held in trust; for instance, if they are claimed for the purpose of fighting against one's country. And this principle will be found to fail the more, according as we descend further into detail, e.g., if one were to say that goods held in trust should be restored with such and such a guarantee, or in such and such a way; because the greater the number of conditions added, the greater the number of ways in which the principle may fail, so that it be not right to restore or not to restore.

"Consequently we must say that the natural law, as to general principles, is the same for all, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge. But as to certain matters of detail, which are conclusions, as it were, of those general principles, it is the same for all in the majority of cases, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge; and yet in some few cases it may fail, both as to rectitude, by reason of certain obstacles (just as natures subject to generation and corruption fail in some few cases on account of some obstacle), and as to knowledge, since in some the reason is perverted by passion, or evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature; thus formerly, theft, although it is expressly contrary to the natural law, was not considered wrong among the Germans, as Julius Caesar relates (*De Bello Gall*. vi)."

[17] It is curious that the apostolic exhortation does not allude to the theme of epikeia or equity (*aequitas*). See *STh* II-II, q. 120; and V *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 16 (Leonine ed., vol. 47/2: 321-25). Epikeia is the virtue that renders a person apt to choose that which is just even when the just thing in question is contrary to the letter of a law that cannot take into account all circumstances. But this "equitable" transgression of a particular law is always made with reference to a higher law: the intention of the legislator and, in the final analysis, the intention of God manifested in the natural law (which is why the natural law is never "dispensable" in its first principles). See V *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 16 (Leonine ed., 47/2:323): "It is true that what is equitable is one kind of just thing and, however, is better than another just thing. For, as was noted before, the justice which citizens practice is divided into natural and legal. However, what is equitable is better than what is legally just, but is contained under the naturally just. Consequently, it is not said to be better than the just thing as if it were some other kind of norm distinct from the genus of just things" (translation modified from *Commentary on the "Nicomachean Ethics*," 2 vol., trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P. [Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964]; the

leaves in the shadows the distinction that, within this context, St. Thomas makes between positive norms and negative norms, a distinction that is at the heart of the teaching of *Veritatis Splendor* on intrinsically evil acts.[18] Indeed, St. Thomas teaches several times that the positive precepts (for example, "Honor your father and your mother") can be realized in multiple ways as long as the subject keeps in mind the intention of the end. They do not oblige always and in every circumstance (*semper et ad semper*). In contrast, the negative precepts (for example, "You shall not kill [the innocent]," or "You shall not commit adultery") oblige always and in all circumstances, without any exception, because the prohibited act is directly opposed to the end.

While the negative precepts of the Law forbid sinful acts, the positive precepts inculcate acts of virtue. Now sinful acts are evil in themselves, and cannot become good, no matter how, or when, or where, they are done, because of their very nature they are connected with an evil end . . . wherefore negative precepts bind always and for all times [*semper et ad semper*]. On the other hand, acts of virtue must not be done anyhow, but by observing the due

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translation has been slightly edited and brought into greater accord with the newer Leonine edition of the Latin text).

[18] The distinction between positive norms and negative norms plays a fundamental role in the teaching of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. See paragraph 52: "The *negative precepts* of the natural law are universally valid. They oblige each and every individual, always and in every circumstance. It is a matter of prohibitions which forbid a given action *semper et pro semper*, without exception, because the choice of this kind of behaviour is in no case compatible with the goodness of the will of the acting person, with his vocation to life with God and to communion with his neighbour. It is prohibited—to everyone and in every case—to violate these precepts. They oblige everyone, regardless of the cost, never to offend in anyone, beginning with oneself, the personal dignity common to all." See also paragraph 67: "In the case of the positive moral precepts, prudence always has the task of verifying that they apply in a specific situation, for example, in view of other duties which may be more important or urgent. But the negative moral precepts, those prohibiting certain concrete actions or kinds of behaviour as intrinsically evil, do not allow for any legitimate exception. They do not leave room, in any morally acceptable way, for the 'creativity' of any contrary determination whatsoever. Once the moral species of an action prohibited by a universal rule is concretely recognized, the only morally good act is that of obeying the moral law and of refraining from the action which it forbids" (translation from the Vatican web site: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html).

circumstances, which are requisite in order that an act be virtuous; namely, that it be done where, when, and how it ought to be done.[19]

[19] *STh* II-II, q. 33, a. 2: "Sicut praecepta negativa legis prohibent actus peccatorum, ita praecepta affirmativa inducunt ad actus virtutum. Actus autem peccatorum sunt secundum se mali, et nullo modo bene fieri possunt, nec aliquo tempore aut loco: quia secundum se sunt coniuncti malo fini, ut dicitur in II *Ethic*. Et ideo praecepta negativa obligant semper et ad semper. Sed actus virtutum non quolibet modo fieri debent, sed observatis debitis circumstantiis quae requiruntur ad hoc quod sit actus virtuosus: ut scilicet fiat ubi debet, et quando debet, et secundum quod debet." See also *De Malo*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 8: "The will of a rational creature is obliged to be subject to God, but this is achieved by affirmative and negative precepts, of which the negative precepts oblige always and on all occasions, and the affirmative precepts oblige always but not on every occasion" ("Uoluntas creature rationalis obligatur ad hoc quod sit subdita Deo, sed hoc fit per precepta affirmatiua et negatiua: quorum negatiua obligant semper et ad semper, affirmatiua uero obligant semper set non ad semper"; translation from *The "De Malo" of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Richard Regan [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 483; the Latin original of *De malo* comes from the Leonine edition, vol. 23 [Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1982]). See also Aquinas's *Super Rom.*, c. 13, lect. 2 (¶ 1052): "[The Apostle] enumerates negative precepts, through which someone is prohibited from inflicting evil on his neighbors. This is the case for two reasons. First, indeed, because negative precepts are more universal, both with respect to times and with respect to persons. Indeed, with respect to times, because negative precepts oblige always and for all times [*semper et ad semper*]. For at no time is there to be stealing or the committing of adultery. However, affirmative precepts oblige always but not for all times, but according to a place and time; for man is not held such that at all times he honor his parents but according to a place and time. Moreover, with respect to persons, because no man is to be harmed, for we are not self-sufficient such that one man can serve all men. Secondly [i.e., why the Apostle enumerates negative precepts], because it is more manifest that, through the love of neighbor, the negative precepts are fulfilled than the affirmative ones" ("Enumerat autem praecepta negativa, per quae aliquis prohibetur malum proximis inferre. Et hoc duplici ratione. Primo quidem, quia praecepta negativa sunt magis universalia, et quantum ad tempora et quantum ad personas. Quantum ad tempora quidem, quia praecepta negativa obligant semper et ad semper. Nullo enim tempore est furandum et adulterandum. Praecepta autem affirmativa obligant quidem semper, sed non ad semper, sed pro loco et tempore; non enim tenetur homo, ut omni tempore honoret parentes, sed pro loco et tempore. Quantum ad personas autem, quia nulli hominum est nocendum, non autem sufficientes sumus, ut unus homo possit omnibus hominibus servire. Secundo quia magis manifestum est quod per dilectionem proximi implentur praecepta negativa quam affirmative"; Latin original in *Super epistolas S. Pauli Lectura*, 8th ed., ed. Raphael Cai, O.P. [Turin: Marietti, 1953]). See also *Super Gal.*, c. 6, lect. 1 (¶ 343): "Some sins consist in commission and some in omission. And the first is more grave than the second, because the former are opposed to negative precepts which bind always and at every moment; whereas the latter, being opposed to affirmative precepts, since they do

The last reference to St. Thomas in *Amoris Laetitia* is found in footnote 348 at the end of this same paragraph 304. In the heart of paragraph 304, after having quoted question 94, article 4 of the *Prima secundae*, we see two points meant to balance each other out: (1) "general rules . . . cannot provide absolutely for all particular situations," and (2) "what is part of a practical discernment in particular circumstances cannot be elevated to the level of a rule." We turn, then, to footnote 348:

In another text, referring to the general knowledge of the rule and the particular knowledge of practical discernment, Saint Thomas states that "if only one of the two is present, it is preferable that it be the knowledge of the particular reality, which is closer to the act": *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, VI, 6 (ed. Leonina, t. XLVII, 354).

It is important to interpret correctly this remark of St. Thomas. In no way is it a question of giving preference to the exception to the norm, as opposed to the norm itself. In reality, St. Thomas does not compare here two norms but two types of knowledge of a norm: (1) general, "abstract" knowledge of the one, universal norm and (2) the proper knowledge of a particular application of this norm in the concrete. This particular knowledge implicitly contains the general norm, in such a way that he who possesses it can get by without explicit knowledge of the general norm. The example given by St. Thomas, which comes directly from Aristotle,[20] allows us to understand this better:

Action has to do with singulars. Hence it is that certain people not possessing the knowledge of universals are more effective about some particulars [i.e., better qualified for action] than those who have universal knowledge, from the fact that they are expert in other particulars. Thus if a doctor knows that

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not bind one at every moment, it cannot be known definitely when they do bind" ("Quaedam peccata consistunt in transgressione, quaedam vero in omissione. Graviora autem sunt prima secundis: quia illa opponuntur praeceptis negativis, quae obligant semper et ad semper, haec vero opponuntur praeceptis affirmativis quae cum non obligent ad semper, non potest sciri determinate quando obligant"; English translation in *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P. [Albany, N.Y.: Magi, 1966], 188).

[20] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7.1141b14-20.

light meats are easily digestible and healthful but does not know which meats are light, he cannot help people to get well. But the man who knows that the flesh of fowls is light and healthful is better able to effect a cure. Since then prudence is reason concerning an action, the prudent person must have a knowledge of both kinds, viz., universals and particulars. But if it is possible for him to have only one kind, he ought rather to have the latter, i.e., the knowledge of particulars that are closer to operation.[21]

The person who only possesses particular knowledge does not in any way contradict the general principle that light meats are easy to digest and thus procure health. But he knows by experience that the flesh of fowls procures health without necessarily knowing that this property results from the fact that fowl is a meat easy to digest.

Thus, irrespective of the question whether *Amoris Laetitia* can be labeled "Thomistic," it is clear that this document opportunely directs our attention to several teachings of St. Thomas that would merit nowadays to be better emphasized. The profound anthropological realism and great finesse of the psychological analysis that characterizes St. Thomas's approach to the human passions and especially to love, and the way in which for the evaluation of a concrete act, he puts together the objectivity of a norm, the consideration of concrete details, and the accounting for subjective factors—all of this most definitely constitutes a major resource for contemporary theological reflection and the pastoral practice that results from it.

[21] VI *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 6 (Leonine ed., 47/2:354): "Actio autem est circa singularia. Et inde est quod quidam non habentes scientiam universalium sunt magis activi circa aliqua particularia quam illi qui habent universalem scientiam, eo quod sunt in aliis particularibus experti. Puta, si aliquis medicus sciat quod carnes leves sunt bene digestibiles et sanae, ignoret autem quales carnes sint leves, non poterit facere sanitatem; sed ille qui scit quod carnes volatilium sunt leves et sanae, magis poterit sanare. Quia igitur prudentia est ratio activa, oportet quod prudens habeat utramque notitiam, scilicet et universalium et particularium; vel, si alteram solum contingat ipsum habere, magis debet habere hanc, scilicet notitiam particularium, quae sunt propinquiora operationi."

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PIERRE BENOIT'S "ECCLESIAL INSPIRATION": A THOMISTIC NOTION AT THE HEART OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY DEBATES ON BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

PAUL M. ROGERS

University of Cambridge
Cambridge, United Kingdom

THE EDITORS OF THE 2005 volume *Aquinas on Scripture* identify well the starting point for much of the recent scholarly interest in the scriptural commentaries of Thomas Aquinas, citing the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* (no. 24): "the study of the sacred page . . . is the soul of sacred theology."[1] This crystallization found in *Dei Verbum* has its own history whose roots lie partially in the Magisterium[2] and partially in

[1] *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to His Biblical Commentaries*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum (London: T & T Clark, 2005), xii. Thomas's scriptural commentaries are increasingly being studied and translated (or in some cases retranslated and reprinted). See the Parisian publisher Cerf's annotated French translations of Thomas's biblical commentaries edited by Jean-Éric Stroobant: Ps (1996, 2004²); Rom (1999); 1 Cor (2002); 2 Cor (2005); Gal (2008); Eph (2012); Phil and Col (2015). In English, see the reprinted translation by Fabian Larcher and James Weisheipl of Thomas's *Commentary on John*, 3 vols., with introduction and notes by Daniel Keating and Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 2010). The *Opera Omnia* project of the Aquinas Institute (Lander, Wyoming) is also noteworthy, publishing the Pauline commentaries (2012) along with Matthew and John (2013). In German, see *Thomas von Aquins Kommentar zum Johannesevangelium*, 2 vols., trans. and ed. Paul Weingartner, Michael Ernst, and Wolfgang Schöner (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, 2016).

[2] The official footnote of *Dei Verbum* 24 directs one to confer with ("cf.") two papal encyclicals: Pope Leo XIII's 1893 *Providentissmus Deus* (EB 114 / no. 22 in translation on Vatican web site) and Pope Benedict XV's 1920 *Spiritus Paraclitus* (EB 483 / no. 36 in translation on Vatican web site); EB = *Enchiridion Biblicum: documenta ecclesiastica Sacram Scripturam spectantia*, fourth edition (Rome: A. Arnodo, 1961); English

preconciliar discussions surrounding revelation, tradition, theological method, and biblical studies. In all these discussions, the issue of biblical inspiration was nodal.[3]

The contribution of the French priest-theologian Pierre Benoit, O.P., to the mid-century discussions around biblical inspiration and, in particular, his notion of "ecclesial inspiration" will be shown here to offer a fruitful avenue for appropriating elements of these knotty preconciliar discussions. Known more widely for his biblical scholarship,[4] Benoit came to relocate the term "inspiration" principally in the mystery of the Church through careful attention to (1) Thomas Aquinas's thinking on prophecy and (2) the mid-century problematic surrounding biblical inspiration. In a recent study, Juan Jesús García Morales has highlighted how preconciliar discussions surrounding theories of inspiration can be read in the light of "convergences" towards *Dei Verbum*.[5] Benoit's theology, he argues,

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translations on w2.vatican.va accessed on April 15, 2016. Critical also for the twentieth-century renewal in Roman Catholic biblical studies was Pope Pius XII's *Divino afflante spiritu* (1943).

[3] For an overview of these preconciliar discussions, see James T. Burtchaell, *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration since 1810: A Review and Critique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 230-78; Denis Farkasfalvy, *Inspiration and Interpretation: A Theological Introduction to Sacred Scripture* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 2010), 153-202. Important also were discussions between Catholic and Protestant theologians, especially in biblical studies where Protestants had led in employing historical criticism; see Robert Gnuse, *The Authority of the Bible: Theories of Inspiration, Revelation and the Canon of Scripture* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985). For renewed interest in biblical inspiration among theologians with a Reformed background, see John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[4] See Benoit's official (but somewhat unbalanced) *École biblique* biography by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Pierre Benoit, O.P." (hereafter, "Biography"), in *The École biblique and the New Testament: A Century of Scholarship (1890-1990)*, with a contribution by Justin Taylor (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 29-69, 162-178 for Benoit's bibliography. Alongside his scholarly work, Benoit served as a theological advisor at the closing sessions of the Second Vatican Council, contributing to its documents on divine revelation (*Dei Verbum*), on the Church in the world (*Gaudium et Spes*), and on the relationship to non-Christians (*Nostra Aetate*).

[5] Juan Jesús García Morales, *La inspiración bíblica a la luz del principio católico de la tradición: Convergencias entre la "Dei Verbum" y la Teología de P. Benoit, O.P.*, Tesi Gregoriana Teologia 190 (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2012). Morales's

represents one such convergence, evidenced in the way his preconciliar analyses of inspiration were refashioned into something called a "charism of Tradition." Morales's key methodlogical term, "convergences" (in juxtaposition—but not categorically opposed—to individual "necessary arguments"), reflects his interest in integrating conciliar and postconciliar theological discussions surrounding biblical inspiration and the theology of tradition, rather than in isolating separate strands, whether theoretical or historical. This essay aims partially to extend Morales's method of integration by asking whether—and if so, in what way—Benoit's notion of "ecclesial inspiration" emerged over the course of his engagement with Thomas Aquinas's texts and thought.

Among his contemporary specialists in the field of the theology of biblical inspiration, Benoit's use of "ecclesial inspiration" trod a fine line. On the one hand, he was challenging the terminological supremacy of "biblical inspiration" defended by biblicists like Luis Alonso Schökel, who, while sympathetic to Benoit's intuitions, was uneasy about the application of "inspiration" outside of scriptural and literary contexts;[6] on the other hand, "ecclesial inspiration" boldly brought other important—but often contentious—loci of the theology of biblical inspiration such as the "fuller sense" (*sensus plenior*) into closer relationship with the histories of the biblical canon and of doctrinal development in the Church. Pierre Grelot thought Benoit's extension of the *sensus plenior* to the Church in history downplayed too much the pre-eminence of the "inspired" biblical author(s) and compromised a coherent theory of the *sensus plenior* by confusing it with later

principal concern is to show how Benoit's thought itself sheds light on *Dei Verbum* and offers the occasion for the author to present his own "synthesis of the elements for a theory of inspiration as a 'charism of the Tradition'" (9). This study has laid the documentary foundations for further study on Benoit and presents a strong case that more attention should be paid to his theology by theologians and historians of Vatican II.

[6] Luis Alonso Schökel, *The Inspired Word*, trans. Francis Martin (London: Herder and Herder, 1965), 22.

developments in theology.[7] Grelot preferred to speak of the Church's "charism," an expression to which Benoit was not opposed, but one which he thought failed to integrate adequately enough the Bible and the subsequent life and history of the Church. During these mid-century debates, Benoit appealed especially to a historical source in the Church's life—the theology of Thomas Aquinas—and proposed a Thomistic take on "analogies of inspiration" to soften terminological rigidity; he also defended (but without proving *a priori*) a deep confidence in the spiritual continuity shared by the biblical authors and future generations in the Church's tradition.

Benoit eventually argued that it was necessary to shift the traditional and almost exclusive association of "inspiration" with "biblical inspiration" towards a broader theology of tradition, where tradition was reconceived as the entire work of the apostolic Church, which established the deposit of revelation, including the biblical canon—a work that was so inspired by the Holy Spirit that even in subsequent periods of the Church revelation was allowed to unfold, develop, and be understood more deeply, especially as a function of continued and progressive attentiveness to the Bible. Benoit termed this postapostolic "prolongation" (*prolongement*) of the apostolic Church's inspiration "ecclesial inspiration."[8] From his initial usage of "ecclesial inspiration" to his subsequent identification of revelation's development in the Church's tradition as the new postconciliar *explanandum*, Benoit remained indebted to his engagement with Thomas's thought, so much so that "ecclesial inspiration" may be called "Thomistic." I will argue that it was Benoit's relating of Scripture and the issue of canonicity to Thomas's theology that led him initially to propose "ecclesial inspiration" as a solution to various problems in biblical exegesis, such as multiple human authorship and the *sensus plenior*. I will present his arguments for the existence of ecclesial inspira-

[7] Pierre Grelot, *Sens chrétien de l'ancien testament*, 2d ed. (Tournai: Desclée, 1962), 452-55.

[8] Pierre Benoit, "Inspiration biblique," in *Catholicisme: Hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, ed. G. Jacquemet (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1963), 5:1710-21, at 1721.

tion and highlight an underdeveloped argument of his that suggested that the principle was latently present in Thomas's theology. Once this link with Thomas is established more clearly, it becomes meaningful to call Benoit's "ecclesial inspiration" "Thomistic." I will conclude by considering briefly how this concept might prove useful for appreciating how Thomas understood Scripture ecclesially. This points to an area that deserves further attention from those interested in using Thomas's biblical commentaries as viable sources for contemporary theology—and even for the contemporary field of the theology of inspiration.[9]

[9] The tendency in scholarship over the last two decades to examine Thomas Aquinas's scriptural commentaries in order to get a better sense of how biblical texts were understood in relation to his vision of theology (*sacra doctrina*) has also become well-established. See *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Exegesis and Speculative Theology*, ed. Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005); *Reading Romans with St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012); *Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas: Hermeneutical Tools, Theological Questions and New Perspectives*, ed. Piotr Roszak and Jörgen Vijgen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015). Monographs include Marc Aillet, *Lire la Bible avec saint Thomas* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1993); Wilhelmus G. B. M. Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God: Place and Function of Sacred Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); Christopher T. Baglow, *"Modus et Forma": A New Approach to the Exegesis of Saint Thomas Aquinas with an Application to the "Lectura super Epistolam ad Ephesios"* (Rome: Editrice pontifico istituto biblico, 2002); Antoine Guggenheim, *Jésus Christ, grand prêtre de l'ancienne et de la nouvelle alliance: Étude théologique et herméneutique du Commentaire de saint Thomas d'Aquin sur l'épître aux hébreux* (Paris: Parole et silence, 2004); Steven Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into His Commentary on Romans 9-11* (New York: Paulist Press, 2008); Leo J. Elders, *Sur les traces de saint Thomas d'Aquin: Étude de ses commentaire bibliques. Thèmes théologiques* (Paris: Parole et silence, 2009); Matthew Levering, *Participatory Exegesis: Towards a Theology of Biblical Interpretation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); ibid., *Paul in the "Summa Theologiae"* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014). Noteworthy for its ecumenical dimension is Charles Raith II, *Aquinas and Calvin on Romans: God's Justification and Our Participation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Addressing medieval exegesis more generally is Gilbert Dahan, *Lire la bible au moyen âge: Essais d'herméneutique médiévale* (Geneva: Droz, 2009).

I. Terminology

Benoit's "ecclesial inspiration" (*inspiration ecclésiale*)—or much rarer "ecclesiastical" (*ecclésiastique*) inspiration—is an expression never employed by Thomas.[10] The following provisional definition will suffice to begin with: ecclesial inspiration is a distinctive type of inspiration whereby God moves the Church collectively through certain of her members to accomplish some act that contributes to its common good through a deepening of its shared faith.

The term "Thomistic" could also be said to be too vague or contested to be useful or illuminating. In a fuller treatment, one

[10] The adjective "ecclesiastical" was usually reserved by Benoit for the Church's official Magisterium and its hierarchical offices. This usage, however, was inconsistent, and he sometimes used "ecclesiastical" and "ecclesial" interchangeably; see the text cited in note 8, above, where he refers approvingly to a type of "ecclesiastical" inspiration where one might have expected him to call it "ecclesial." When modifying "inspiration," this difference ("ecclesial" versus "ecclesiastical") did not substantially alter Benoit's description, and his usage of the two adjectives in this context is synonymous. In other contexts, however, this same terminological difference is resolved less satisfactorily; Benoit sometimes spoke of "ecclesiastical writers" (*écrivains ecclésiastiques*) without clarifying whether he meant either (1) writers who were officially sanctioned by or themselves members of the Church's hierarchy (like bishops) or (2) any Christian writing on a theological topic; see Pierre Benoit, "The Analogies of Inspiration," in *Inspiration and the Bible*, trans. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor and M. Keverne (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 94-115, at 113 (= "Les analogies de l'inspiration," originally delivered at a 1958 international biblical studies congress in Belgium and published as "Les analogies de l'inspiration," in *Sacra Pagina: Miscellanea biblica congressus internationalis de re biblica*, 2 vols., ed. J. Coppens, A. Descamps, and E. Massaux [Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1959], 1:86-99; and reprinted in *Exégèse et théologie* [Paris: Cerf, 1961 (vols. 1-2), 1968 (vol. 3), 1982 (vol. 4)], 3:29). The phrase "écrivains ecclésiastiques" came from an article (cited by Benoit, "Analogies," 113 n. 7) by Gustave Bardy, "L'inspiration des pères de l'église," *Recherches de science religieuse* 40 (1952), 7-26, at 7. Even if "ecclésiastique" in this context extends to any Christian theological writer, it is clear that for Benoit communion with the Church's Magisterium and its judgments is essential; see Pierre Benoit, "Inspiration and Revelation," *Concilium* 10 (1965), 5-13, at 13; "Exégèse et théologie biblique," in *Exégèse et théologie*, 3:1-13, at 13. When this point is understood, the ambiguity of phrases like "ecclesiastical writers" becomes less problematic, since implied in any theological undertaking for Benoit was the guidance of the Magisterium, both positive (contributing to a deeper understanding of faith's deposit) and negative (safeguarding against heresies).

would need to address the complexities surrounding the development of "Thomism" or, perhaps more accurately, "Thomisms" in order get to the heart of the matter. Conscious of these terminological pitfalls but unable to expand on them further here, I use "Thomistic" in this article to describe the dependence of a principle, theory, or methodological outlook on some aspect of Thomas's thought as evidenced in his texts. In particular, the major Thomistic principles at play are "inspiration" and "revelation," along with the general methodlogical outlook of Thomas's *sacra doctrina*.

II. Benoit's Path to "Ecclesial Inspiration"

Benoit's development of the notion of "ecclesial inspiration" was characterized by a deep confidence in Thomas's theology and an acute awareness of the major questions arising from historical biblical criticism and the twentieth-century biblical movement. Benoit had initially entered the mid-century debates surrounding biblical inspiration in the course of a commentary on Thomas Aquinas's questions on prophecy from the *Summa theologiae* (*STh* II-II, qq. 171-78).[11] This commentary contained germinal insights that eventually enabled him to identify a link between Thomas's prophetic inspiration and a revived tradition of ecclesial inspiration.

[11] Paul Synave and Pierre Benoit, *La Prophétie: Somme Théologique, 2a-2ae, Questions 171-181* (Paris: Revue des jeunes, 1947). These mid-twentieth-century debates surrounding biblical inspiration have sometimes been presented more in the manner of historical curiosities; such is the impression given by Jean-Pierre Torrell in his *avant-propos* to *La Prophétie: Somme Théologique, 2a-2ae, Questions 171-181* (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 5-7, *120-*121; this volume is a reprint of the 1947 *La Prophétie*, but with a new introduction and bibliography by Torrell. More recently, interest in biblical inspiration as a topic within systematic theology has re-emerged; see Philip Moller, "What Should They Be Saying about Biblical Inspiration? A Note on the State of the Question," *Theological Studies* 74 (2013): 605-31. Dwelling less on the history of the debates, Moller helpfully outlines and focuses on the content of postconciliar debates surrounding inspiration; his bibliographical notes (nn. 1-8) are useful. See also Denis Farkasfalvy, "How to Renew the Theology of Biblical Inspiration?" *Nova et vetera* 4 (2006): 231-54.

Three periods in the development of Benoit's thinking about ecclesial inspiration will be distinguished: (1) the *Summa* commentary period, (2) the preconciliar and conciliar years, and (3) the postconciliar years. In the first period, Benoit followed closely Thomas's texts about prophetic inspiration; the second saw him engaging more directly the problems of biblical inspiration, canonicity, Scripture's fuller sense, and multiple authorship in the Bible; the third saw him endeavoring to integrate inspiration within a theology of tradition and the development of revelation and doctrine.

Within these periods, two major factors will be identified that led Benoit to posit the existence of ecclesial inspiration. The first stemmed from his evaluation of the theological problems surrounding biblical inspiration and historical critical methodology as they were being debated in the mid-twentieth century. These debates led him to conclude that "ecclesial inspiration" was not just a helpful theological concept, but a necessary one, when faced with the reality of the biblical texts seen in the light of the valid methods of historical criticism.[12] The second factor was the recognition that "ecclesial inspiration" has Thomistic principles, even if Thomas himself never employed the term (something Benoit always readily admitted).

In addition to arguing that these principles are Thomistic, Benoit also held that they have patristic and New Testament foundations, which helped him to clarify the latent presence of "ecclesial inspiration" in Thomas's thought and to identify its source in the apostolic tradition. The apostolic tradition and its inspiration thus became the most important topic in the third period. Benoit thought himself justified in 1961 in proposing "to revive the ancient tradition of 'ecclesiastical' inspiration" in

[12] Benoit had an ongoing concern for methodological questions surrounding various critical methods as applied to the Bible, especially form criticism; see "Reflections sur la *Formgeschichtliche Methode*," in *Exégèse et théologie*, 1:290-311. See M. Labourdette's review of *Exégèse et théologie*, vols. 1-2 in *Revue thomiste* 62 (1962): 114-16, which commended Benoit especially for treating form criticism "*magistralement*" and clarifying its "philosophical presuppositions" (115).

the course of a revised English edition of his 1947 commentary on the *Summa*, as anachronistic as this may have sounded.[13]

In reality, these factors were interrelated in Benoit's career. It is thus somewhat artificial to try to separate them for the sake of providing a neatly delineated account of his historico-conceptual development. The fact is that he never considered the New Testament, the Fathers, or Thomas in complete isolation from each other. His Dominican training in Thomism and his *Summa* commentary were important workshops for his later proposal for analogies of inspiration, out of which "ecclesial inspiration" emerged. Taking each of these periods chronologically will be the most practical way of proceeding, provided our individual treatment of each does not conceal the fact that for Benoit the two factors mentioned above were interrelated and often served to clarify each other.

Benoit was never able to write a *magnum opus* on inspiration, despite his expressed intention to do so;[14] instead, his reflections were spread out over several decades, usually appearing in occasional articles or conference papers, whose aims differed somewhat from the questions we have posed here about ecclesial inspiration.[15] Some of these occasional pieces were rapid exchanges responding to the writings of other theologians; their argumentation was often intricate and sometimes

[13] Pierre Benoit and Paul Synave, *Prophecy and Inspiration: A Commentary on the Summa Theologica, II-II, Questions 171-178*, trans. Avery R. Dulles and Thomas L. Sheridan (New York: Desclee, 1961), 14. This volume was not simply a translation of *La Prophétie*; Benoit used the occasion to add a number of substantial revisions, evidence that he still had interests in Thomas's treatment of prophecy and found it useful to revisit (13-14).

[14] Ibid., 13: the work, which never appeared, was to be "a supplementary volume of *Bible de Jérusalem*."

[15] The occasional character of Benoit's writings presents a challenge to renewing interest in his work today. That he never published a book-length study on inspiration leaves the initial impression that his reflections have loose ends. Still, his major strength lay in his ability to perceive and articulate the need for theology to address the renewed biblical and patristic understandings of inspiration and the Church and to argue for a broader and more integrated sense of "biblical theology," so that it might be conceived as the principle and beginning of "theology"; see "Exégèse et théologie biblique," 12. Benoit's work might be more profitably exploited by fundamental theology before it is by biblical exegesis.

polemical. In these condensed exchanges, Benoit would often treat multiple foundational topics in the course of a single article. Because of this, some attention will be paid to the specific contexts and circumstances of both his writings and those of his interlocutors in order to appreciate his arrival at "ecclesial inspiration."

III. Period One: The *Summa* Commentary

With the premature death in 1937 of his professor of Sacred Scripture at the Saulchoir, Paul Synave, O.P.,[16] Benoit's superiors entrusted to him the task of completing one of his teacher's unfinished projects: a commentary on and translation of Thomas's questions on prophecy, published in 1947.[17] This *Summa* commentary was foundational for Benoit's "ecclesial inspiration" (*inspiration ecclésiale*), especially in his treatment of the social character of inspiration. Benoit saw this social character expressed partially in Thomas's identification of prophecy as a gratuitous grace. The need to explore prophetic inspiration further also became more pronounced through his contact with the problem of ascribing "biblical inspiration" to multiple authors of biblical texts, which had traditionally been thought to be the work of one inspired prophet or scribe. Within this commentary, Benoit began identifying the need to employ "inspiration" analogously, especially when not speaking directly to Thomas's thirteenth-century problematic of prophetic inspiration. This would eventually open the way for him to propose ecclesial inspiration as a type of inspiration distinct from biblical inspiration.

[16] See Murphy-O'Connor, "Biography," 30, 39.

[17] Synave and Benoit, *La Prophétie,* 8. Benoit reported that when he took over the volume Synave had already completed many of the explanatory notes and a translation that only required minor editing and revision. Benoit identified his own notes and clarified that Appendix II was his alone. The choice of Synave—a biblicist—as the initial editor of the volume was decisive for Benoit being chosen to complete it.

A) "La Prophétie": An Ultimate Preference for the "Summa's" Setting

A noteworthy feature of this commentary by Benoit and Synave is its frequent cross-reading of the questions on prophecy from the *Summa theologiae* with Thomas's earlier question on prophecy from the disputed questions *De veritate* (q. 12). The disputed question "On Prophecy" is helpful for understanding Thomas's treatment of the prophetic charism in the more systematic *Summa theologiae*; the two sets of questions overlap extensively and shed light on each other.[18] The major differences can be accounted for by their different contexts and purposes, and by the development of Thomas's own thought on the issue.[19] An awareness of the historical situatedness of Thomas's own thought and of the limitations this brought to transposing prophetic inspiration to biblical inspiration would become an increasingly important feature of Benoit's method. In 1947 Benoit thought it necessary to highlight these limitations in order to avoid certain blind alleys down which others had naïvely gone in trying to map straightforwardly Thomas's account of prophetic inspiration onto biblical inspiration; he insisted that profound transpositions were necessary in order to relate the two fruitfully.[20]

[18] See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Questions disputées sur la vérité: Question XII, La prophétie*, Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques, French trans. Serge-Thomas Bonino, introduction and commentary by Jean-Pierre Torrell (Paris: Vrin, 2006), 11-12. Latin texts cited are from this edition.

[19] Thomas also briefly wrote on prophecy early on in his career in *Expositio super Isaiam ad litteram*, c. 6, lect. 1, ll. 25-181 (*Opera Omnia*, vol. 28 [Rome: Editori di San Tommaso, 1974], 47-49). Strikingly, Torrell relegates all the other occasions where Thomas treated the gift of prophecy in his scriptural commentaries to a single footnote (Torrell, *Question XII*, 8 n. 1). Following Adriano Oliva (*Les débuts de l'enseignement de Thomas d'Aquin et sa conception de la sacra doctrina: Avec l'édition du prologue de son commentaire des "Sentences"* (Paris: Vrin, 2006), 207-24), Torrell ascribes the Isaiah commentary's composition to Paris 1251/52-1252/53; see Torrell, *Initiation à saint Thomas d'Aquin: Sa personne et son œuvre*, nouvelle édition profondément remaniée et enrichie d'une bibliographie mise à jour (Paris: Cerf, 2015), 51-62.

[20] Synave and Benoit, *La Prophétie*, 8.

In question 12 of *De veritate*, Thomas is concerned principally to situate the gift of prophecy within the noetic context of the first twenty disputed questions. Structurally, question 12 is preceded by questions on the mind (as *imago Trinitatis*) and the teacher; questions on rapture and faith immediately follow. This location within *De veritate* reveals that prophecy is classified as a type of praeternatural knowledge oriented to faith. Prophetic knowledge is also defined through its communication to others, so that it is seen as a type of teaching.[21]

Within question 12, many of the fundamental elements of Thomas's later treatment in the *Summa theologiae* are already in place: prophecy's definition as a temporary disposition (as opposed to a more stable *habitus*)[22] or gratuitous grace[23] that pertains principally to knowledge;[24] its essentially praeternatural character;[25] its firm truth and infallibility;[26] its principal identification with and classification through the created light of prophecy (*lumen propheticum*)—its formal cause—as opposed to its material, that is, the things prophetically knowable;[27] its nonidentity with a vision of God's essence or ideas;[28] and the gift's neutrality toward moral goodness as a prerequisite for prophesying.[29] A chief element not stressed in *De veritate*, but present in the *Summa* (and which is critical for our discussion), is how Thomas integrates prophecy into his fuller doctrine of

[21] See Torrell, *Question XII,* 10 n. 2

[22] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 1 (*STh* II-II, q. 171, a. 2). Parallel passages from the *Summa Theologiae* will be given in parentheses. For the Latin text of the *Summa* see *Summa Theologiae. Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, t. 4-12 (Rome: 1888-1906).

[23] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 5, ad 7 (*STh* II-II, q. 171, prol.). Although Thomas did not explicitly refer to prophecy as a *gratia gratis data* in q. 12, he did distinguish it from *donum gratiae gratum facientis* at q. 12, a. 14, ad 5. He explicitly referred to *prophetia* as a *gratia gratis data* at *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 10; q. 27, a. 1, co.

[24] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 2 (*STh* II-II, q. 171, a. 1).

[25] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 3 (*STh* II-II, q. 172, a. 1).

[26] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 11 (*STh* II-II, q. 171, a. 6).

[27] *De Verit.*, q. 12, aa. 1, 7 (*STh* II-II, q. 171, aa. 3-4; q. 173, a. 2; q. 174, a. 2).

[28] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 6 (*STh* II-II, q. 171, a. 4; q. 173, a. 1; q. 174, a. 5).

[29] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 5 (*STh* II-II, q. 172, a. 4).

grace and salvation. Those receiving the gift of prophecy—prophets—are able to order and dispose others externally to the grace of faith by proposing things to be believed as divinely revealed. In their public communication by words and deeds, prophets help to remove hindrances to faith through moral correction and encouragement.[30] This latter category of "moral direction" is important for our discussion, since it relates especially to Thomas's understanding of postapostolic prophecy, which no longer "proposed a new doctrine of faith," but is "for the direction of human actions" for salvation's sake.[31] Thomas draws special attention to prophecy's progress in time and its role in the events of salvation history in the last article of the questions on prophecy in the *Summa*, which asks whether "the grades of prophecy" (*gradus prophetiae*) varied "according to the procession of time" (*secundum temporis processum*).[32] This article has no equivalent in *De veritate*, and it marks a critical extension of Thomas's thought on the issue.[33]

While integrating prophecy into the *Summa*'s broader account of the Christian life of grace, Thomas still had the opportunity to explore how the gift functions psychologically in

[30] Latent in *De Verit.*, q. 12 but made more explicit in the *Summa* is a picture of how prophecy ordered people to God's life, which they were called to share in and through faith in Christ and through their concrete moral lives. See *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 6. One needs to skip to *De Veritate*'s question on faith (q. 14, a. 8, ad 13) before the connection between prophecy and faith as ordered to God's life is spelled out.

[31] *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 6, ad 3: "singulis temporibus non defuerunt aliqui prophetiae spiritum habentes, non quidem ad novam doctrinam fidei depromendam, sed ad humanorum actuum directionem."

[32] *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 6. Synave's note 53 (*La Prophétie*, 254) helpfully associates *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 6 with the article concerning the increase of the articles of faith over time (*STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 7). Benoit would go further than Synave by broadening this link between *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 6 and q. 1, a. 7 by identifying explicitly Thomas's awareness of revelation's "progress" along two chief paths: (1) God's self-revelation and (2) humanity's moral development; see Pierre Benoit, "Saint Thomas et l'inspiration des écritures," in *Atti del VII congresso internazionale. Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, vol. 3 (Naples: Edizioni domenicane italiane, 1976), 3:19-30, at 24-25.

[33] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 14 is the closest parallel, but there it is asked whether Moses was the most excellent of the prophets (a question that appears again at *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 4). The article in *De Veritate* restricts prophecy to an Old Testament framework; Thomas admits as much (ad 5).

prophets. This psychological account is particularly prominent in *De veritate*;[34] however, it lacks the emphatic soteriological and social element that is introduced through the *Summa*'s analysis of "gratuitous graces" (*gratiae gratis datae*), of which prophecy is one.[35] The structure of the *Secunda secundae* and the location of the questions on prophecy within it also lend themselves more readily to attempts to integrate prophecy into some understanding of the life of the Church, which still experiences charismatic gifts given by the Holy Spirit.[36]

Noteworthy also was a review of Benoit's 1947 commentary by M. Labourdette,[37] which brought the structural situating of the *Summa*'s questions on prophecy into clearer focus for Benoit, as evidenced by the multiple footnotes that cite the review in the commentary's 1961 revised English edition.[38] Highlighting the ecclesial context of Thomas's questions on prophecy and how the Church receives prophetic testimony and constantly calls to mind the nature of this testimony as one of faith's mysteries, Labourdette greatly influenced Benoit in his development of the idea of ecclesial inspiration.

The ecclesial and soteriological dimensions of prophecy, while not entirely absent in question 12 of *De veritate*,[39] are more pronounced structurally in the *Summa theologiae*. The

[34] *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 7.

[35] *STh* I-II, q. 111, a. 1.

[36] See *STh* II-II, q. 171, prol.; in addition to evoking *gratiae gratis datae*, Thomas makes two further distinctions among things pertaining to certain people: (1) active versus contemplative life and (2) ecclesiastical orders (prelates and their subjects). These closing questions of the *Secunda secundae* provide fruitful avenues for considering Thomas's thought about the Church. See the classic (but now dated) article by Yves Congar, "The Idea of the Church in St. Thomas," in *The Mystery of the Church*, 2d rev. ed. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 53-74; see also Avery Dulles, *A Church to Believe In* (New York, Crossroad, 1982), 149-69. The nature of the Church remained a central concern for Benoit as well; he explored it principally through his work on the Captivity Epistles; see "Corps, tête et plérôme dans les épîtres de la captivité," in *Exégèse et théologie*, 2:107-53.

[37] M. Labourdette, "Théologie morale," *Revue thomiste* 50 (1950): 408-21.

[38] Synave and Benoit, *Prophecy and Inspiration*, 75 n. 2; 76 n. 1; 80 n. 3; 94 n. 2; 118 n. 1; 165 n. 2.

[39] See *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 2: "the gift of prophecy is given for the benefit of the Church"; see also q. 12, a. 3, ad 11; and q. 12, a. 5.

latter's objective of situating prophecy within sacred doctrine's architectonic allowed Benoit to hone his wide-ranging analysis of Thomas on prophecy down to its character as a "social charism of knowledge."[40] Benoit's interest in question 12 diminished somewhat after 1947, and it did not set the agenda for his later thinking; he used it chiefly to help clarify the intricacies of Thomas's account of prophetic inspiration, especially its psychological details. But it was Benoit's sustained attention to the *Summa*'s questions on prophecy that proved the most fertile ground for his later speculation on the charism of inspiration in the Church.

B) Developments from "La Prophétie"

In the commentary sections under his sole care, Benoit adapted a traditional view—one that was also promoted by the papal Magisterium at the time[41]—that saw Thomas's treatment of prophecy and prophetic inspiration as potential sources for a theory of scriptural inspiration. Emboldened by this magisterial nod, Benoit saw his commentary on Thomas's questions on prophecy as an opportune moment "to consider the modern problems and to treat the rich and numerous consequences that flow from them for a right comprehension of scriptural inspiration."[42] A correct theory of scriptural inspiration that preserved both the divine and the human origins of the Bible was thought to be an important guarantee for promoting authentic biblical exegesis, especially given the air of rationalism

[40] Synave and Benoit, *La Prophétie*, 270: "charisme social de connaissance."

[41] Ibid., 8-9. In the *avant-propos*, Benoit highlights the importance of Pope Pius XII's 1943 encyclical on biblical studies, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, for his commentary. (Oddly, *La Prophétie* [2005] omits this original *avant-propos*.) He cites a passage from the encyclical that commends Catholic theologians who "in following the doctrine of the Holy Fathers, above all of the Angelic and Common Doctor, have examined and explained the nature and effects of biblical inspiration more aptly and completely than has customarily been done in centuries past" (Latin text ch. 2 or no. 33/34 of English/French translations on Vatican web site); this is my translation of the French text cited by Benoit. Obviously since Synave died in 1937, the encyclical had no bearing on his work.

[42] Synave and Benoit, *La Prophétie*, 8 (translation mine).

in biblical studies at the time. In this traditional approach, Benoit's commentary oriented itself toward many of the concerns of the ongoing, mid-century debates over scriptural inspiration among Catholics—debates that generally viewed the issue of biblical inerrancy as nodal for any theory of inspiration.

This first foray also began to reveal some of the major limitations of the debates as they had been conducted up to that point. One such limitation surfaced when this traditional approach to inspiration came up against the problem of multiple human authorship in the Bible. Benoit laid the groundwork for an advance by highlighting the need to speak of inspired practical judgments; the identification of the problem and the foundations of a solution were laid bare in the commentary's lengthy appendix.[43] But it was only in the second period that Benoit's solution took on its full shape, when he brought directly into his discussion of inspiration considerations about canonicity and tradition.

Still, the commentary freed Benoit from thinking it was necessary to link strictly the psychologically formal part of Thomas's account of prophetic inspiration—what he sometimes identified as Thomas's strict sense of inspiration—to biblical inspiration. Disengaged from the issue of biblical inspiration, he was then able to identify the social dimensions of the prophetic charism in Thomas's thought, rudimentary though they were. The social formality of prophecy was brought into focus further by a renewed appreciation of Thomas's notion of revelation as God's disclosure in history to save, guide, and especially *teach* humanity. This insight was assisted by Benoit's ability to distinguish "inspiration" from "revelation" in Thomas and to note how the charism of inspiration varies its action according to the different human faculties (for instance, according to practical and speculative reason). He could then adapt inspiration "analogously to the proper mode of each faculty."[44]

As a commentator, Benoit was required to stay close to the psychological formality of Thomas's treatment of prophetic

[43] Ibid., 297-328.

[44] Ibid., 330.

inspiration. By analyzing inspiration principally on the level of judgments (speculative and practical), he offered an intriguing argument that inspired practical judgments could help to distinguish prophetic inspiration from biblical inspiration (or "hagiographical" inspiration—being moved to write), even though Thomas never spoke in this way. Benoit started experimenting with extending this idea of inspired practical judgments to "judgments of the Church" and "the spirit of her Tradition."[45] He even intimated that these "judgments of the Church" had some instrumental role in inspiring biblical exegetes or, at least, in being the occasion of some kind of inspiration associated with them.

IV. Second Period: "Analogies of Inspiration" before and during the Second Vatican Council

In 1954 a textbook article on scriptural inspiration provided Benoit with the occasion to extend analogously the sense that the "judgments of the Church" diffuse the charism of inspiration to the people of God as readers of Scripture. This intuitive extension came in the context of a discussion of Scripture's "fuller" sense.[46] To explain the fuller sense, Benoit described how there was in the historical transmission of God's word an analogical diffusion; it was the careful attentiveness to this diffusion, Benoit thought, that allowed later generations to capture something of the initial relationship between God and the sacred author(s) and, in turn, to distinguish—aided by the light of faith—what is contingent in the Bible from what is permanent.[47] Though he never used the expression "ecclesial inspiration" in this article, Benoit was speaking to the way the Church's judgments submitted to in faith could be said analogically to inspire readers of Scripture to grasp authentic

[45] Ibid., 373.

[46] Pierre Benoit, "Inspiration," in *Guide to the Bible*, 2d ed., 2 vols., trans. E. Arbez and M. R. P. McGuire (New York: Declée, 1960), 1:9-65, at 36-37. (Originally published as "L'Inspiration," in *Initiation biblique*, 3d ed., ed. A. Robert and A. Tricot [Paris: Declée, 1954], 6-45.)

[47] Benoit, "Inspiration," 37.

meanings that may not have originally been intended by the sacred authors. His understanding of the fuller sense pointed to the critical importance of the inspiration of these ecclesial judgments to guide readers. However, he carefully qualified this: "It is not claimed that the charism of inspiration extends to the mind of the reader. He may indeed need an assistance of the Holy Spirit to understand Scripture properly, but this does not mean that for that reason he is 'inspired.'"[48] Benoit avoided ascribing strict psychological inspiration to readers; instead, the appeal was more to the analogy of faith through the Church's judgments.

In 1959 Benoit introduced "ecclesial inspiration" as a category distinct from "biblical" and "scriptural" inspiration[49] (he would also distinguish this latter pair). He recategorized "prophetic" inspiration and linked it more closely to another category he called "apostolic" inspiration; both categories express the formality of a "social mission."[50] The term "apostolic inspiration" was associated especially with "tradition." Benoit later spoke more regularly of the analogous social functioning of (1) the oral, living transmission of revelation in the "inspired" apostolic tradition (along with its role in the formation of the biblical canon) and (2) the authentic expounding of revelation in future periods of the Church, which required an analogous ecclesial inspiration.[51] Benoit developed a schema of certain analogies of inspiration to capture the continuity and distinction between the apostolic tradition and the postapostolic Church under the analogy of faith.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Benoit, "Analogies," 94-115.

[50] Ibid., 97, 103-4.

[51] See Pierre Benoit, "Inspiration de la Tradition et inspiration de l'Écriture," in *Mélanges offerts a M.-D. Chenu*, ed. A. Duval, Bibliothèque thomiste 37 (Paris, Vrin: 1967), 111-26.

A) Inspired Judgments and Multiple Human Authors

In this 1959 article Benoit returned to the issue of multiple biblical authorship.[52] While some medieval authors had ascribed individual books of the Bible (especially in the Old Testament) to multiple human authors, modern historico-critical studies brought important attention to the topic and led to a consensus among scholars that the issue of multiple biblical authorship needed urgently to be addressed. In particular, these studies made certain aspects of earlier theories of inspiration—where human authorship was assumed to be limited to a single person prophetically inspired—seem strained or no longer viable.[53] The emerging scholarship meant that even Benoit's earlier treatment of inspiration in 1947 had to be adapted further to address the historical studies on the formation of the biblical canon.[54]

Building on his 1947 proposal to extend the prophetic charism to include practical judgments and his fuller 1959 "analogies" scheme, Benoit drew further attention in 1963 to the distinctions between Thomas's treatment of prophecy and the needs of a theory of biblical inspiration.[55] In his questions on prophecy, Thomas had only considered speculative judgments in the context of prophetic inspiration. The text of Thomas, however, did not have to be the sole guide on the issue of inspiration, Benoit thought. His argument to extend prophetic inspiration to embrace practical judgments was an important step, because it meant that now the acts of speaking or of composing a text, even if not composed by a human author deliberately setting out to record an oracle or prophecy, could be considered "inspired."

[52] Benoit, "Analogies," 104-7.

[53] See R. A. F. MacKenzie, "Some Problems in the Field of Inspiration," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20 (1958), 1-8, at 3.

[54] Benoit, "Analogies," 94-97.

[55] Pierre Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," in *Inspiration in the Bible*, 5-93 (originally published as "Révélation et Inspiration selon la Bible, chez Saint Thomas et dans les discussions modernes," *Revue biblique* 70 [1963]: 321-70; repr. in *Exégèse et théologie*, 3:90-142).

Prior to this, the prevailing opinion supported by Jacques-Marie Vosté and Augustin Bea had been that Thomas ascribed only speculative judgments to prophets and sacred writers who had been given the prophetic light to judge things "with the certitude of divine truth."[56] Benoit concurred with this reading.[57] However, when Vosté and Bea subsequently maintained that Thomas treated "explicitly biblical inspiration in the *Summa Theologica*," Benoit raised objections.[58] Such a claim, in his opinion, failed to appreciate the limits of Thomas's own terminology about prophetic inspiration. The implications of Bea's and Vosté's claim were that the authors of scriptural texts manifested their "inspiration" principally by writing down what they knew thanks to the prophetic speculative judgments that God had enabled them to make. Benoit determined that these theologians had essentially (and perhaps unwittingly) revived the unsatisfactory "dictation theory" of inspiration associated with the nineteenth-century Jesuit Johannes Baptiste Franzelin.[59] The dictation theory, in general, drew support from Thomas's strong association of prophetic inspiration with knowledge based exclusively on speculative judgments.[60] These theologians, however, according to Benoit, did not pay enough attention to the practical judgments needed by the sacred writer (or any writer) to produce a text. Their views smacked too much of the miraculous, and Benoit thought a subtler approach that respected nature's perfection by supernatural grace more apt and ultimately more Thomistic.

[56] Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," 59-60: citing Jacques-Marie Vosté, *De divina inspiratione et veritate sacrae scripturae*, 2d ed. (Rome: Angelicum, 1932), 58; Augustin Bea, *De scripturae sacrae inspiratione*, 2d ed. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1935), 52f.

[57] Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," 60.

[58] Ibid., citing Vosté, *De divina inspiratione*, 50. Bea did not say this explicitly but still earned the criticism of Benoit by applying what Thomas said about prophecy "to biblical inspiration without more ado."

[59] Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," 61, citing Bea, *De scripturae sacrae*, 50f.; H. Höpfl, *Introductio generalis in sacram scripturam: Tractutus de inspiratione, canone, historia, textus, hermeneutica*, 6th ed., ed. P. L. Leloir (Rome: A. Arnodo, 1958), 51; Christian Pesch, *De inspiratione sacrae scripturae* (Freiburg: Herder, 1906), no. 416.

[60] See *STh* II-II, q. 171, a. 1.

At the same time, through the influence of earlier theologians who first drew attention to practical judgments for biblical inspiration,[61] others fell into the opposite extreme: they overemphasized practical judgments to the point of asserting—incorrectly in Benoit's view—that Thomas's account of prophecy explicitly included them.[62] Their lack of attention to the importance of speculative judgments left biblical inspiration unsatisfactorily adrift from any theory of truth or inerrancy.

Benoit contributed significantly to this discussion by maintaining that there are in fact two different dilemmas that have to be distinguished: (1) the dilemma of speculative and practical judgments and (2) the dilemma of revelation and inspiration.[63] While practical judgments were never explicitly included in Thomas's account of prophecy, this did not mean that Thomas's thought was unadaptable to the newly perceived needs of multiple human authorship.[64] Benoit began to adapt Thomas's thinking by identifying the limits of his theory of prophecy; here the knowledge of Thomas's text acquired from his commentary placed Benoit in a better position than most to adjudicate the dispute among theologians about what Thomas's theory of prophecy did and did not contain. He pointed out that when the cognitive emphasis in Thomas's theory of prophecy was applied to scriptural inspiration—a twentieth-century problematic absent in the thirteenth century—an overemphasis was bound to follow that distorted the actual needs of a theory of scriptural inspiration.[65] For Benoit, to restrict scriptural inspiration only to speculative judgments—as if the former were simply a species of prophetic inspiration—is unhelpfully anachronistic. Certainly, speculative judgments have

[61] Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," 52: Benoit singled out Eugène Levesque, "Questions actuelles d'écriture sainte," *Revue biblique* 4 (1895): 421; see Burtchaell, *Catholic Theories*, 132 n. 1.

[62] Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," 59: citing T. Calmes, *Qu'est-ce que l'écriture sainte?*, 8th ed. (Paris: Bloud, 1907), 37; Henri Merkelbach, *L'inspiratione des divines écritures*, 2d ed. (Liège: H. Dessain, 1913), 34-38.

[63] Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," 59.

[64] Ibid., 60-61.

[65] Ibid.

to be maintained in order to safeguard the truth of Scripture, but this does not need to come at the cost of excluding practical judgments. The judgments of sacred writers (both practical and speculative) can be distinguished without losing their common supernatural source and unity. Thus, those theologians who doggedly insisted that scriptural inspiration has to be based essentially and principally on speculative judgments seemed to remain

> prisoners of the point of view adopted by St. Thomas in a particular case in which the external expression (speech or book) is only the necessary faithful communication of ideas received from God to be transmitted without modification. The psychological reality, however, is completely different. Often, in fact most frequently the sacred writer or author, decides to write a book in order to produce a determined effect on his readers without yet knowing the exact details he will include. . . . [S]ince the work to be produced is a book its object will be predominantly didactic. This is eminently true of the Bible, by which God educates men through instruction. . . . To express the matter in more technical terms with which we are concerned: Speculative judgments are formulated subsequent to the practical judgements constituting the decision to write and under its influence.[66]

Once this distinction was made, there was room for Benoit to address the history of the human composition of the biblical texts with more nuance; the supernatural origin of the texts could be maintained in the decision to compose or edit a text, even with multiple authors or redactors. Important too was Benoit's identification of the "didactic" aim of the Bible; this represented an important transposition from Thomas's account of prophecy and revelation conceived as God's "teaching."

B) Clarifying Revelation and Inspiration

Benoit resolved the second dilemma of revelation and inspiration by considering both as "two aspects of one analogical notion."[67] He proposed analogous types of inspiration as partial solutions to the problems of multiple human authorship and the

[66] Ibid., 61-62.
[67] Benoit, "Analogies," 95.

sensus plenior. It was in the context of these two problems that he first used the expression "ecclesial inspiration" in order to elaborate on biblical inspiration's social formality and to link "inspiration" to the didactic purpose for salvation found in revelation.[68]

It was clear that biblical inspiration could no longer be identified exclusively as a type of cognitive prophetic inspiration.[69] Benoit argued that theologians had to consider how inspiration functions correlative to the purpose of God's revelation: salvation. New terms were needed to capture how this was reflected in the formation of the biblical canon. Benoit proposed analogous categories of "inspiration" to accomplish this. For example, inspired movement to speech is "prophetic" or "apostolic" inspiration. For the impulse to write or edit a text, there is "hagiographical" inspiration; when applied to the Bible, this is "scriptural" (*scripturaire*) inspiration—taken now in a more restricted sense that sets it apart from "biblical" (*biblique*) inspiration, which refers to "the inspiration of sacred scripture in general."[70] To name "the role of the men chosen by God to act, and to live the biblical 'Deed' before it was recounted and written" Benoit chose "dramatic" (*dramatique*) inspiration, a term that he confessed "may not be perfect."[71] By 1963, he preferred the term "pastoral" (*pastorale*) inspiration.[72]

[68] See ibid., 97, 102.

[69] Ibid., 97.

[70] Benoit, "Analogies," 98. "Scriptural inspiration" was addressed principally to those critics of Benoit who found problematic his view that speculative judgments were not always primary. Benoit affirmed that "the impulse to write will, of course, always be accompanied by an enlightening of the mind" through speculative judgments "in the measure that the work to be composed involves the teaching of truth" (ibid., 99).

[71] Ibid., 103-4. Benoit noted that J. Coppens had suggested the term "historical" (*historique*) inspiration in place of "dramatic" (ibid., 107 n. 5 = *Exégèse et théologie*, 3:25 n. 1). Benoit did not object to this suggestion and sometimes referred to "'dramatic' or 'historical' inspiration" (111), until he changed his mind in 1963. Benoit stressed the etymological overtones of "dramatic" to point to "action" as the inspired reality.

[72] Benoit, "Revelation and Inspiration," 45 n. 49 (= *Exégèse et théologie*, 3:117 n. 1); see "Inspiration de la Tradition," 123 n. 73. Benoit reported that "pastoral" was suggested to him. See also the noted added in 1967 at *Exégèse et théologie*, 3:23 n. 1.

These categories gave him the ability to distinguish the various ways God formed his chosen people, whose "education" was the primary purpose of divine revelation. By highlighting "revelation" as formation through God's disclosure, Benoit distinguished it more clearly from "inspiration" and simultaneously pointed to their correlation.

C) Clarifying "Dramatic" Inspiration

The category of "dramatic" inspiration obviously overlaps with the inspiration to write (or "hagiographical" inspiration), since they both refer to an action; this caused some to be critical of Benoit's terminology for sliding "from analogy to ambiguity."[73] Benoit, however, had anticipated some of these objections. He tried to clarify the category of dramatic inspiration first by denying that it was meant to support an "editorial-seal" theory of biblical inspiration, where inspiration is attributed exclusively to the last generations that formed the biblical canon.[74] The individual writers of biblical texts, even if discovered later to be pagans, had to be said to be working under some type of inspiration, even if psychologically they were unconscious of this. Attributing inspiration exclusively to the final editorial activity of canonization runs the risk of equating inspiration and revelation with the conscious recogni-

[73] Schökel, *Inspired Word*, 22. Schökel objected to Benoit's use of "inspiration" in contexts other than the Bible. For him, "inspiration" in its current usage was too closely tied to its technical application to biblical inspiration; to uproot it by appeal to "analogies" caused more difficulties. When speaking in nonbiblical contexts, Schökel preferred the term "charism" instead of "inspiration" (221-22, 239, 249). The difficulty with Schökel's view is that while it resolved possible confusion over the term "inspiration," it arguably just delayed a similar problem arising with the term "charism." This tactic did little to clarify, for instance, how an "ecclesial charism" related to "biblical inspiration." While "charism" could distinguish ecclesial inspiration from any misleading notion of "collective" inspiration, one still had to clarify that charisms too can only be possessed in the first instance by persons; there still has to be an accompanying social ontology, just as much as there would be to make sense of "ecclesial inspiration." Schökel's criticism was largely terminological; elsewhere he commended Benoit's application of analogy to inspiration (92, 96, 103, 117, and 213).

[74] Benoit, "Analogies," 104-5.

tion of the canonizing generations of these texts; for Benoit and the Catholic tradition in general, this is an unacceptable position if one wants to say that Scripture is inspired in its entirety.[75] "Dramatic" inspiration could be recognized within this canonization process; in fact, it was essential to assert this. Yet, Benoit denied that "biblical" inspiration is reducible to this process.

D) Clarifying "Collective" Inspiration and Ultimately Rejecting It

Another important clarification of the category of dramatic inspiration came when Benoit ruled out any sense of "collective inspiration" that could refer to an indiscriminate outpouring of inspiration "upon all the members of the Israelite people or of the primitive Christian community."[76] "Dramatic" inspiration, like all types of inspiration, is given only to individuals, even if it could be analyzed under a social formality.

At first, in 1959, Benoit was tolerant of the term "collective inspiration," since it was trying to account for the inspiration of the Bible's multiple human authors and editors (often anonymous). He affirmed that there was a "correct intuition" in those scholars who said that divine inspiration is not limited to the last generation of sacred writers or editors, even if this same consideration led to "the ambiguous expression of 'collective' inspiration" being adopted.[77] By 1965, Benoit expressed more reservations over the term, given its ability to blur the lines between personal and social ontology.[78]

The notion of "ecclesial inspiration" depended partially on Benoit's adaptation of "collective" inspiration, taken in what he would later called the latter's "correct sense"—that is, not

[75] See Burtchaell, *Catholic Theories*, 243.

[76] Benoit, "Analogies," 106.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Benoit, "Inspiration and Revelation," 9. Benoit remained open to the expression in 1959 chiefly because he thought his analogies of inspiration sufficiently clarified the ambiguities associated with "collective" inspiration; see "Analogies" 106.

conflating it with the inspiration of an "anonymous mass."[79] The progression of his thought went like this. "Collective" inspiration led to an analysis of "prophetic" or "apostolic" inspiration under their specific social or ecclesial functions. This led to the thought that there was an inspired apostolic tradition which embraced the unique inspiration of the apostolic generation where an oral preaching or *kerygma* formed the Church. The texts of the New Testament were composed on the basis of this oral preaching and canonized along with the inherited Hebrew Scriptures. "Ecclesial inspiration" for Benoit refers to an extension beyond the apostolic period into the postcanon period, after which the deposit of revelation is said to be closed.[80] It thus differs functionally from collective biblical inspiration, since ecclesial inspiration is not endowed with the task of composing biblical texts, but of preserving them, authoritatively interpreting them, and developing their understanding. Benoit himself realized the potential for confusion between "collective" inspiration and "ecclesial" inspiration. This may help explain his restraint when in 1961 he limited discussion of the latter to a footnote.[81] By acknowledging that

[79] Benoit, "Analogies" 106; see Benoit, "Inspiration and Revelation," 9-10. On the so-called "social dimension of inspiration," Schökel faulted Benoit's description for being too concentrated on the material that was to go into the scriptural text; see Schökel, *Inspired Word*, 231-32. He based this assessment chiefly on how Benoit treated the category of "dramatic inspiration," thinking he had touched on inspiration's social character "rather hastily" (see ibid., 221 n. 6; and 239 n. 5). Schökel's criticism of "dramatic inspiration," however, may have been missing what Benoit's notion of "ecclesiastical inspiration" was trying to resolve by extending "inspiration" beyond the material that went into the scriptural text like the author's words and the redactors' editing to the end or purpose of the scriptural texts in the Church. Schökel's analysis sometimes fell victim to the weaknesses inherent in intense theological exchanges where the level of analysis is quite complex and terminological experiments are often initially misunderstood and/or exaggerated.

[80] Benoit, "Inspiration and Revelation," 9-10, 12.

[81] Synave and Benoit, *Prophecy and Inspiration*, 165 n. 2: With regards to the judgments of the Church and their function, "we may even speak of a type of 'inspiration' of the Church and in the Church; it would not, of course, be the same as biblical inspiration, but analogous to it because of the positive illuminating motion which it entails; in order to distinguish it from biblical inspiration it could very well be called 'ecclesiastical inspiration.' This terminology, which appears contrary to present

"ecclesial inspiration" was an unconventional term, Benoit signalled that his terminology was liable to be misunderstood if taken out of its context.

There is evidence that some misunderstandings did occur. For example, in a popular survey of biblical inspiration and revelation theology published in 1985, Robert Gnuse described Benoit as a theologian who supported a notion of "collective inspiration" with "similar views" to James Barr.[82] Gnuse cited Benoit's 1965 article "Inspiration and Revelation" from *Concilium* "where he speaks of 'collective inspiration'" approvingly.[83] Benoit did mention "collective inspiration" in this article, but only to clarify that "the expression is not apt."[84]

"Collective inspiration" was sometimes also referred to as "social inspiration." Gnuse and L. John Topel[85] associated this latter expression with Karl Rahner[86] and John L. McKenzie.[87]

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theological usage, actually is in harmony with a well accepted doctrine of the patristic and medieval periods. It is based on the theological principle that the same Spirit who had the books written is necessary for an authoritative interpretation of them."

[82] Gnuse, *Authority of the Bible,* 50 n. 1: citing James Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, and Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 27.

[83] Gnuse, *Authority of the Bible,* 50: Gnuse recommended the summary of Benoit's views by John Scullion, *The Theology of Inspiration* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1970), 36-40. Scullion neither ascribed to Benoit a view of "collective" inspiration nor addressed Benoit's usage of "ecclesial inspiration."

[84] Benoit, "Inspiration and Revelation," 9. Gnuse did not realize that Benoit had changed his mind from his earlier and more positive estimation of the expression in *Prophecy and Inspiration*, 127: analogous distinctions of inspiration "can do justice to the expression, 'collective' inspiration in the correct sense, by supplying the safeguards against any danger in it." However, by 1965 Benoit denied the expression's viability.

[85] See L. John Topel, "Rahner and McKenzie on the Social Theory of Inspiration," *Scripture* 16 (1964): 33-44

[86] Gnuse, *Authority of the* Bible, 50-62; Karl Rahner, *Inspiration in the Bible*, trans. Charles H. Henkey, Quaestiones Disputatae 1 (New York: Herder, 1961); this latter was an expanded version of "Über die Schrift-inspiration," *Zeitschift für katholische Theologie* 78 (1956): 127-68.

[87] John L. McKenzie, "The Social Character of Inspiration," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24 (1962): 115-24. McKenzie admitted his reliance on Benoit for part of his thinking on inspiration's "social character" (119, 121), but he never employed the expression "social inspiration." In other survey treatments, the positions of McKenzie and Benoit were sometimes unhelpfully (and incorrectly) opposed; see Topel, "Rahner

Gnuse, in fact, grouped Benoit together with Rahner and McKenzie in his discussion of Catholic "theories of social inspiration."[88] However, as far as "social inspiration" was applicable to Benoit, this grouping was somewhat imprecise. He never spoke specifically of "social inspiration," nor did McKenzie. Gnuse confused (1) the consideration of inspiration's *social formality* with (2) "social inspiration." The latter was denied by Benoit when he treated collective inspiration. This fact, however, was sometimes missed.[89]

Benoit's analogies of inspiration were also liable to be misconstrued. Gnuse, for instance, portrayed them sometimes as antithetical, such as when he commended Benoit for his explanation of inspiration as it operated "in the teaching and interpreting function of the Church today as an 'ecclesial inspiration' as opposed to the deeper and more profound 'biblical inspiration' which produced the Scriptures."[90] To describe this relationship as an "opposition" actually missed what Benoit was trying to accomplish. Benoit did not portray "ecclesial" and "biblical" inspiration as *antithetically* opposed, although when describing them he often made a conceptual distinction between them.

E) Tradition Emerges as the Setting for Ecclesial Inspiration

Another important step in the development of "ecclesial inspiration" came from Benoit's handling of inspiration and tradition. In his 1959 categorization, "prophetic" and "apo-

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and McKenzie on the Social Theory of Inspiration," 42. Topel associated Benoit too closely to the "traditional" view of Marie Joseph Lagrange.

[88] Gnuse, *Authority in the Bible*, 50-62.

[89] Ibid., 52. Gnuse quoted Benoit: "To limit inspiration to individuals is to 'impoverish to a dangerous degree the extreme riches of the encounter that God offers man in the Bible.'" Gnuse's citation (52 n. 7), however, is incorrect; Benoit never said this here, and I have not been able to find this supposed citation in any of Benoit's writings.

[90] Gnuse, *Authority of the Bible*, 52. Gnuse notes three of Benoit's works immediately after making this claim (n. 5). He considered Benoit's extension of ecclesial inspiration to "ecclesiastical leadership" problematic (61).

stolic" inspiration refer primarily to inspired speech.[91] From this, the question of the relationship between this "oratorical" inspiration and "scriptural" inspiration soon arose. The inspired speech of the apostles and prophets contributed to the composition and formation of canonical Scripture. But what about, for example, the apostolic speech that did not find its way into the New Testament? Was it entirely lost? Benoit thought not, because apostolic speech was also "gathered up in [the Church's] tradition."[92] Benoit defined "tradition" not as some secret oral teaching, but as the source and living norm for Christian life. Tradition is

> that sea of living and lived faith in which the primitive Church was plunged by the word of the Apostles and from which she drew those intuitions of faith and that sense of the Christian life which have guided her through the centuries in the interpretation of her Scriptures. Sacred Scripture, which is merely a condensation of the living teaching, owes its authority to a divine inspiration which directed its composition.[93]

This sense of tradition portrays the faith as a dynamic reality which had its formative stage in the preaching of the apostles to the primitive Church, but which also generated preaching for the continued guidance of future Christians in their encounter with Scripture by serving as a basis for a living sense or norm about what Christian life is.[94] Apostolic preaching definitively shaped the process of the formation of the biblical canon as well as its early interpretation, situating Scripture's central place within the Church's life. This passage shows how tradition for Benoit depended on a type of apostolic inspiration for "its authority," an authority which guided the composition of Scripture and the formation of the canon. His situating of inspiration in this broader context of the apostolic tradition and especially in the problematic of canon formation occasioned the

[91] Benoit, "Analogies," 103.

[92] Ibid., 110.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Benoit did not usually speak of "norm" in this context, but I have adopted this sense from Joseph T. Lienhard and his discussion of the "rule of faith" in *The Bible, the Church, and Authority* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 87-100.

opportunity to discuss another type of inspiration that was applicable to the apostolic tradition and subsequently to the postapostolic Church. He was led, thus, to see the need to posit the Church's inspiration as something analogous to the apostolic inspiration that stirred the *kerygma*.

From this reflection on the question of God's real presence to his people in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit working through the tradition, Benoit first hit upon "ecclesial inspiration." He identified in this inspiration a real positive character that "stimulates" the Church—not a vague collective inspiration of the Church, but the inspiration of individuals in the Church:

> Does not God continue to guide his people? Does the Holy Spirit, who is the characteristic gift of messianic times, act only for the sanctification of individuals? Is he not also and primarily in the Church in order to illuminate and direct her ever-growing awareness of the deposit of revelation entrusted to her? Does he not preside over the researches of the Fathers, of the doctors and theologians, over the deliberations of Councils, and the dogmatic decisions of the Magisterium in order to guarantee the results? It is no longer a question, of course, of biblical inspiration which adds to revelation, but perhaps the trouble we take to avoid possible confusion leads us to exaggerate the *negative* character of the assistance that the Holy Spirit gives the Church, as if it consisted in a preservation from error, whereas there is much more to it than that; a real impulsion which *positively* stimulates the Church in her research and helps her to a constantly improving expression of her faith. Having recognized, together with the inspiration to write, certain parallels which are different species of the same genus, we should be able to use the same principle in order to do justice to the irresistible power of the Holy Spirit, who after having moved the Chosen people to grasp and formulate the message of revelation, now moves it to advance in its penetration of the message. It is thus perhaps that we can best explain the formulation of certain dogmas which are something more than a simple clarification of a fundamental notion found in Scripture. In order to disengage them from her tradition and to become gradually aware of them the Church had to live and grow. Is it not the Holy Spirit who desires this vital growth in the awareness of the Faith by a sort of inspiration, but which continues it analogically on a new plane?[95]

Benoit emphasized that an important sign of this ecclesial inspiration consists in an awareness of revelation's deposit

[95] Benoit, "Analogies," 111-13.

through both "illumination" and "directing." It is clear that he did not abandon an understanding of "inspiration" that had roots in Thomas's account, where the mind's elevation or illumination is essential.[96] At the same time, Benoit expanded the scope of this mental elevation to consider its function of directing people, which is analogous to the way the Holy Spirit has guided the Church in history: not just negatively—preserving especially the councils and Magisterium from error—but also positively toward the development of the doctrine of the faith. Benoit, thus, shifted the emphasis from the subjective-psychological inspiration model and resituated inspiration more in the context of the life of the Church.[97]

This led him next to consider the history of the Church and whether there actually was an awareness of the Spirit's presence that fit this description:

In patristic times and down to the Middle Ages, it was common to speak of the inspiration of the Fathers, ecclesiastical writers, and of Councils. It was thought that the same Spirit who inspired the Scriptures was needed in order to propose an authoritative interpretation. The difference between the charism of composition and that of interpretation, which was well perceived though not formally expressed, did not prevent the use of the term "inspiration" in both cases. Contemporary theological language restricts the term to sacred writers. It would be interesting, nevertheless, to adopt the broader usage of former times, which has the merit of underlining a real analogy. In order to avoid any misunderstandings, it would suffice to distinguish between 'biblical' inspiration and 'ecclesial' [*ecclésiale*] inspiration, by pointing out clearly with the aid of the results of recent theological advances, the real difference between the two. In the one case we are dealing with the production of a text which contains revelation and serves as a rule of faith; in the other with an explanation of this text and of the Tradition which envelops it. Ecclesiastical texts [*textes ecclésiastiques*], authoritative commentaries, or even dogmatic definitions no longer have God for their direct author and cannot claim to have the same profundity of meaning which is the privilege of Sacred Scripture, wherein the divine author always surpasses his instrument, the

[96] See *STh* II-II, q. 171, a. 1, ad 4; q. 171, a. 2.

[97] Lienhard notes (*Bible, Church, and Authority*, 95) that there are parallels here with Karl Rahner's *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Seabury, 1978), 370-71.

human author. With these essential reservations, it should be possible to speak once again of a certain inspiration of the Church [*inspiration de l'Église*].[98]

This recentering of biblical inspiration around the Church and Scripture's role in salvation history proved decisive; it demanded that Benoit posit the existence of ecclesial inspiration in order to ensure that biblical inspiration was correctly understood.

In this first usage of the term, Benoit also signalled his dependence on the patristic scholarship of Gustave Bardy on the inspiration of the Church Fathers.[99] Bardy argued that it was commonly held among some of the Fathers that history itself was moved and guided by the Holy Spirit in a unique way in and through the Church. This patristic testimony is also discernible in the way Benoit set ecclesial inspiration in a framework that related more explicitly creation and revelation, with the Holy Spirit's role identified and highlighted in both:

Seen in this broader perspective, scriptural inspiration ceases to be an isolated and, as it were, exceptional phenomenon; it takes place in the center of a great current of the breath of God passing through the history of salvation from beginning to end, from the Spirit who stirred the primordial waters to the Spirit who will penetrate souls and bodies in the final manifestation. Scriptural inspiration remains a charism of eminent dignity because canonical Scripture is derived essentially from it. But it has its antecedents and its prolongations; on the one hand, the impulsions that moved men to live and recount the message before it was written and in order that it might be written, and on the other hand, those illuminations which afford the Church, down the centuries, an ever more profound penetration of her faith. Understood in this way, our canonical Scriptures cease to be a book which fell from heaven, as sacred writings are for other religions. They are rather the result of a whole history, throughout which the word was formulated little by little, and the point of departure for a new story, that of the messianic era, in which the word blossoms and fructifies. The Bible is steeped in the life of the people of God which is the Church; the Church receives from the Bible the core of its faith, and the Bible receives from the Church it authentic interpretation. For the Spirit who inspired the writing of the Book is the same Spirit who, before and after its composition, directs the Church in the way of truth.[100]

[98] Benoit, "Analogies," 113-14 (*Exégèse et théologie*, 3:29).
[99] Bardy, "L'inspiration des Pères de l'Église," 7-26.
[100] Benoit, "Analogies," 114-15.

Benoit also linked ecclesial inspiration to the Church's Magisterium and in particular to councils and dogmatic formulations. In this way, "ecclesial inspiration" refers analogously to a kind of prolongation of apostolic inspiration, while remaining distinct. Benoit never worked out a full account of how ecclesial inspiration could be integrated into the Magisterium or councils. He preferred simply to state the general hermeneutical principles he outlined above. Influenced by some of the developments around Vatican II, Benoit chose to clarify ecclesial inspiration's dependence on the inspiration of the apostolic tradition first. Thus, a major part of his argument for the existence of ecclesial inspiration came down to his argument for an inspired apostolic tradition that required a kind of analogous prolongation of itself in the subsequent Church tradition.

V. THIRD PERIOD: "ECCLESIAL INSPIRATION" AND "TRADITION" POST-VATICAN II

The "inspired apostolic Tradition" was the subject of an article published in 1967, shortly after Vatican II, which drew heavily on *Dei Verbum*.[101] This inspired tradition had become the main *explanandum* for Benoit following the council, and the expression "ecclesial inspiration" tended to drop out of his writings in this third period. In this article, Benoit barely mentioned Thomas's treatment of prophecy, but even here, there were signs of continued dependence. While he began to pay more attention to the question of the inspiration of "tradition" in the New Testament and in the Fathers, in part stimulated by *Dei Verbum*, the significance of the issue, as we have seen, had already been appreciated in his preconciliar writings.

[101] Benoit, "Inspiration de la Tradition," 111-26. The council's preparatory schema *De revelatione* (1964) became the focus of Benoit's writing in "Inspiration and Revelation," 5-13. On this schema, see Denis Farkasfalvy, "Inspiration and Interpretation," in *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 77-100, at 78-79.

The 1967 article's thesis was that the Bible and some of the Fathers testified to the existence of "the divine inspiration of the apostolic tradition."[102] Benoit added a footnote immediately following this expression that served as a "preliminary warning" to avoid "frequent misunderstandings encountered among listeners and readers." He clarified that "inspired tradition" in the article referred essentially to "the *apostolic* Tradition, that is, the creative and 'constitutive' [*créatice et 'constitutive'*] period where Revelation in progress and not yet closed was expressed at the same time orally, as experienced, and written." The apostolic tradition was inspired in a way distinct from "scriptural" inspiration. Benoit also distinguished it from subsequent Church history:

> Even if the epithet 'apostolic' is not always expressed, the upper-case T ought to suffice to signal that it is not about posterior ecclesiastical traditions [*traditions ecclésiastiques postérieures*]. I will speak also of these, but in noting the differences, and I claim for them only an inspiration of a different species [*une inspiration d'une espèce différente*], which one could call 'ecclesial' [*'ecclésiale'*] and which many moderns prefer to name 'assistance' [*'assistance'*].[103]

This footnote makes it plain that Benoit had not abandoned ecclesial inspiration as a viable category, but had distinguished it more clearly from the inspiration of the apostolic tradition.

Benoit also mentioned here the terminology of "assistance" preferred by many theologians over and against "ecclesial inspiration." Grelot, for example, preferred the term "ecclesial assistance" (*assistance*), because it avoided the ambiguities associated with "collective" inspiration.[104] Benoit never denied

[102] Benoit, "Inspiration de la Tradition," 111: "'inspiration' divine de la Tradition apostolique."

[103] Ibid.

[104] Grelot, *Sens chrétien*, 194 n. 3: For Grelot, "assistance" was given to the community, "inspiration" was given to individuals who were authentic guides. Grelot was generally favorable to Benoit's observation that "inspiration" has varied in meaning over time (194 n. 2). He was more critical of McKenzie's "Social Character of Inspiration"; he thought McKenzie poorly distinguished "collective" inspiration and the "assistance" given to the tradition and, thereby, downplayed the inspiration of individuals (195 n. 1). Grelot did not dispute Benoit's claim that what he himself

that "ecclesial assistance" is a worthy expression to explain the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Church; he just thought there are some advantages to linking up the formation of the biblical canon and its subsequent authoritative interpretation in the postapostolic Church through the terminology of analogous types of inspiration. Highlighting connection and continuity was more valuable than avoiding confusion on this score for Benoit, and "ecclesial inspiration," while different from "inspired apostolic tradition" or "scriptural inspiration," still called to mind the biblical text, since it was the same Holy Spirit who inspired the composition of the Bible who also moved the Church to discover the biblical text's fuller sense. In this respect, Benoit's commitment to defending and clarifying the inspiration of Scripture's fuller sense motivated his preference for "ecclesial inspiration" over "ecclesial assistance."[105]

Another major argument hinged on how to interpret the absence in *Dei Verbum* of any express affirmation that the tradition is "inspired." According to Benoit, this absence was more of "a passing over" than "a denial" of its existence.[106] The Church's Magisterium as expressed in *Dei Verbum* had, he felt, left the question open and unresolved. He maintained in the article's notes a subtler argument that *Dei Verbum* "assuredly" did contain "the doctrinal foundations of an inspiration of the

preferred to call the Holy Spirit's "assistance" to the community "ancient theology" did not hesitate to qualify as "inspiration"; see Pierre Grelot, *La Bible, Parole de Dieu*, 2d ed. (Paris: Desclée, 1965), 43-44. Like Schökel, Grelot preferred ecclesial "charism" over "inspiration"; he admitted, however, that this was in part an issue of vocabulary (ibid., 44 n. 2).

[105] See Grelot, *Sens chrétien*, 452-55 and his insightful analysis of Benoit on the *sensus plenior*. Grelot thought Benoit's position removed the *sensus plenior* too drastically from the sacred authors and left it too categorically as a part of revelation's development. For him Benoit put too much weight on analyzing the sacred author's conscious knowledge. See Benoit, "La plenitude de sens des livres saints," *Revue biblique* 67 (1960): 161-96 (= *Exégèse et théologie*, 3:31-68).

[106] Benoit, "Inspiration de la Tradition," 113: "c'est une prétérition plutôt qu'une négation." He also cited the analogous—albeit more controversial—case of the Magisterium's silence on the question of the inspiration of the LXX; see Benoit "La Septante est-elle inspirée?" in *Exégèse et théologie*, 1:1-12; and "L'inspiration des Septante d'après les Pères," in *Exégèse et théologie*, 3:69-89.

oral Tradition," citing the second article of the constitution, which says that revelation was made "*gestis verbisque*."[107] That the Magisterium refrained from developing this point further did not, for Benoit, count as evidence that such an understanding of the inspired tradition never existed. *Dei Verbum*'s silence on this issue was more a function of how the Magisterium operated concretely and historically; it reflected how the debates concerning inspiration had construed the problem up to and at the council:

> The Church pronounces on those concrete situations to defend or affirm its faith where it is at stake. The inspiration of the Tradition was not implicated in the recent debates with adversaries who no longer accepted the fact; the Church did not have to explain it to herself.[108]

Having presented his case for why *Dei Verbum* should be interpreted as leaving open the question of the existence of the inspiration of tradition, Benoit proceeded to show how the absence of some notion of an inspired tradition impoverishes how one encounters the Bible. This larger, second argument—taking up the remainder of the article—appealed to (1) a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*, where the absence of any notion of an inspired tradition leads to insurmountable difficulties, especially in biblical exegesis, and (2) a more positive and constructive argument for "inspired" tradition.[109]

Without going into the intricacies of this larger argument, it suffices to observe that Benoit's chief tactic was to analyze biblical and patristic testimonies on the issue of inspired tradition and their historical contexts. His appeal to the Fathers is especially noteworthy, because it marked the point of transition from "inspired apostolic Tradition" to "ecclesial inspiration." Benoit assembled a list of citations from the

[107] Benoit, "Inspiration de la Tradition," 113 n. 8. Benoit hinted that while "the notion and the precise term 'inspiration' are reserved more for the particular charism of scriptural inspiration" in *Dei Verbum*, nevertheless, the constitution acknowledged to some extent that the apostolic tradition was not always distinguished so sharply from the "ecclesiastical tradition" (*tradition ecclésiastique*).

[108] Ibid., 113.

[109] Ibid., 114-25.

Fathers—starting with Clement of Rome and going up to John Damascene—to argue that there was among these authors a practical equivalence between an understanding of Scripture's inspiration and tradition's inspiration. A further absence among the Fathers of a sharp distinction between the apostolic tradition and ecclesial tradition was for Benoit additional evidence that they saw continuity between the two.[110]

Benoit then posed the question: how should one distinguish the inspiration of the oral, apostolic tradition, which contributed to constituting the deposit of faith, from that inspiration which in the Church conserves and explicates this deposit? Benoit admitted to this question's complexity and contentiousness.[111] He did not seem to have the occasion or energy to tackle it head-on in this article, and he simply reasserted his intuition that the inspiration of the apostolic tradition was not identical with the ecclesial tradition's inspiration.[112]

He did, however, gesture towards evidence that this notion of inspiration in the Church was maintained into the Middle Ages, by footnoting G. Bardy and Yves Congar.[113] In this brief discussion of the Middle Ages, the expression "ecclesial inspiration" returned, referring exclusively to the postapostolic inspiration of the Church. In his conclusion, Benoit reiterated his terminological scheme to distinguish the different analogies of inspiration: pastoral (ecclesial), oral (apostolic), and scriptural. About this first category of "pastoral" or "ecclesial" inspiration, he wrote:

> Particularly the Holy Spirit remains in the Church, to whom Christ gave it; he inspired it until the end of the ages, but this inspirational motion no longer bears substantially new revelation. It assures the preservation, the explication, the legitimate development of the gift of faith received once and for all; it no

[110] Ibid., 122.

[111] Ibid., 123.

[112] Ibid., 124.

[113] Ibid., 124 n. 76; citing Congar, *La Tradition et les traditions*, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1960-63), 2:102, 108ff.

longer believes in a new Tradition of divine authority nor of canonical scripture.[114]

Benoit left to other theologians the "arduous" task of "clarifying in what this explication and development consist" and of discerning "in the Tradition that which goes back to the apostolic epoch and that which cannot be reclaimed from it."[115] Benoit felt that he had offered a sufficient start for this future research in his "analogies of inspiration," a terminological framework that gave more suppleness to "inspiration." He referred to his larger project as a "'*ressourcement*' of the notion of inspiration that recovered the Tradition as well as Scripture, and to a certain extent the Church."[116] His last qualification acknowledged the underdevelopment of the notion of "ecclesial inspiration."

When he returned to the topic of Thomas and Scripture's inspiration in a 1975 paper delivered at a congress in Rome commemorating the septcentennial of Thomas's death, Benoit chose to focus on the "progress of revelation" within "inspired tradition," not on "ecclesial inspiration."[117] He outlined elements of Thomas's thought that he considered useful for rethinking scriptural inspiration. Given the paper's occasion, had he thought "ecclesial inspiration" was Thomistic, one might have expected him at least to mention the expression in this article. He did not; instead, he devoted most of his attention to the argument that Thomas had some notion of the progress of revelation.[118]

On the surface, to speak of the "progress of revelation" instead of "ecclesial inspiration" was more faithful to Thomas's own terminology; at the same time, Benoit's analysis of the "progress of revelation" in Thomas harkened back to the deeper problematic that "ecclesial inspiration" was originally deployed to address: Scripture's *sensus plenior* and inerrancy. Benoit

[114] Benoit, "Inspiration de la Tradition," 124.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Benoit, "Saint Thomas et l'inspiration des écritures," 19-30.

[118] Ibid., 25-27, 30.

perceived, so it seems, that there were some benefits to situating ecclesial inspiration within the context of a theory of revelation and doctrinal/theological development. Given the prominence of the question of tradition and its development in the early stages of his usage of "ecclesial inspiration," the absence of any explicit mention of "ecclesial inspiration" at the end of his career should not be read as Benoit's repudiation of the concept; instead, by choosing to resituate the discussion around Thomas's understanding of revelation and its progress, Benoit was actually able to return more directly to Thomas's treatment of prophecy for insights, especially to the pregnant discussion of prophecy's variation over time.[119]

The language of revelation's progress was also consonant with some of *Dei Verbum*'s treatment of tradition. Benoit's own interpretation of the constitution led him to shift focus away from inspiration and toward revelation, its progress in history, and the development of tradition; this served to resituate his earlier thinking on ecclesial inspiration within a doctrine of salvation history and tradition. In the postconciliar period, Benoit rethought ecclesial inspiration—as present in Thomas's thought—more in the context of a theory of revelation's progress and doctrinal development than in the context of biblical inspiration. He asserted that the thirteenth-century theologian's treatment of prophecy could offer certain key principles for a theory of doctrinal development, even if Thomas himself never had occasion to speak directly to the problematic of doctrinal development.[120]

CONCLUSION: "INSPIRATION" RESITUATED IN THE CHURCH

The exigencies and progression of preconciliar discussions on biblical inspiration and canonicity led Benoit to perceive a need to examine the social and ecclesial contexts which formed

[119] Ibid., 26, n. 11; citing *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 6; q. 1, a. 7.

[120] Benoit, "Saint Thomas et l'inspiration des écritures," 26; see Christopher Kaczor, "Thomas Aquinas on the Development of Doctrine," *Theological Studies* 62 (2001): 283-302.

the biblical canon and to appreciate their unique animation by the Spirit, especially in the apostolic and canon-formation period; this led him to reconsider the traditional presentation of Thomas's prophetic inspiration and to propose "ecclesial inspiration" as a type of inspiration that existed in the post-apostolic Church and that ensured the authentic interpretation of Scripture. Benoit's development of "ecclesial inspiration" progressed chiefly along the lines of his discussions surrounding Scripture's inspiration, although many of the major issues of these discussions overlapped simultaneously with debates in the theology of tradition and revelation.[121] It was the fruitful relating of the two—inspiration and tradition—that ultimately served as a breakthrough in Benoit's work. Given that Thomas was an important witness within the theological tradition he was trying to describe, Benoit saw no reason not to import and transpose certain helpful resources in Thomas's thought. While never professing explicitly the existence of ecclesial inspiration, much of Thomas's own approach to Scripture, prophetic inspiration, and revelation pointed towards its assumed existence.

Benoit's "ecclesial inspiration" warrants the designation "Thomistic" chiefly because of the way Thomas's thought was both applied and not applied to the concept by Benoit. His ability to parse out the essential elements of Thomas's thought on revelation and inspiration—the principles—from the unessential and contingent expressions of his thirteenth-century context proved pivotal in developing his argument for the existence of ecclesial inspiration. Thomas's correlative usage of "revelation" and "inspiration," once discerned, allowed Benoit to propose a new perspective on the early twentieth-century debates on scriptural inspiration, which often made appeal to Thomas but with varying degrees of sensitivity and sophistication. Unhinging prophetic inspiration from speculative judgments and considering practical judgments as inspired enabled Benoit (1) to address the new issues of Scripture's multiple authors and canonicity and (2) to develop "pastoral

[121] Tradition was addressed more directly in other contexts by Benoit, "La Tradition selon O. Cullmann," in *Exégèse et théologie*, 2:309-317.

inspiration" that could categorize actions as well as words. Attending to the broader context of Thomas's treatment of prophecy in his doctrine of grace and salvation—as evidenced in a structurally sensitive reading of the *Summa Theologiae*—Benoit also was moved to consider the social formality of inspiration more deeply over time. When these considerations were brought into dialogue with contemporary problems surrounding canonicity and the *sensus plenior*, ecclesial inspiration was posited as an initial solution that Benoit left relatively underdeveloped.

From this, a final observation can be made about Thomas's method of biblical reading: the interpretation of Scripture never relied entirely on the individual effort of the exegete/theologian to explain or resolve away every difficulty presented by the biblical text that challenged or stirred human reason. Thomas's task and that of any theologian depended on the gift of faith for its starting point. The *Summa Theologiae* was meant to clarify this gift and to point to its root in God and in the Church's preaching and teaching.[122] In this respect, the eschatological ordering of the Church was also critical for showing up the link between inspiration and the Church; the Church, wrote Benoit, "still possesses that same Spirit who inspired revelation," and precisely because she is justified "to keep and present the faith to all men till the end of time, the Church has the authority of the magisterium whose teaching is ensured against error."[123]

The interpretation of Scripture undertaken by a Christian left open a space that could not be filled entirely either by human reason or by the Church's Magisterium (even though it safeguarded from error), but into which God's action could enter through the light of faith. This space allowed for the possibility of other types of divine inspiration—"inspiration" which "signifies any motion from outside"[124]—that are analogous to the more familiar models of prophetic inspiration, but not exactly identical with them. Benoit's "ecclesial inspiration"

[122] See *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 9, s.c.

[123] Benoit, "Inspiration and Revelation," 13.

[124] *STh* I-II, q. 68, a. 1; see Benoit, *Prophecy and Inspiration*, 70.

identified this space and offered a fruitful avenue by which Thomas's ecclesially rooted understanding of Scripture might be further appreciated.[125] The ecclesiocentric reading of Scripture understood in relation to inspiration, in turn, is critical for scholars wanting to integrate Thomas's scriptural commentaries into his broader theological method.[126]

[125] Benoit, "Inspiration de la Tradition," 126.

[126] An ecclesio-centric approach to Thomas's scriptural commentaries was outlined in M.J. Le Guillou, *Christ and Church: A Theology of the Mystery*, trans. Charles E. Schaldenbrand with preface by M. D. Chenu (New York: Descleé, 1966), 14: Chenu's preface summarized nicely how the "Church is the place of Mystery, the community of the Word of God, and the organism of faith, in which understanding is *theology*."

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HYLOMORPHIC ELEMENTS AND THE CELL THEORY: A BASIS FOR BIOLOGICAL LAW?

MICHEL ACCAD

University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco, California

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit. (John 15:5)

THE CELL THEORY, also known as the cell doctrine, expresses the major biological insight that emerged in the wake of the invention of the microscope and the discovery of the structure of living organisms. The three tenets of the theory, formulated over a course of two decades in the mid-nineteenth century, are commonly articulated as follows:

(1) All living organisms are composed of one or more cells.
(2) The cell is the basic unit of life.
(3) Cells come from pre-existing cells.

The first two tenets of the theory were proposed by Theodor Schwann (1810-82) and Matthias Jakob Schleiden (1804-81), who initially thought that cells come to be by a process of crystallization of inorganic elements. That idea was later rejected by Robert Remak (1815-65) and Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), who proposed the third tenet of the theory, establishing cellular generation as proceeding exclusively from pre-existing cells, a principle later translated as "Omnis cellula e cellula."[1]

[1] L. Wolpert, "Evolution of the Cell Theory," *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 349 (1995): 227-33.

To this day, biological observations remain in keeping with the tenets of the cell doctrine as enunciated a century and a half ago. However, ever since its first articulation, the doctrine has confronted scientists with nagging philosophical questions. For example, the cell theory has provoked disputes about the nature of the relationship between the cellular parts and the whole organism; it has prompted a search—so far fruitless—for more fundamental, subcellular loci of vital activity; and, to the frustration of biologists and philosophers wedded to a reductionist understanding of nature, it has suggested a realm of natural action among living species distinct from that of the inorganic elements.[2]

To my knowledge, the cell theory has not received an explicit treatment within a hylomorphic framework, that is, within the framework of natural philosophy established by Aristotle and further clarified by St. Thomas Aquinas. In this article, I will show that the cell theory points to a parallel between the properties of elements as explained by Aristotle and Aquinas, and the properties of cells revealed by modern biology. Such a parallel might prove helpful in firming up our philosophical understanding of biology and might guide further hylomorphic interpretation of modern empirical findings.

I. HYLOMORPHIC ELEMENTAL THEORY

An element is "the primary component immanent in a thing, and indivisible in kind into other kinds."[3] The hylomorphic account of nature establishes that the material world is made up

[2] See, for example, A. Dröscher, "Edmund B. Wilson's *The Cell* and Cell Theory between 1896 and 1925," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 24 (2002): 357-89; F. Duchesneau, "Determinism and Probability in the Development of the Cell Theory," *Progress in Physics and Molecular Biology* 112 (2012): 34-40; and M. Richmond, "T. H. Huxley's Criticism of German Cell Theory: An Epigenetic and Physiological Interpretation of Cell Structure," *Journal of the History of Biology* 33 (2000): 247-89.

[3] Aristotle, *Metaphys.* 5.3.1024a26-27, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, trans. H. H. Joachim (New York: Random House, 1968). All texts from Aristotle are drawn from this collection of translations.

of a noninfinite plurality of elements.[4] Elements may exist as *simple bodies,* composites of prime matter and of an elemental substantial form,[5] or be part of *mixed bodies*, which are composed of more than one element.

As simple bodies, elements have extension and may be divisible according to quantity: a body of water, for example, can be divided into parts by an efficient cause (say, a bucket) and each part of water is water. An element may corrupt, and corruption of an element leads to the generation of another element of a different kind.[6]

In a mixed body, the elemental substantial forms of the constituent elements cease to be in act, but the elemental powers are retained—albeit in an attenuated way.[7] Accordingly, a body made up, for example, of a certain proportion of fire and water will manifest a certain heat and a certain moisture in proportion to the constituent elements, and this degree of heat and moisture will be the proper disposition for the substantial form of the mixed body.[8] The phenomenon by which, in a

[4] I am presenting the hylomorphic precepts here in a terse, general form, without their philosophical justifications. For a more detailed analysis of the theory, readers may wish to consult Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas on Matter and Form and the Elements: A Translation and Interpretation of the "De Principiis Naturae" and the "De Mixtione Elementorum" of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), parts I and II.

[5] "the elemental bodies are simple and there is no composition in them except out of matter and form" (*ScG* III, c. 23 [trans. V. Bourke]). (All texts from Aquinas are drawn from the online collection maintained by the Dominican House of Studies and found at http://dhspriory.org/thomas.)

[6] "for these [elements] change into one another (they are not immutable as Empedocles and other thinkers assert)" (Aristotle, *Gen. et Corr.* 2.2.329a35 [trans. H. H. Joachim]).

[7] "The constituents, therefore, neither persist actually, as 'body' and 'white' persist: nor are they destroyed (either one of them or both), for their 'power of action' is preserved" (*Gen. et Corr.* 1.10.327b29-31).

[8] "So, then, by remitting the greatest qualities of the elements, there is constituted from out of these qualities some medium quality which is the proper quality of the blended body, differing nevertheless in diverse things according to the diverse proportion of the blend. And this quality is, in fact, the proper disposition for the form of the blended body, just as the simple quality is for the form of the simple body" (Aquinas, *De Mixt. Elem.*, ll. 53-54 [trans. P. Orlowski]). The question about the identity (e.g., "fire," "water," etc.) and number of elements will be taken up below.

mixed body, elemental substantial forms are not in act while elemental powers are retained is commonly referred to as the "virtual presence" or the "presence by power" of the element in the mixed body.[9] It is because the elemental forms are not in act that contrary elements can coexist in the mixture, since otherwise it is impossible for contrary things (e.g., fire and water) to be in the same thing at the same time. But the coexistence of different species of elements in the mixture also involves the retention of attenuated contrary powers, which cause the elements to act on one another reciprocally so that they "combine" or "blend" within the mixture.[10] Aquinas articulates this coexistence of elements as being "blended in truth" as opposed to being "blended in sense," that is, seemingly blended, which would be the case for, say, a mixture of tiny seeds. Such a mixture may appear to be a homogeneous blend but in reality each seed exists as such, with its individual substantial form in act.[11]

[9] For the admittedly (and perhaps unavoidably) equivocal terminology employed by Aristotle and Aquinas, see C. Decaen, "Elemental Virtual Presence in St. Thomas," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 271-300.

[10] The following selected passages from *On Generation and Corruption* illustrate that the combination of elements in mixed bodies involves attenuated elemental contrarieties: "Thus it is clear that only those agents are 'combinable' which involve a contrariety—for these are such as to suffer action reciprocally" (1.10.328a33-35); "the 'elements' must be reciprocally active and susceptible, since they 'combine'" (2.2.329b23); "Perhaps we may suggest the following solution. (i) There are differences of degree in hot and cold. Although, therefore, when either is fully real without qualification, the other will exist potentially; yet, when neither exists in the full completeness of its being, but both by combining destroy one another's excesses so that there exist instead a hot which (for a 'hot') is cold and a cold which (for a 'cold') is hot; then what results from these two contraries will be neither their matter, nor either of them existing in its full reality without qualification. There will result instead an 'intermediate': and this 'intermediate', according as it is potentially more hot than cold or vice versa, will possess a power-of-heating that is double or triple its power-of-cooling, or otherwise related thereto in some similar ratio. Thus all the other bodies will result from the contraries, or rather from the 'elements', in so far as these have been 'combined'" (2.7.334b8-17).

[11] "and thus there will not be a blend in truth, but according to sense, just as happens in the aggregation of bodies imperceptible because of [their] smallness" (*De Mixt. Elem.*, l. 16). See also Decaen, "Elemental Virtual Presence," 272 n. 2.

Finally, while the elemental properties are retained in the mixture, the elements can be recovered upon corruption of the mixed body.[12] The phenomenon of recovery is expressed in the following passage:

> [Bodily corruption] comes about from the fact that, when the principle which holds the individual contrary parts together is removed, they tend to whatever agrees with them individually according to their own natures, and so the dissolution of the body takes place.[13]

The "principle which holds the individual contrary parts together" is the substantial form of the mixed body. One should note the use of the term "individual" in referring to the contrary parts being held together by the substantial form, parts which then, upon corruption of the substance, "tend to whatever agrees with them individually according to their own nature." The passage therefore illustrates that the constituent elements retain some individuality within the mixed body (by their virtual presence in the body), and that these same elements will recover their own natures—and therefore their elemental form *in act*—after corruption of the mixed body.

To summarize, material elements enjoy the following properties:

(1) *Substantiality*: Elements can exist as "simple" bodies, that is, as substances, which are composites of an elemental substantial form and prime matter.
(2) *Divisibility according to quantity*: As physical substances, elements have extension and can be divided by an external efficient cause into parts of the same substance.
(3) *Corruptibility*: Elements are corruptible and corruption of a given element generates an element of a different kind.
(4) *Virtual presence in mixed bodies*: Elements enter into the composition of mixed bodies. Their substantial forms cease to be in act but their elemental powers are retained, in an attenuated way. In this state of "virtual presence," the elements enter into combination with one another in the mixed body.

[12] Bobik's use of the term "retrievability" (*Aquinas on Matter, Form, and the Elements*, 120) distinguishes the phenomenon from the more general "educibility" of forms from prime matter.

[13] *De Verit.*, q. 25, a. 6 (trans. R. W. Schmidt).

(5) *Recovery of elements upon corruption of complex body*: when a mixed body corrupts, the composing elements are recovered and follow their elemental nature.

II. Cells as Elements: Virtual Presence of the Part in the Whole

By identifying cells as "units of life," and by specifying that "all living organisms are composed of one or more cells," the cell doctrine attributes to cells an elemental character, as far as living organisms are concerned. Since hylomorphic elemental theory does not distinguish between elements of living versus nonliving substances, it may be instructive to examine the properties of cells in light of those elemental properties mentioned above, namely, those traits characteristic of elements *qua* elements and which have been deduced from first principles of natural philosophy. In other words, if cells are elements of life, it may be instructive to ask to what extent, if any, cellular properties correspond to those properties attributed to elements by hylomorphic theory.

Before examining cells in light of hylomorphic elemental theory, we will briefly review our empirical knowledge of them. In his biological treatise *Micrographia*, Robert Hooke (1635-1703) coined the term "cell" (alluding to the monastic *cella*, "small room") to describe the honeycomb-like appearance of plant tissue when seen under the microscope. An individual cell is an enclosed structure, or sac, whose outer wall is made of a lipid membrane and whose content, the protoplasm, is a fluid or gel-like substance which contains water and a variety of components: salts and ions, sugars, amino acids, proteins, and nucleic acids (e.g., DNA and RNA). Cells of certain organisms may also contain specialized intracellular structures called "organelles."[14]

To the best of our empirical knowledge, all living organisms consist of one or more cells, as stated by the cell theory.[15] Some

[14] Wolpert, "Evolution of the Cell Theory," 227-28.

[15] There are controversies in scientific circles pertaining to the origin and definition of life which has led some contemporary scientists to propose considering certain

organisms are unicellular while others are composed of multiple cells. Complex multicellular organisms are also composed of extracellular material (e.g., bone), but this material is made and laid down by cells, and is therefore dependent on them. All cells are metabolically active. Cells may be capable of increasing in size (cellular growth) or of dividing into daughter cells (cellular division). From the process of division, cells in multicellular organisms "differentiate," a term which conveys the notion that daughter cells, while remaining cells in their own right, manifest certain properties distinct from the parent cell. Cell differentiation is essential to the development of multicellular organisms, a point to which we will return. The basic characteristics of cells just sketched are essentially constant features of living organisms.

At this point we should recognize that an isolated, living cell is obviously itself a mixed body composed of more basic elements.[16] For the rest of the discussion, however, we will focus our attention on the properties of cells by considering the cell itself as a possible *organic* element, that is, an element of living organisms, as posited by the cell theory.[17] I shall now

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noncellular entities, such as viruses or RNA strands, as living organisms (see, e.g., P. Forterre, "Defining Life: The Virus Viewpoint," *Origins of Life and Evolution of Biospheres* 40 [2010]:151-60). In a hylomorphic framework, however, such controversies can easily be addressed. A virus, for example, cannot be considered to be a living organism since it is not intrinsically self-moving but requires the metabolic apparatus of a host cell to change and to be replicated.

[16] This is not simply a fact of observation—all living cells, for example, contain water and other molecules, as we saw—but also a necessary fact, if we hold to the definition of a living thing as a self-moving substance. Establishing the principle that "whatever is moved is moved by another," Aristotle explains: "Again, how can anything of continuous and naturally connected substance move itself? In so far as a thing is one and continuous not merely in virtue of contact, it is impassive: it is only in so far as a thing is divided that one part of it is by nature active and another passive" (*Phys.* 8.4.255a12-15 [trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye]). If the cell were the primary element of nature, it would not have distinguishing parts, and action of one part on another could not occur.

[17] Note that the discussion in this article is focused on cells as elements, given that the modern cell doctrine precisely invites such a focus. Another level of consideration might focus on molecules, atoms, or subatomic structures as elements of living bodies. Of course, modern empirical science typically considers atoms, or perhaps subatomic particles, to be "elements." The question of a hylomorphic interpretation of molecules,

argue that cells indeed enjoy properties analogous to those demonstrated for the hylomorphic elements, namely, substantiality, divisibility according to quantity, virtual presence in mixed bodies, and corruptibility with elemental recovery of cells upon corruption of the mixed body.

We can readily observe that a single-cell organism, such as a bacterium or an amoeba, manifests a unity of structure and a characteristic kind of activity that show that it is a substance in a hylomorphic sense: a complete and subsistent being. However brief its lifespan, a bacterium or an amoeba is *unum simpliciter*, a composite of prime matter and substantial form (which, in living things, is called a soul), and the same is true of other unicellular life forms.[18] Moreover, all unicellular life forms are vegetative substances, that is, substances manifesting power of metabolism, growth, and reproduction. Therefore, unicellular life forms are informed by a vegetative soul.

When it comes to the property of "divisibility according to quantity," the elemental character of cells is not so obvious. In contrast to inorganic elements, cells are not "divisible according to quantity" by an extrinsic efficient cause. Although a cell does have extension, applying a razor blade or sharp instrument capable of splitting will lead to cell death (and to the recovery of its composing inorganic elements), not to one or more other cells. On the other hand, as we saw previously, a cell "divides" according to an intrinsic process (cell division), which is the manifestation of its vegetative power of reproduction. Cell division leads to daughter cells of the same species, so, in this sense, a cell can be said to be "*intrinsically* divisible according to quantity."

The fact that cells self-divide according to quantity has some important consequences depending on whether the cell is from a unicellular or a multicellular species. In the case of a

atoms, and subatomic particles will be set aside here, although I will briefly touch upon this question at the end of the article.

[18] We will have a chance later in this article to examine the case of other unicellular life forms such as released seeds or gametes, and also individual cells "harvested" from a multicellular organism and placed in a culture dish. These also enjoy the property of substantiality.

unicellular organism, successive divisions lead to new instantiations of the species. In some cases, these instantiations may form a homogeneous colony. An example would be a clump of bacteria growing in a culture dish, and such a colony illustrates a type of living, homogeneous, "simple body." The colony made up of single cells can be divided according to quantity by an extrinsic efficient cause (say, a scraper). The division can be made at any place in the colony; each part obtained would itself be a colony of the same species; and the division could be repeated until one reaches the single-cell level, at which point no further extrinsic division could occur.

In the case of a multicellular organism, however, the situation is different. A dog, for example, is not "divisible according to quantity" by an extrinsic efficient cause. And even if one could divide the dog carefully to obtain a living part (say, a kidney) while preserving the animal, the part would never be the same as the whole.[19]

The distinction between the divisibility of a colony of unicellular organisms and the indivisibility of a multicellular organism reflects the fact that, in the latter, a cell—while remaining similar in kind (species) to any other cell in the body—"differentiates" from its parent cell. As a result, especially after successive divisions have given rise to a variety of tissues and organs, the body is not homogeneous with respect to cells. A cell in one part of the body is manifestly distinct from a cell in a different part. Furthermore, each cell in a multicellular organism is tightly bound to its neighboring cells, making division by an extrinsic cause (e.g., a knife) liable to cause severe trauma.

The binding of cells to one another in a multicellular organism (cell adhesion) is due to interactions between cell surface proteins. Empirical science has described a variety of adhesion molecules, and the chemical arrangements are of great complexity. Ultimately, though, these interactions between cells

[19] Some organisms, such as segmented worms, may replicate on the basis of the severed part. Still, it cannot be said that the part is the same as the original whole. It takes some time for the severed part to develop into a worm.

are due to electrochemical attractions between the cell surface molecules. Two daughter cells that bind together are cells which have differentiated so that one cell expresses surface molecules with features complementary to opposite surface molecules on the other cell. These opposing electrochemical properties, leading to reciprocal interactions between the cells, bring to mind the "contrary powers" postulated by Aristotle to be at the basis of the "combination" of elements in mixed bodies.

Despite the process of differentiation and the binding of cells to one another, cells in a multicellular organism continue to exhibit a basic cellular structure and to manifest basic vegetative powers (e.g., metabolic and reproductive powers). These powers, however, are present in an attenuated or modified manner in the multicellular organism. For example, unlike a single-cell substance (such as a bacterium), which will reproduce continually as long as the surrounding nutritive and environmental conditions support it, a cell in a multicellular organism is kept in check by the presence and action of the other cells of the body, which regulate its ability to divide. Similarly, the power of metabolism and growth of a cell in a multicellular organism is influenced by the other cells (and by the organism as a whole).

We can now see that the mode of being of a multicellular organism is analogous to the mode of being of a "mixed body" as described in the hylomorphic theory of elements. Indeed, from the moment of the first cell division, any daughter cell in a multicellular organism is not *unum simpliciter*, a composite of a single vegetative cell soul and prime matter, but, being combined with other cells in the body by virtue of electrochemical "contrary powers," it is intrinsically part of the organism and, therefore, must be informed by the substantial form of the organism. On the other hand, as we saw, the cell's reproductive and metabolic powers are retained, albeit in a modified way. As in the case of inorganic elements in a mixed body, we may say that cells in a multicellular organism are present, not in act, but "virtually" or "by power."

Moreover, in a way similar to that described for hylomorphic elements, cells "virtually present" in a multicellular organism can be recovered upon corruption of the body. For example, certain cell types that do not depend on high levels of oxygen and do not have a high metabolic rate may survive for many days or even weeks after the death of an animal. Examples include skin cells and certain types of stem cells. The survival of these cells beyond the death of the body means that the cells have recovered their unicellular status and thus their vegetative soul *in act*, and can survive as long as the decaying nutritive conditions in their immediate environment permit it. A similar phenomenon can also occur without involving the corruption of the body. Cells harvested from a plant or from an animal and placed in a petri dish also manifest the recovery of their unicellular vegetative status. The cells will go on living, growing, and reproducing in the culture dish individually (so long as nutritive medium is added to the culture dish). These cells will not form a plant or an animal anew.

Finally, to complete our analysis guided by the hylomorphic property of inorganic elements, we can address the corruptibility of cells. On the one hand, cells can corrupt into inorganic matter, a condition properly called cell death. On the other hand, we can occasionally observe in nature the transformation of a cell of a given species into a cell of another species. This usually happens by an extrinsic efficient cause. For example, the seed of a plum tree can be fertilized by genetic material from an apricot plant and this may yield a cell that has a nature distinct from that of a normally fertilized plum seed. If we agree that a cell has subsisted through the change, we can say that the apricot cell has corrupted and a *plumcot* cell has been generated. This particular process of "hybridization" is an example of a transformation whereby a prior cell species ceases to be and a new cell species comes to be.

To summarize the preceding discussion, we have seen that, in keeping with the hylomorphic understanding of elements, cells can exist as simple substances with vegetative powers of metabolism and reproduction. Hylomorphic philosophy holds that elements are divisible according to quantity. Indeed, cells are divisible according to quantity, bearing in mind, however, that cellular division is an intrinsic process. Hylomorphic philosophy holds that elements can combine and become "virtually present" in mixed bodies where their powers are retained in an attenuated fashion. Indeed, cells can exist as part of multicellular organisms, which can be considered organic mixed bodies in which the combined cells are present virtually with attenuated vegetative powers. Hylomorphic philosophy holds that an element virtually present in a mixed body can be "recovered" from it. Indeed, a cell virtually present in a multicellular organism can also be recovered as an individual cell in act. And just as a hylomorphic element is said to be corruptible into another element of a different species, so can a cell corrupt into a cell of a different species.

III. CELLS AS ELEMENTS: VIRTUAL PRESENCE OF THE WHOLE IN THE PART

In this section, I will describe an aspect of cell behavior by introducing a notion that is not part of established hylomorphic elemental theory. What I propose is a further elaboration on hylomorphic theory in light of what empirical science has revealed.

As we saw in the preceding section, cells may be separated from an organism and recover their cellular substance in act. But a cell separated from an organism of a given species retains the species identity from the parent organism. A cell obtained from a cat is a cat cell. It may be a cat hepatic cell if it comes from the cat liver, a cat dermal fibroblast if it comes from the cat skin, a cat oocyte (egg) if it comes from a cat ovary, but whatever its differentiation it will always be some type of cat cell. If grown in culture, the resulting cell line will be identified as a cat cell line in perpetuity.

The retention of species identity is not a simple matter of record-keeping meant to remind us of the origin of the cell. It reflects a real distinction in the nature of the cell or cell line. To begin with, there is a material relationship to the parent organism. For example, the genome of the parent organism is transmitted to all the daughter cells, and therefore to the separated cell. A cell line derived from a human tumor produces cells, each of which contain 23 pairs of chromosomes.

The retention of genetic material in the separated cell, however, is not the only consideration. A more important consideration is that the behavior and tendencies of the cell, its essence, can also be related to the parent organism. For example, a cat liver cell can be transplanted into another cat with relative ease, but not into a dog, where it will be rejected violently and die. The same, of course, goes for released germ cells, such as eggs, sperm cells, or seeds. These unicellular vegetative cell forms have a distinct nature in keeping with the organism of origin. A bovine sperm cell will only "seek out" and activate a bovine egg. A sheep egg will only be activated by sheep sperm. The resulting organism will always be of the species from which the germ cells are derived, and this is true also in cases of asexual reproduction, like parthenogenesis.

How we are to understand this retention of species identity in the separated cell is not obvious. To say that a separated cat liver cell is informed by a cat soul would be obviously incorrect. On the other hand, we cannot say that it is informed by an undifferentiated vegetative soul since, as we saw, it manifests certain properties unique to cells derived from cats. In particular, the vegetative powers of the cat soul are manifest, but its animal and sentient powers are not.

The reduction or attenuation of species powers in the isolated cell invites a consideration of the concept of virtual presence we encountered earlier but in reverse, as it were. In the case of the separated cell, it is the whole organism that seems to be present "by virtue" in the cell. This *virtual presence of the whole in the part* can be more clearly appreciated if we consider the phenomenon of reproduction of a multicellular organism which, as we shall see, seems to manifest an ontological change: a "recovery" from virtual to actual presence.

Let us first consider a simple case of asexual reproduction such as parthenogenesis. A released lizard egg, for example, is a vegetative cellular substance which must be "activated" to turn into a developing animal that will mature into a lizard. The activating factor may be a change in heat, humidity, or some other environmental factor. This mode of reproduction of the lizard confronts us with a problem of proportional causality. How can a vegetative organism (the released egg) and a physical agent (the heat), entities with powers lower than those of an animal, give rise to a sentient organism with higher powers? A similar problem arises even in the case of more complex, sexual reproduction. The released egg and sperm are also vegetative organisms. How do two vegetative entities produce an organism capable of developing animal organs?

It is this problem of proportional causality in reproduction which prompted Aristotle and Aquinas to invoke an "epigenetic" factor, residing outside the embryo, to explain the phenomenon of sexual reproduction of animals.[20] Since only an essence with animal powers could produce another animal, Aristotle postulated the existence of a transient formative power brought by the male parent through the semen to the embryo. This formative power, he argued, would guide development of the embryo until animal organs were sufficiently developed, at which point the organism would be disposed to accrue an animal soul. The theory, of course, has not been supported by empirical scrutiny. No such power has been discovered.

If, however, we consider that the animal is "virtually present" in the inactivated or unfertilized vegetative embryo, the problem of proportional causality is solved. The activation or fertilization of the egg produces a particular alteration in the vegetative substance, as a consequence of which the animal which was virtually present in the egg is now recovered. No other epigenetic factor need be invoked to dispose the vegetative matter to an animal soul since the "presence by power" of the animal in the vegetative cell is a sufficient cause for the transformation. One should note that the virtual presence of the animal in the vegetative cell is the presence of a *generic* animal, not of the specific instantiation of the parent animal that gave

[20] "Therefore, the very same power which is separated, together with the semen, and is called the formative power . . . is responsible for the formation of the body" (*ScG* II, c. 89 [trans. J. F. Anderson]). Aquinas goes on to explain that the "formative power" must be invoked because none of the powers proper to the embryo (reproduction, nutrition, growth) are sufficient to explain the formation of the body.

rise to the cell to begin with. It is “dog” that is virtually present in dog sperm, not Fido.

Recognizing that this proposal of virtual presence of the whole in the part is somewhat novel, I should note that Aristotle did consider that the soul could be “in potency” in certain organisms when he described the case of plants and worms which can replicate by simple division:

> just as in the case of plants which when divided are observed to continue to live though removed to a distance from one another (thus showing that in *their* case the soul of each individual plant before division was actually one, potentially many), so we notice a similar result in other varieties of soul, i.e. in insects which have been cut in two; each of the segments possesses both sensation and local movement.[21]

Unaware of the existence of cells, and unfamiliar with modern biological knowledge, Aristotle was unable to develop this notion beyond a simple description of this phenomenon of plant and animal division in lower life forms, from which he concluded that the soul was at once “actually one but potentially many” in the same substance. Our account of the virtual presence of the species in the cell refines this notion and expands it to the entire realm of living organisms, showing that cells are not just “units of life,” but *units of living species*.

IV. Toward Modern Principles of Biology

The foregoing analysis began with an attempt to examine the cell theory in terms of hylomorphic philosophy. We established that a strong parallel can be identified between the properties ascribed to elements by hylomorphic natural philosophy and those of cells. Elements must be substances, and an isolated cell is a substance. Elements must be divisible according to quantity, and cells divide according to quantity—albeit intrinsically. Elements can combine into mixed bodies, and when they do, they are “virtually present” in the mixed body where their elemental powers are retained. Cells, likewise, can combine into

[21] *De Anima* 2.2.413b17-21 (trans. J. A. Smith).

a multicellular organism, and when they do, their cellular (vegetative) powers are retained. An element is corruptible into a different element, and a cell may corrupt into a cell of a different species. In addition, we have also proposed that species forms (souls) are "virtually present" in isolated cells to give an ontological explanation to the observation that cells retain their species identity when separated from the organism of origin, an explanation that solves the problem of proportional causality in the phenomenon of reproduction of animals and higher organisms.

The cell theory, which has provided the point of departure of our discussion, can now be revisited and articulated more specifically as follows:

(1) All living organisms are composed of one or more cells.
(2) Cells are units of living species.
(3) All cells come from pre-existing cells by intrinsic cell division.
(4) A cell may corrupt into inorganic elements (cell death) *or*
(5) A cell may corrupt into a cell of a different species (cell transformation)

As mentioned earlier, the cell theory articulates biological facts which have essentially held true to this day. Despite finding no significant exception to these general facts, modern scientists have been reluctant to elevate the theory to the status of biological law, a hesitancy likely due in part to an attachment to biological reductionism that has proved difficult to shed.[22] Cells are clearly made up of matter that can be described atomically and molecularly by basic laws of physics and chemistry, but the existence and maintenance of the cell as such has so far eluded explanation by material principles.[23] To the extent that the properties of elements listed at the beginning of this article were

[22] D. Nicholson, "Biological Atomism and Cell Theory," *Studies in History andn Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 41 (2010): 202-11.

[23] See, for example, J. Gayon, "Defining Life: Synthesis and Conclusions," *Origins of Life and Evolution of Biospheres* 40 (2010): 231-44, as well as other articles in the same issue. This deficiency frustrates the hope expressed by Francis Crick that "The ultimate aim of the modern movement in biology is in fact to explain all biology in terms of physics and chemistry" (*Of Molecules and Men* [Seattle, Wa.: University of Washington Press, 1966] 10).

derived apodictically by Aristotle,[24] the fit between elements and cells that we have presently identified may give us the necessary confidence to consider the cell theory as a law of nature, a consideration that might prove useful in addressing problems pertaining to the philosophy of nature.

For example, if the cell theory can be considered a law of nature, questions regarding the origin of life from inorganic elements, as well as those pertaining to the diversity of life forms, are likely to benefit from such an anchor.[25] Furthermore, the biological precepts obtained through our hylomorphic framework allow the possibility of transformation of one biological species into another.[26] This opens the door to making hylomorphic philosophy compatible with the notion of descent and multiplication of species from common ancestors, a compatibility that has heretofore been commonly rejected.[27]

Beyond questions related to the origin of life and to the multiplication of species, the proposed enunciation of biological

[24] An obviously important condition to which I will return at the end of the article.

[25] Scientific laws in general have been weakened by the modern shedding of formal and final causality, but biology suffers particularly. Evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr has frequently lamented the lack of a biological law and pointed to this deficiency as an explanation for why evolutionary biology continues to be mired in scientific controversies and difficulties. See, for example, "The Objects of Selection," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 94 (1997): 2091-4.

[26] Our hylomorphic cell theory even suggests a mechanism for this transformation. One of the current difficulties for modern evolutionary theory is to identify the locus where natural selection exerts its effect, the so-called "selecton" or object of selection. The gene itself has been found wanting in that regard, and theoretical biologists are now turning their attention to other candidates, such as the cell, the individual member of the species, or even entire populations. Our new articulation of the cell theory suggests that the cell itself could indeed be the sought after "selecton." See Mayr, "The Objects of Selection."

[27] See, for example, F. O'Rourke, "Aristotle and the Metaphysics of Evolution," *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 3-59. On the other hand, Antonio Moreno made a persuasive case for the possible compatibility of evolution with hylomorphism in "Some Philosophical Considerations on Biological Evolution," *The Thomist* 37 (1973): 417-54. In keeping with Moreno's analysis, it seems that hylomorphic principles may be all the more helpful to modern evolutionary theory given that the latter greatly struggles with the concept of species, a concept foundational to the idea of evolution to begin with. On that point, see E. Mayr, "What Is a Species and What Is Not," *Philosophy of Science* 63 (1996): 262-77.

law may also have applications for ontological problems related to the beginning and end of human life. In a recent article, for example, I showed that understanding the concept of "virtual presence" of cells in whole organisms, coupled with the hylomorphic definition of life, helps avoid conceptual errors that arise when organs separated from the body are described as being "alive." Avoiding such errors clarifies the debate on the ontology of brain death and the status of transplanted organs.[28] I also believe that the proposed biological law, particularly its articulation of the species identity of cells, can shed light on the issue of the timing of "ensoulment" of human persons. As I have shown in the preceding section of this article, the notion of "virtual presence" of the species in the cell obviates the need to invoke an epigenetic factor to make the embryonic matter apt for a human form and lends credence to the proposal that embryos are ensouled at the moment of conception.[29]

Other issues of ontology in the life sciences will likely also benefit from an agreement on biological law. Examples include questions related to the ontology of cancers, parasites, stem cells, "xenotransplants," to name but a few. Beyond the life sciences, the relationships expressed by the cell theory could conceivably inform ethical decisions, in so far as social structures like families, communities, and societies are frequently considered on the model of organisms. The same could be said about some theological notions. The concept of the "virtual presence" of the part in the whole and of the whole in the part may stimulate reflection on the relationship between Christ, his mystical body, and its members, for example.

Of course, confidence in this hylomorphic approach to biological law would be greatly enhanced if we could also relate hylomorphic elemental principles to the findings of modern empirical science regarding the realm of the inorganic. To identify elements as water, fire, earth, and air will not do,

[28] M. Accad, "Of Wholes and Parts: A Thomistic Refutation of 'Brain Death'," *Linacre Quarterly* 82 (2015): 217-34.

[29] In my opinion, recent attempts to defend the immediate ensoulment position have not been faithful to hylomorphic principles. This topic deserves a more extensive treatment than can be allowed here.

especially if these terms are understood according to their common usage. Perhaps the hylomorphic insights about cells revealed in our analysis will provide an impetus to re-examine the physical treatises of Aristotle anew and, if possible, identify and resolve the apparent error.[30] I must point out, however, that the hylomorphic properties I reviewed in this article do not depend on the theory of the four elements, so the hylomorphic interpretation of the cell doctrine need not be threatened by a lack of clarity in that regard. Nevertheless, it is fair to assume that until hylomorphism can provide a cogent interpretation of modern molecular, atomic, and subatomic phenomena, it will have difficulty reasserting itself as a system of understanding of nature acceptable to a broad audience.

Furthermore, a deeper philosophical insight into the concept of "virtual presence" seems necessary to boost confidence in this hylomorphic proposal for biological law. While virtual presence allows us to describe mixed bodies in a way that remains faithful to the fundamental tenets of hylomorphism, the notion does not yet amount to an explanation of the mixed body that is derived from principles of ontology and motion. An elaboration on that aspect of elemental theory would greatly expand and buttress the hylomorphic understanding of nature.

CONCLUSION

An examination of cell behavior in light of the hylomorphic theory of elements indicates that a cell is a type of hylomorphic element. This elemental character of the cell can prompt us to expand the cell doctrine beyond its nineteenth-century articulation, and more confidently to consider the new formulation of the doctrine as a law of nature. Anchoring the interpretation of natural biological phenomena to this law could provide a way forward in regard to a variety of problems and dilemmas of modern empirical science that, at their root, are due to

[30] In his attempt to update hylomorphism to the findings of modern science, Bobik has pointed to subatomic particles as possible examples of physical elements. I have reasons to disagree with his opinion but cannot do so in the scope of this article.

philosophical uncertainties and hesitations stemming from an attachment to materialist reductionism. Any such progress, however, will likely first require finding compatibility between hylomorphism and more fundamental aspects of physics. It is my hope that the present insights can stimulate further inquiry and narrow the gap that separates the holistic hylomorphic account of nature from the empirical findings of modern science.[31]

[31] I wish to express my gratitude to Michael Dodds, O.P., for his guidance with earlier versions of this manuscript. I also thank two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

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THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF COMMON GOODS

BENJAMIN L. SMITH

Aquinas College
Nashville, Tennessee

EVERY SCIENCE includes a specific subject matter, common and proper principles, and proper conclusions. The principles are the indemonstrable starting points of demonstration within the science, including axiomatic propositions and foundational notions. The principles of the practical sciences are precepts related to ends, and the architectonic principle of all practical science is the ultimate end.[1] The notion of the common good and the principle of the primacy of the common good are important for all practical sciences. Indeed, a right understanding of the meaning and importance of the common good is an essential element of any species of wisdom about practical matters and for the exercise of prudence. The purpose of this article is to define the common good in general and explain its importance. Although the political common good will be discussed, the aim of this essay is to define the common good as a general category of goods. The question "What is a common good?" needs to be addressed prior to defining the specifically political common good.

Defining the common good in general is timely because there has been a consistent distortion of the meaning of the common good among some Thomist commentators beginning with Jacques Maritain and reaching to contemporary proponents of the New Natural Law theory. Maritain consistently argued that

[1] Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Politicorum*, pref., 1.

the common good of the political community is subordinated to the individual good of personal happiness, whether natural or supernatural.[2] He was supported in this interpretation by Ignatius Eschmann.[3] Charles De Koninck opposed Eschmann, arguing that Eschmann misunderstood the unity of the common good.[4] More recently, proponents of the New Natural Law theory have argued that the political common good is merely instrumental to more basic goods and John Finnis—a leading representative of this group—has defined the common good as an aggregate of individual goods.[5] The "instrumental interpretation" of the common good has been vigorously opposed by Lawrence Dewan, Michael Pakaluk, and John Goyette.[6] In general, this article supports the efforts of those opposing Maritain, Eschmann, and the New Natural Law theory.

I. Preliminary Theses and Distinctions

Since the common good is a version of the good it will prove helpful to summarize some relevant theses about the good; these theses may seem basic and remote but they are important. Following Aristotle, Thomas teaches that the good is that which

[2] Jacque Maritain, *Man and the State* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); *The Person and the Common Good* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1948); *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*, trans. Doris Anson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943).

[3] I. Th. Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," *The Modern Schoolman* 22 (1945): 192.

[4] Charles De Koninck, *The Primacy of the Common Good*: *Against the Personalists*, repr. and trans. in *The Aquinas Review* 4 (1997): 11-131. Originally: *De la primauté du bien commun contre les personalistes* (Quebec: Edition de l'université Laval, 1943).

[5] John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); "The Public Good: The Specifically Political Common Good in Aquinas," in *Natural Law and Moral Inquiry: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Politics in the Work of Germain Grisez*, ed. R. George (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998), 176, 179, 183-87; *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 247.

[6] Lawrence Dewan, "St. Thomas, John Finnis, and the Political Good," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 337-74; Michael Pakaluk, "Is the Common Good of Society Limited and Instrumental?" *The Review of Metaphysics* 60 (2001): 57-94; John Goyette, "On the Transcendence of the Political Common Good: Aquinas versus the New Natural Law Theory," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 13 (2013): 133-55.

all things desire; it is the desirable objective that stimulates intention, desire, or natural movement. In this perspective, the good (or the perception of the good) is prior to intention and desire. Rational creatures cognize something as good prior to intention; animals sense that something is good prior to desire; plants and inanimate substances naturally move towards that which is desirable for them proximately by natural inclination but ultimately by divine providence. Accordingly, the good, understood as that which is desirable, operates as a final cause, moving agents to action. And something is perceived to be desirable insofar as it is perceived to be perfective, for, according to Thomas, all things seek their own perfection, namely, the actualization of their natural powers.[7]

However, not everything that is desired is really good. Sometimes we err about what is perfective; sometimes we pursue an inferior sort of perfection when we should not; sometimes we pursue a perfection in the wrong way or in the wrong context. Nevertheless, the good and perfection are synonymous. For this reason, Thomas affirms that goodness is really the fullness of being, for what makes something complete and perfect is the actualization of its being. Goodness is simply the full realization of being proportionate to a given subject. In fact, Thomas insists that the name "good" does not really add anything to its subject other than a certain relation.[8] Good does not signify any distinct property, rather, it signifies that which actualizes and therefore perfects a given subject.

Thomas divides the perfection of being in a way that mirrors his universal division of being into act and potency. Something becomes good insofar as it is actualized and perfected in its species-specific powers. The cause of actualization, which is to say the cause of perfection and goodness, is not identical to that which is perfected. Nevertheless, the cause of perfection is desirable because it is the perfective actuality desired by the imperfect subject. Thus "good" may be said of that which is

[7] *STh* I, q. 5, a. 1; I *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 1. See Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 85-86.

[8] *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1.

perfected insofar as it has become perfect and it may be said of that which causes perfection because it is perfective. And since "good" may be said not only of that which is perfected within the agent but also of that which perfects—the perfective cause—it follows that the good of a thing may be external to the perfected subject, or at least that the *materia circa quam* may be external. In this way the good is transitive, for it directs an agent to something outside of himself. Indeed, among things that come to be perfected, it is necessary that the cause of perfection be external to the substance of that which is perfected. For this reason, Thomas distinguishes between an internal end and an external end: the former is a perfection in the perfected subject, whereas the latter is something outside of the subject that causes perfection. The external end perfects something within the agent, but it is not itself in the agent. Examples include production goods, physical possessions, exemplar models, and relations *ad alia*.

Therefore to the first it must be said that we may acquire some good in multiple ways: in one way, just as a form existing in us, as health or science; in another way, as something done by us, just as the builder acquires his end by building the home; in another way, just as some good held or possessed, as he who buys, acquires his end by buying the field.[9]

Now it may happen that something extrinsic is the end not only as something done, but also as possessed or acquired, or even as represented, just as if we

[9] *STh* I, q. 103, a. 2, ad 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod bonum aliquod consequimur multipliciter, uno modo, sicut formam in nobis existentem, ut sanitatem aut scientiam; alio modo, ut aliquid per nos operatum, sicut aedificator consequitur finem faciendo domum; alio modo, sicut aliquod bonum habitum vel possessum, ut ille qui emit, consequitur finem possidendo agrum." All texts from the *Summa theologiae* are taken from the Leonine Edition: *Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita,* t. 4-5: *Pars prima Summae theologiae* (Rome: Ex typographia polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1888-89); *Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita,* t. 6-7: *Prima secundae Summae theologiae* (Rome: Ex typographia polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1891-92); *Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita,* t. 8-10: *Secunda secundae Summae theologiae* (Rome: Ex typographia polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1895-97-99); *Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita,* t. 11-12: *Tertia pars Summae theologiae* (Rome: Ex typographia polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1903-6).

were to say that Hercules is the end of the statue, which was made to represent him.[10]

So, the good is divided into internal perfections and the external cause of perfection; it is divided into the actualized and the actualizing; it is divided into the internal and external. Thomas further divides the good into the individual and the common.

II. Defining the Common Good

Thomas compares and distinguishes individual and common goods in a variety of ways. The common good is communicable, whereas the individual good is incommunicable; that is, the individual good is not the kind of good that can be shared. It is private and exclusive. My health is my health and it cannot be directly shared by anyone else; it is not the health of another. To be sure, my health may indirectly contribute to the good of another, but only by occasioning a different perfection. It directly perfects me and no else. Again, my money may be used to the benefit of others, but only by its no longer being in my possession. By contrast, the common good is common because it may be shared, that is, it is a good that perfects more than one. The victory of the army is shared by all its parts, and the procreation and education of children perfects both parents. For this reason, Thomas says that the common good is a good common to many whereas the individual good is the good of one, which means that it is communicable (or sharable).[11] This

[10] *STh* I, q. 103, a. 2, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 5:455): "Contingit autem aliquid extrinsecum esse finem non solum sicut operatum, sed etiam sicut possessum seu habitum, vel etiam sicut repraesentatum, sicut si dicamus quod Hercules est finis imaginis, quae fit ad eum repraesentandum."

[11] III *Sent.*, d. 30, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 (Moos ed., 3/2:954): "Whence because charity has an order, one ought to love himself more than any other, neighbor more than stranger, and friend more than enemy, and the common good more than the private good of one" ("Unde quia caritas ordinem habet, et plus debet diligere quisque se quam alium, et propinquos quam extraneos, et amicos quam inimicos, et bonum commune multorum quam bonum privatum unius"). References to the commentary on the *Sentences* are taken from the following editions: *Scriptum super Sententiis magistri Petri Lombardi*,

is the essential characteristic of the common good. But something is good because it is perfective. A good is communicable, and therefore common, because it is perfective of more than one. By contrast the individual good is incommunicable (not shareable) and does not perfect the many; it perfects only one, and for this reason it is individual. Accordingly, the individual good cannot be the direct good of a group because it cannot be shared by many, whereas the common good, in virtue of its communicability, is a group good. It is the kind of good that perfects and motivates a group as a whole; in this sense the common good is genuinely social. Indeed the common good is the cause of unity among the many that it perfects. The individual good cannot operate this way because it is not communicable and perfects only one.[12] Finally, the common good is a more universal final cause than the individual good. Every good operates as a final cause and something is good insofar as it is perfective. But the common good perfects the many whereas the individual good perfects one. For this reason, the common good is a more universal final cause.[13] These

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t. 3, 2 vols. ,ed. M. F. Moos (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1956); *Scriptum super Sententiis magistri Petri Lombardi*, t. 4, ed. M. F. Moos (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1947); *Commentum in quartum librum Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi,* in *Opera omnia* 7/2 (Parma: Typis Petri Fiaccadori, 1858), pp. 872-1259. See *STh* I-II, q. 96, a. 3.

[12] *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 11 (Leonine ed., 8:359): "Sed contra est quod diversae scientiae sunt politica, quae ordinatur ad bonum commune civitatis; et oeconomica, quae est de his quae pertinent ad bonum commune domus vel familiae; et monastica, quae est de his quae pertinent ad bonum unius personae" ("But on the contrary political science, which is ordered to the common good of the city, and economy, which is ordered to the common good of the home or family and monastic, which is about those things which pertain to the good of one person are diverse sciences").

[13] *De Virtut.*, q. 2, a. 2. *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 7:295): "Manifestum est autem quod bonum partis est propter bonum totius. Unde etiam naturali appetitu vel amore unaquaeque res particularis amat bonum suum proprium propter bonum commune totius universi, quod est Deus" ("But it is manifest that the good of the part is for the sake of the good of the whole. Whence also by natural appetite or love each particular thing loves its good for the sake of the common good of the whole universe, which is God"). *STh* II-II, q. 42, a. 2, ad 3 (Leonine ed., 8:321): "Ad tertium dicendum quod regimen tyrannicum non est iustum, quia non ordinatur ad bonum commune, sed ad bonum privatum regentis" ("To the third, it must be said that tyrannical rule is not

considerations are the grounds of Thomas's famous (or infamous to some) endorsement of the primacy of the common good.[14]

III. The Primacy of the Common Good

The common good is superior to the individual good because it perfects the many; its power to bring about perfection outpaces the individual good. This may be expressed syllogistically: (1) The good is said of the perfect, whether of that which is perfected or that which perfects. (2) But the common good is more perfective than the individual good. (3) Therefore, the common good is a greater good, for it is more perfective.

The common good is superior to the individual good and therefore it is rational that it should be loved and preferred to the individual good. This conclusion is affirmed by Thomas in many passages. For example in the third book of the *Summa contra Gentiles* he says that "it is better that a good bestowed on something be common to many, than that it be proper: because the common good is found always to be more divine than the good of one alone."[15] Earlier in the same text he says that "the particular good is ordered to the common good just as to an end: for the being of the part is on account of the being of

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just, because it is not ordered to the common good, but to the private good of the ruler"). See also III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 1; *ScG* I, c. 41.

[14] *STh* II-II, q. 47, q. 10 (Leonine ed., 8:358): "Quia igitur ad prudentiam pertinet recte consiliari, iudicare et praecipere de his per quae pervenitur ad debitum finem, manifestum est quod prudentia non solum se habet ad bonum privatum unius hominis, sed etiam ad bonum commune multitudinis" ("Therefore because to prudence pertains right counsel, to judge and command about those things which attain to the due end, it is manifest that prudence has a relation not only to the private good of one man, but also to the common good of the multitude"). Of course, a tyrant may subject the many to serving his individual good alone, but by doing so he does not make his individual good a common good and does not create a unified whole. Rather, he makes the many into servile instruments.

[15] *ScG* III, c. 69 (Leonine ed., 14:200): "Melius autem est quod bonum alicui collatum sit multorum commune, quam quod sit proprium: quia bonum commune semper invenitur esse divinius quam bonum unius tantum." This text is taken from *Summa contra Gentiles*, Leonine Edition emendatum ex plagulis de prelo Taurini (1961), vols. 13-16 (accessed September 25, 2016, on www.corpusthomisticum.org).

the whole; whence the good of the nation is more divine than the good of one man."[16]

It should be evident from the definition of the common good and the demonstration of its primacy that the essential feature of the common good is its communicability. However, further precision is required on this point because something may be common or universal in two relevant senses: it may be universal by abstraction and predication or by causality.

IV. Dividing the Common Good

Thomas first distinguishes the common good by predication and the common good by causality; this distinction played an important role in the debate between Eschmann and De Koninck in the 1940s. Eschmann criticized De Koninck for arguing that human beings are ordered to God as a common good. According to the former, we are ordered to God as the supreme good in whom our happiness is found. The decisive point for Eschmann was that God is the end of each person taken individually, because he is the source of beatitude; and since beatitude in God is the person's ultimate end and an individual good, it follows that the person is not ordered to God as a common good.[17] In his response, De Koninck claimed that Eschmann was confused about the different meanings of "common good."[18]

According to De Koninck, there are two senses in which Thomas uses the phrase "common good."

> The proper good of one person is never the proper good of another person. . . . A proper good may indeed be spoken as common to many

[16] *ScG* III, c. 17 (Leonine ed., 14:40). "Bonum particulare ordinatur in bonum commune sicut in finem: esse enim partis est propter esse totius; unde et bonum gentis est divinius quam bonum unius hominis."

[17] Eschmann, "Defense of Jacques Maritain," 193-97.

[18] Charles De Koninck, "In Defense of St. Thomas: A Reply to Father Eschmann's Attack on the Primacy of the Common Good," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 1 (1945): 229-33.

persons, but we are then using the term "common" in the sense of "common according to predication."[19]

De Koninck had already raised this distinction in his earlier *Primacy of the Common Good*.

> [T]he common character of the good must not be understood as a commonness of predication, but rather a commonness of causality. The common good is not common in the way that "animal" is in relation to "man" and "beast" . . . [20]

More recently Gregory Froelich has defended and developed the same thesis.[21] Thomas introduces the distinction in his commentary on the *Sentences* in reply to an objection. The objection argues that goods of the body are more common than the spiritual good, and since the more common a good is the more divine it is, it follows that we should seek the corporeal good more than the spiritual good. In order to avoid this conclusion, Thomas argues as follows:

> To the third, it must be said that something is said to be common in two ways. In one way through predication; however "common" of this sort is not the same in number found in diverse things; and in this way the good of the body has community [*communitatem*]. In another way *something is common according to participation of one and the same thing according to number*; and this community [*communitas*] is most able to be found among things that pertain to the soul; because through it is achieved that which is the common good to all things, namely God; and therefore the reason does not proceed.[22]

[19] Ibid., 229-30.

[20] De Koninck, *Primacy of the Common Good*, 51.

[21] Gregory Froelich, "The Equivocal Status of *bonum commune*," *The New Scholasticism* 63 (1989): 41, 43-53.

[22] IV *Sent*., d. 49, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 4, ad 3 (Parma ed., 7/2:1185). "Ad tertium dicendum, quod dupliciter aliquid dicitur esse commune. Uno modo per praedicationem; hujusmodi autem commune non est idem numero in diversis repertum; et hoc modo habet bonum corporis, communitatem. Alio modo est *aliquid commune secundum participationem unius et ejusdem rei secundum numerum*; et haec communitas maxime potest in his quae ad animam pertinent, inveniri; quia per ipsam attingitur ad id quod est commune bonum omnibus rebus, scilicet Deum; et ideo ratio non procedit" (emphasis added).

In this passage, Thomas distinguishes between two sorts of common goods: those that are one in number and those that are not. Goods of the body, like health and food, are goods common for all living corporeal natures. Yet they do not constitute a good that is one in number. Health is common to every healthy animal, but every instance of the perfection of health is a different instance; health is a good that is diversified, multiplied, and individualized among the many who enjoy it, and, as such, it is common only by predication. The same sort of thing may be said about the consumption of food. By contrast, the more important sense of the common good, the one that Thomas associates with God, is a good that is one in number but somehow shared by many. All things—in one way or another—are ordered to the *one* God.[23] The common good by predication is a good common to many taken separately and individually. As such it does not serve as the unifying common good of the whole as such; it is fundamentally not a group good. This can be explained in terms of numerical distinction. A group good must be one in number, otherwise it could not unite the community and be the good of one united whole as such. A sports team does not pursue many different victories, but one and the same goal, the team's victory. In fact, it is accounted a failure if one seeks exclusively individual laurels in team sports, the accumulation of personal honors, rather than the goal of the team. Such an athlete has failed precisely because he is not unified with his teammates in pursuit of numerically one good, namely, the victory of the team.[24] On the other hand, the good

[23] Although Thomas does not explicitly says so, it is hardly doubtful that he means that all things are ordered to God as an end and that God is the common good in that he is the ultimate final cause. If my interpretation is correct, then we have here an example of the common good by causality.

[24] By "numerically one," I believe Thomas means a single final cause. If a team wins a match, there are not multiple victories. The victory is a singular goal—if the team wins, it receives a numerical addition of 1 in the win column. This is the goal of the team. Of course, this victory may be ordered to further victories, but the goal in each case is one goal for the many members. So "numerically one" in this context means unified or singular finality—one goal as opposed to many. Again, the port to which a ship is going is a numerically one final cause. Imagine what would happen to the crew

common to many taken separately is common in the sense that it is multiplied among many. This is not really and truly a common good, but an individual good made common by division into many individual instances. The hallmark of the common good by predication is division and multiplication; the hallmark of the common good by causality is unity.

In the *Prima secundae*, Thomas distinguishes the real common good in just this fashion. In question 90, article 2, he famously argues that all law is ordered to the common good rather than the individual good. In the *corpus* of the article, he says that because law belongs to practical reason, it must be ordered to happiness, the first principle of practical reason. This conclusion is clear enough, but he immediately goes on to argue that law is ordered not to happiness taken individually, but to the happiness of the whole community, which as we shall see essentially consists of virtuous cooperation. Law is not ordered to individuated happiness. Indeed, Thomas's point is that law and the members of society are ordered to the good of the whole, which is greater than the good of the part, and this indicates a good that is really common rather than a good made common by predication. This point is made clear by Thomas's response to the second objection.

The second objection argues that insofar as law is directed to human acts, it is concerned with particular goods rather than the common good, since human acts are always "among particular things." Thomas responds thus:

> To the second it must be said that operations are indeed in particulars, but these particular things are able to be referred to the common good, not indeed according to a community of genus or species, but by a community of final causality, according to which the common good is called the common end.[25]

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and the ship if all the members of the crew attempted to steer the ship to different ports, i.e., to numerically many—multiplied—destinations.

[25] *STh* I-II, q. 90, a. 2, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 7:150): "Ad secundum dicendum quod operationes quidem sunt in particularibus, sed illa particularia referri possunt ad bonum commune, non quidem communitate generis vel speciei, sed communitate causae finalis, secundum quod bonum commune dicitur finis communis."

In this passage Thomas invokes a distinction between two senses of common that he had used in his earlier disputed questions *De Veritate*.

For something is called common in two ways: in one way through consequence [*consecutionem*] or predication, namely, when some one thing is found in many things according to one notion [*rationem*]; and thus that which is more common is not nobler but more imperfect, just as animal to man, and in this way the life of nature is more common than the life of glory. In another way [something is called common] through the mode of cause, just as the cause remaining one in number extends itself to many effects; and thus that which is more common is more noble, as conservation of the city than conservation of the family.[26]

These two passages taken together are decisive for determining the meaning of the real common good. First, there is a sense of common good that which depends on a community of genus or species. As the passage from *De Veritate* confirms, this sort of good is common only by predication, not by final causality; it is a commonality produced by the abstractive process of the mind. By contrast, the common good according to causality is a universal final cause; the common good is not a mere abstraction from concrete individual goods, but a universal first cause. Like any universal it is some one thing said of many, but unlike universal names or ideas it is not a being of reason. It is a real good—some actual perfective cause in things. Final causes are not abstractions; they are principles of actualization.

[26] *De Verit*., q. 7, a. 6, ad 7 (in *Opera Omnia*, vols. 21-22 [Rome: Leonine edition, 1882-], 22/1:207): "Dupliciter enim dicitur aliquid commune: uno modo per consecutionem vel praedicationem, quando scilicet, aliquid unum invenitur in multis secundum rationem unam; et sic illud quod est communius non est nobilius sed imperfectius, sicut animal homine, et hoc modo vita naturae est communior quam vita gloriae. Alio modo per modum causae, sicut causa quae una numero manens ad plures effectus se extendit; et sic id quod est communius, est nobilius, ut conservatio civitatis quam conservatio familiae."

V. Corollaries

It should be evident that there is a strong connection between internal goods and the individual good. An internal end is ultimately a perfection that inheres in the agent. An action motivated by such a final cause reaches its terminus in the agent himself. Exercise and eating properly produce the perfection of health internally to the individual exercising, and health perfects only the individual. As such, the end of this activity is an internal and individual good. Certainly many may possess health, but the perfection of health is inherent to a particular body, and as such, it is a good that cannot be shared: my health is not numerically the health of another. Any internal end, like health, will be an individual good: what is intrinsic to one cannot be shared by another. It follows that the real common good, which is distinguished by its communicability and universality, cannot be an internal good of the agent; it must be external to the many whom it perfects. It cannot be my health, emotions, predilections, and so on.

But if this is so—if the common good is external—how can it be a perfection? How does the common good belong to the good of a person? How is it the good of an individual part? If it is external, how can it be *my* perfection? These kinds of questions have led some to oppose the good of the person to the common good and to treat the primacy of the common good as if it involved a devaluation of the person. This concern would be legitimate if the good was said only of that which is perfected. That which is perfected—the perfected perfection—is an internal good, and consequently, an individual good. However, Thomas does not limit the attribution of goodness to the accomplished perfection; good is also said of that which perfects. The common good pertains to the good of the person, although it is not his *individual* good. It is the *common* good of the person; it is the good that a human person shares with others. Of course it is true that each thing naturally pursues its own perfection. However, often the cause of a thing's perfection is right order to an external shared good. There is something internal in any instance of loving the common good;

there must be some quantity, quality, action, or passion that rightly relates the agent to the external end. However, the relation is *ad alia* and terminates in another. When the Church in community adores God, the adoration of the assembly does not terminate in the members of the assembly, but in God himself. The common good may be external to an individual person, but it is not an alien good and it is rooted in something real about the person. In fact, the right order to the common goods of the family, particular societies, and political community are among the most important and highest sources of perfection.

The real common good is an external final cause, one in number, extended to many, and external to the individual person, but not alien. These conclusions shed new light on Thomistic practical philosophy and pave the way towards a deeper reappraisal of Thomas's political philosophy. However, it must be conceded that these conclusions also raise additional questions.

VI. Further Questions and Clarifications

According to the interpretation advanced in this exposition, externality and real unity are distinguishing features of real common goods. However, it must be admitted that when we consider common goods related to work, sports, family, society, and so on it is not clear how unity and externality work out in the concrete. In fact, even Thomas concedes that the political common good consists of many things and this is verified by any concrete example of the common good; often when we turn to the common good we find that it is composite, which suggests that perhaps the common good really is just an aggregate of individual goods after all. In order to respond to this difficulty it is necessary to consider the metaphysical structure of common goods.

In most cases, it is probably most accurate to place the common good in the category of transitive cooperative action. It is distinguished from the individual good and other forms of action by being a common cooperative action, that is, an action that is performed by many as an end. A common good is the cooperative action of a whole group. In this context, the modifier "cooperative" should be taken in a fairly literal sense. When an action is truly common its form requires coordinated, mutually dependent action on the part of multiple agents. In these instances the action in question is such that it can only be done or is done most effectively through cooperative action. This means that the action needs to be a kind of action that can only be accomplished by a whole or at least that is primarily and most effectively accomplished by a whole; the kind of good that requires a whole with certain parts. Many examples come to mind: constructing a house, playing team sports, having a good conversation, participating in a Bible study, playing chess, procreating and educating children, performing a symphony, the Church's worship of God, and so on.

I have described these kinds of actions as not only cooperative but "transitive" in order to bring out the way in which the common good "transcends" individual agents. These actions are transitive in the sense that they terminate in *materia circa quam* that is outside of the individual agent. The combined efforts of the military "terminate" in the matter of the enemy.

When these sorts of goods are operative, they cause the existence, order, and unity of their underlying communities. The Church does just happen to evangelize, worship, teach, and sanctify. Rather, the Church exists for this very purpose. Similarly, military organizations do not just happen to be apt for armed conflict. Rather victory in armed conflict is the *raison d'être* of military organizations (not advancing unrelated social agendas). The victory of the army is the action of a whole. Depending upon the historical context, different parts are required by a military group to defeat another group. For example, during the Napoleonic wars, skirmishing infantry, mainline regular infantry, light cavalry, heavy cavalry, horse artillery, carriage artillery, auxiliaries, and various levels of commanders all played different roles in the one and the same goal of defeating the enemy and they were all necessary to this end (to one degree or another).

Although I have chosen not to focus on political community in this article, I would be remiss to ignore the matter of the political common good entirely. Without going into detailed argument, it is evident that the political common good is *active happiness*.[27] It is well known that Thomas divides happiness in a variety of ways, but the most relevant division is that between contemplative and active: the former concerns transcendent, spiritual goods and ultimately God, whereas the latter primarily concerns the virtuous use of temporal goods: life, food, wealth, commercial exchange, the procreation and education of children, peace, and security. In this context the chief virtue is justice, but certainly regal prudence, political prudence, fortitude, and temperance are all important to one degree or the other. Political authority exists for the sake of advancing this good, and human laws must be in keeping with the natural law.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of this interpretation of the political common good is that it forces us to consider the question of whether active happiness is a common good. Even in a postliberal age like our own, it is still jarring to think of active happiness as something that can only be achieved effectively by political community, by the joint effort of a community united under law and authority. Indeed, if we were to take this thesis seriously, we might be forced to engage in a radical critique of current political and economic arrangements.

CONCLUSIONS

According to my interpretation, the common good is not the aggregate or sum of individual goods. An aggregate of individual goods is not really one but simply the adding up of many

[27] On the rationality of the active and contemplative life, see *STh* II-II, q. 179, aa.1-2; I *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 5, X *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 11; and X *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 12. On the comparison of the active and contemplative life, see *STh*. II-II, q. 181, a. 1; X *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 11 and 12. On primary happiness not belonging to political life, see X *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 11. On secondary happiness belonging to political life, see X *Nic. Ethic.*, 11 and 12 (active happiness defined); II *Sent.*, d. 41, q. 1; d. 34, q. 1, a. 4; III *Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 2; III *Polit.*, lect. 5. On the object of the active life, see *STh* II-II, q. 179, aa. 1-2; q. 181, a. 1, ad 1; and q. 182, a. 2 (love of neighbor).

really different individual goods. By contrast the real common good is one in number and genuinely shared by many. As such it is external to any individual person; it is genuinely the common good of the whole rather than the individual good of the part. It is a shared purpose that unites and perfects the many who pursue it. The inability to comprehend or appreciate this kind of good is often based on a reduction of the real common good, the common good by causality, to the common good by predication and abstraction. The latter is really an internal and individual good made common by abstraction. When the common good is reduced to an aggregate of individual goods, the root of social and interpersonal union is lost.

Real common goods are the basis of social unity, friendship, cooperative enterprises, and family. The real common good is genuinely shared and as such provides the basis for a new and distinctive way of life. Consider the changes that take place when men and women marry. In a relatively healthy marriage a new shared way of life is initiated, which is intensified by the birth of children. Indeed, we should expect that the common good of diverse forms of community gives rise to similarly unique and compelling forms of cooperation. By contrast, the neglect of the common good reduces everything to the level of the individual; it dissolves the basis of unity and introduces competition, faction, and strife. There is no shared good between us—only your good, which cannot be mine, or my good, which cannot be yours. In the absence of the common good, all other agents become actual or potential rivals. One of two outcomes follows: either an egoistic and competitive pursuit of the individual good or an artificially enforced equalization of individual goods. The breakdown of a marriage very often can be explained by the neglect of the common good. When the shared goods of husband and wife are subordinated to the separate individual goods of the partners, the spouses begin to look more to themselves than towards their shared purposes; the dissolution of the marriage often follows.

The problems with reducing the common good to the individual and internal are especially manifest in politics. Such reduction inevitably leads to destructive individualism, which is remedied by the worse "cure" of coercive egalitarianism. Both approaches are misguided because they neglect the primacy of the common good which perfects the many, grounds distinct species of prudence, justice, and love, causes real political unity, reduces factionalism, and ennobles political life. The common good opens before us the possibility of a way of flourishing together that transcends narrow individualism and coercive egalitarianism. At the same time, political life oriented by the common good remains *the good of the person*, just not his individual good. Serving the common good does not diminish but ennobles the human person.

For Thomas, the common good really differs from the individual good. The former is external, communicable, common, social, and superior, whereas the latter is internal, exclusive, particular, private, and inferior. It belongs to practical wisdom, especially political wisdom, to insist on this difference and to defend and explain the irreducibility of the common good. In the practical domain it is the task of wisdom to seek out, define, and expound the common purpose that can unite us with others, especially within the body politic. The importance of this task should be evident in our own time, for we desperately need a way to live and work together that goes beyond competitive individualism and coercive egalitarianism. To these ends, a right understanding of Thomas's doctrine of the common good remains an invaluable resource even today.

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HOLY TEACHING, HOLY PREACHING: THOMAS, THOMISTS, AND THE PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

ROMANUS CESSARIO, O.P.[1]

St. John's Seminary
Brighton, Massachusetts

I. *Ardet et Lucet*

IN 1658, Philip Howard, an English nobleman turned Dominican, purchased property in Flanders to accommodate the exiled English Province. Father Howard chose Bornhem, in part because of its proximity to the English Channel via the port of Antwerp.[2] Edward Fenwick arrived at Bornhem in 1784, five years before the Parisian assault on the Bastille. The English Dominicans also maintained an educational institution in Louvain, some thirty-six miles southeast of Bornhem, at the College of Saint Thomas Aquinas, whose motto was *Ardet et lucet*.[3] In all likelihood, Edward Dominic Fenwick did not

[1] This article was originally delivered as an address at the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2016.

[2] For a good account of the English College at Bornhem, see Raymund Palmer, O.P., "Bygone Colleges. Bornhem and Carshalton," *Merry England* 12 (February 1889): 310-24; (March 1889): 370-97. For historical and bibliographical information, see Pascal Majérus, *Ordres mendiants anglo-irlandais en Belgique: Monasticon, bibliografische inleiding tot de belgische kloostergeschiedenis vóór 1796*, nr. 43 (Brussels: Archives générales du Royaume, 2001), 259-304.

[3] Father Philip Thomas Howard (d. 1694) purchased Bornhem in 1658. Later in 1695, thanks to a legacy from the same Howard, who had been made a cardinal in 1675, the English Dominicans purchased a small house at 3-5 Krakenstraat in Louvain from which the English friars could study and teach in the university. This College of Saint Thomas Aquinas, erected in 1697 and closed down a century later, was sold in

frequent this College.[4] Still, whatever exposure to Thomist thought he received derived from the intellectual activity around Louvain, where a general study house of the Order, until its suppression under Josephism, flourished at the Flemish convent of Our Lady of the Annunciation—*Onze–Lieve–Vrouw Boodschap*.[5]

The founder of the Province of Saint Joseph, who was ordained a priest at Ghent in 1793, probably never mastered *Le thomisme vengé* by the erudite Belgian theologian, Charles René Billuart (d. 1757).[6] Even so, the eighteenth-century Austrian Netherlands, under Habsburg-Lorraine rule, witnessed a flourishing of Thomist authors and teachers. Overall, Thomists of the period engaged issues that the *Congregatio de auxiliis* (1602-5) controversy had generated as well as the associated questions of predestination, sacramental causality, and moral theology.[7] To avenge or to vindicate Thomas Aquinas generally meant Thomists getting the better of their Molinist adversaries. At Louvain, the English Dominicans joined ranks with other Thomists, as the published theses, including one on physical

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1804 and demolished in 1836. See Raymund Palmer, O.P., "Forgotten Colleges. The College of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Louvain," *Merry England* 16 (November 1890): 63-81. For bibliographical information about the College, see Majérus, *Ordres mendiants,* 306-15. See also E. Van Even in *Louvain dans le passé et dans le présent* (Leuven, 1895), 503-4.

[4] Palmer, "Forgotten Colleges," 75, 77, reports that Ceslas Fenwick, Edward's uncle, and Thomas Wilson came to Louvain in 1780 and that Raymund Tuite arrived in 1790. Palmer however does not mention Edward Fenwick.

[5] Dominicans first arrived at Louvain in 1228. In 1447, the convent on the Onze Lieve Vrouwestraat was erected as a general study house of the Order. The conventual Church still exists as a parish church, whereas the convent was demolished in 1784 under the orders of Emperor Joseph II (d. 1790). For further information, see Lieve De Mecheleer, *De orde van de dominicanen*, *monasticon, bibliografische inleiding tot de belgische kloostergeschiedenis vóór 1796*, nr. 35 (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2000), 334-38.

[6] Charles-René Billuart, *Le thomisme vengé de sa prétenduë condamnation par la constitution Unigenitus, adressé en forme de lettre á un abbé, par un religieux de l'ordre de St. Dominique* (Brussels: Jean Léonard, 1720).

[7] For some further information, see Reginald Lynch, O.P., "Domingo Bañez on Moral and Physical Causality: Christic Merit and Sacramental Realism," *Angelicum* 91 (2014): 105-26.

premotion, of an early eighteenth-century English Dominican, Thomas Dominic Williams (1660-1740), illustrate.[8]

Given the Thomist publications circulating during the late eighteenth century, including *Schola thomistica vindicata* by the Provençal Dominican James Hyacinth Serry (1659-1738), the young Fenwick had to realize that Aquinas and his commentators occupied a central place in the normative instruction of Dominicans.[9] In addition, Fenwick's intellectual formation would have profited from the renewal that the Master of the Order, John Thomas Boxadors (d. 1780), gave to Thomist studies. His 1757 instruction to the entire Order, "De renovanda et defendenda doctrina sancti Thomae," had been republished by the General Chapter of 1777.[10] At the same time, one may forgive the founder of the Province of Saint Joseph for not making the vindication of Aquinas his lifetime project. In 1794, the French Revolutionary forces that occupied Holy Cross Priory and College at Bornhem took Fr. Fenwick captive.[11] His American citizenship saved him from an uncertain fate.[12]

After his forced departure from the Continent, Fr. Fenwick spent about ten years in England as a missionary circuit rider.

[8] For further information, see Majérus, *Ordres mendiants,* 315. See also Romanus Cessario, "Hommage au Père Servais-Théodore Pinckaers, O.P.: The Significance of His Work," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 5 (2007): 1-16.

[9] Jacques–Hyacinthe Serry, O.P., *Schola thomistica vindicata, seu Gabr. Danielis è soc. Jesu tractatus theologicus adversùs gratiam se ipsâ efficacem censoriis animadversionibus confutatus. Quibus Moliniana inventa, pro fidei dogmatibus ab eodem Daniele venditari; Augustini doctrinam non exponi, sed impeti; scholam angelicam iniquè traduci ac sugillari, demonstratur* (Cologne: N. Schouten, 1706). The author was the chief historian of the *Congregatio de auxiliis* debate between Dominicans and Jesuits.

[10] See Benedict Ashley, *The Dominicans* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 169, 196.

[11] See *Edward Dominic Fenwick Papers 1803-1832: Founding American Dominican Friar and Bishop*, ed. and annotated by Luke Tancrell, O.P. (New York: The Dominican Province of St. Joseph, 2005), 11. Besides the record of his Dominican profession in 1790, the first document extant from Fenwick's pen inquires of Richard Luke Concanen about an American foundation.

[12] See Bede Jarrett, O.P., *The English Dominicans* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1921), 196.

From the letter he wrote to John Carroll in 1804, we know that the young Fenwick proposed to bring Dominicans to the United States in order "to execute in Miniature the plan of Bornhem College & Convent."[13] Fenwick's proposal was first realized in the short-lived Saint Thomas's College in Kentucky (1809-19). Other than by its patronage, however, this skeleton operation did little to promote the thought of Aquinas.[14] The frontier school seems to have welcomed young men for training in the humanities and religion, though documentation remains scant, namely, a few crumbled, practically illegible pages from a register that had been used to stuff a rat hole.[15] At the same time, the cofounders of the Province, Frs. Samuel Thomas Wilson (d. 1824) and William Raymund Tuite (d. 1833), each of whom had benefitted from studies at the English College in Louvain, provided the Province's first members with instruction in the humanities, philosophy, and "whatever of the sacred sciences were taught."[16] Wilson's own studies at Louvain were, on Fr. V. F. O'Daniel's account, "thoroughly Thomistic."[17] For his part, Fr. Reginald Coffey acknowledges that Wilson and Tuite "both were much better educated than Fenwick."[18] Given the challenges of frontier life, however, neither Wilson nor Tuite enjoyed the leisure to pursue their studies.

Although their speculative engagement with studies may have been curtailed, the first Dominicans in the United States maintained the Order's characteristic practical opposition to Jansenist rigorism. Evidence appears in another letter to Bishop Carroll from a Rome-based Irish Dominican: "It is the first time," wrote Richard Luke Concanen (d. 1810), later first

[13] Reginald M. Coffey, O.P., *The American Dominicans: A History of Saint Joseph's Province* (New York: Saint Martin de Porres Guild, 1970), 10, 11.

[14] For a maximal appreciation of the College, see V. F. O'Daniel, O.P., *The First Two Dominican Priories in the United States* (New York: Holy Name Society, 1947), 12-27.

[15] See Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 69-74, at 70.

[16] Ibid., 49, 50.

[17] See Victor F. O'Daniel, *A Light of the Church in Kentucky* (Washington, D.C.: The Dominicana, 1932), 8.

[18] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 46.

Bishop of New York, "I have ever heard of Dominicans being accused of lax doctrine. It must be that worthy and zealous man, Mr Badin, has poisoned his mind by reading Jansenistical authors."[19] Stephen Theodore Badin (d. 1858) was a diocesan priest—the first ordained in the United States—and French exile from the Revolution.[20] He was notoriously critical of the pastoral care Dominicans administered on the early trans-Appalachian frontier.[21] To the extent that Dominicans of this period usually had to defend themselves against Jesuits and other Probabilists, who considered Dominican moral discipline too strict, one may regard Badin's complaint as anomalous. Recall that in the first decades of the eighteenth century, Dominican Pope Benedict XIII (d. 1730) was obliged to defend his confreres against charges that their teachings appeared effectively indistinguishable from Jansenist doctrines.[22] In any event, one may reasonably assert that the earliest members of the Province exhibited at least a Thomist ethos, although pastoral demands kept them from a full-scale pursuit of Thomist learning.

The next milestone in the Province's engagement with the intellectual tradition of the Order occurs in 1834 when the sixty-ninth Master of the Order, Maurice Benedict Olivieri (d. 1845), arranged for the first two American Dominicans to study in Rome.[23] He also erected Saint Joseph's near Somerset, Ohio, as a *studium* of the Order. This first *studium*, as it were, of the Province was slated to occupy a three-room log cabin

[19] Ibid., 77.

[20] For further information, see J. Herman Schauinger, *Stephen T. Badin, Priest in the Wilderness* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1956), esp. chap. 8.

[21] For further information, see Victor F. O'Daniel, "Fathers Badin and Nerinckx and the Dominicans in Kentucky: A Long Misunderstood Episode in American Church History," *The Catholic Historical Review* 6 (1920): 15-45.

[22] For further information, see Romanus Cessario, "Premotion, Holiness, and Pope Benedict XIII (1724-30): Some Historical Retrospects on *Veritatis Splendor*," in *Theology and Sanctity*, ed. Cajetan Cuddy, O.P. (Ave Maria, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2014), 236-56.

[23] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 180. Brothers Thomas Grace and Raymond Young left for Rome after Easter in 1838.

built in 1822 by the abovementioned Fr. Wilson, who served as first provincial of Dominicans in the United States.[24] Still, in 1834 the circumstances of everyday apostolic life did not allow the members of the Province much time for intellectual pursuits. Father O'Daniel even notes the lack of an adequate physical plant in Somerset, and so estimates that the actualization of the priory and *studium* waited until 1839 under Provincial Charles Pius Montgomery (1838-43).[25] Another authority, the Roman historian Fr. Angelus Walz, places the actual beginning of this proto-*studium* in 1841.[26]

The year 1841, which saw the brief "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" administration come to Washington, also witnessed the arrival of a talented Northern Italian, Eugene Hyacinth Pozzo, who became the first Regent of Studies in the Province.[27] By the 1830s, Pozzo was active in the intellectual life of the Province of Piedmont, with its center at Turin. In fact, it required the intervention of the Holy See to release him for missionary work

[24] This is mentioned in the online history of the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception (www.dhs.edu/history/).

[25] O'Daniel, *First Two Dominican Priories*, 167, 168.

[26] Angelus Walz, O.P., *Compendium Historiae Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum "Angelicum," 1948), p. 612, writes the following about academic life in the Province: "In Statibus Foederatis provincia S. Joseph collegio in Somerset, anno 1834 concesso et anno 1841 incoepto, successit anno 1903 domus studiorum B. M. V. Immaculatae Washingtonii, cuius regentes pp. Kennedy et Waldron celebres fuerunt. Auctis fratribus atque actione et zelo doctrinali non solum plures ad cathedras catholicae universitatis Washingtonii constitutae professores adsciti sunt, sed et plurimi studentes academicos gradus in ea habere meruerunt. Prae multitudine alumnorum diviso studio, philosophi magnificum collegium D. Thomae in River Forest prope Chicago anno 1925 intrarunt" ("In the United States, the house of studies of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Immaculate, at Washington, whose regents, Fathers Kennedy and Waldron were well-known, succeeded in 1903 the college of Saint Joseph in Somerset, which had been established in 1834 and begun in 1841. With a growth in the number of the Brethren and in their activity and because of doctrinal zeal, not only have many of them received chairs at the Catholic University at Washington, but also a number of students have merited there to obtain academic degrees. The *studium* being divided because of a large number of students, the philosophers occupied the magnificent college of Saint Thomas in River Forest near Chicago in 1925").

[27] William Henry Harrison (9 February 1773-4 April 1841) died after thirty days in the presidency; he was succeeded by the Vice-President, John Tyler.

in the new Province of Saint Joseph. Once arrived in 1841 however, Pozzo met with some initial success, including the granting of a Lectorate in Sacred Theology to James Whelan (1823-78), later Bishop of Nashville.[28] Because of Pozzo's European experience, he was able to institute a program of studies that resembled as much as possible the Order's *Ratio Studiorum*. By 1845, this zealous Italian had succeeded in setting up in rural Ohio a classical curriculum for Dominican students.

On the account given in Coffey's *The American Dominicans*, the Province required of her students "two years of philosophy, following the manual of Father Storcheman, and taught according to Thomistic principles. Five years of theology . . . to be taught from the text of the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas, supplemented by the commentary on the text by Father Billuart."[29] "Father Storcheman" appears to refer to Sigismund von Storchenau (d. 1798), an eighteenth-century Jesuit, who authored a series of philosophical manuals and apologetic works.[30] In any case, this earnest effort to promote Aquinas and the Thomists did not receive long-term support from the Province of Saint Joseph, many of whose members saw, in the words of Fr. Coffey, "no need at all for 'high–faulutin' subjects,

[28] For a sympathetic account of this Dominican, who later became the second Bishop of Nashville, see Anthony J. Lisska, "Bishop James Whelan, O.P.: College President in Somerset and Second Bishop of Nashville, While Passing through and Returning to Zanesville," *Barquilla de la Santa Maria* 28 (2003): 41-46. The Lectorate in Sacred Theology was conferred in 1847, a year after Whelan's priestly ordination.

[29] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 222.

[30] Sigismund von Storchenau was a Jesuit, born in Hollenburg near Klagenfurt in the southern Austrian region of Kaernten on August 17, 1731; he died in Klagenfurt on April 13, 1798. Storchenau entered the Jesuits on Halloween 1747, and he was made professor of philosophy in Vienna in 1763. Following the suppression of the Society, he lived in his parents' house. Between 1781 and 1790, he was the court preacher at Klagenfurt for the Archduchess Maria Anna Josepha Antonia von Habsburg-Lothringen (1738-89). The manual to which the ordination refers probably envisages his *Institutiones logicae* (1769) and *Institutiones metaphysicae* (1769), each of which were often reprinted. I acknowledge with gratitude Fr. Richard Schenk, O.P., for this research in German philosophy.

such as philosophy and speculative theology."[31] By 1850, Pozzo, discouraged, had left the Province. He returned eventually to Italy where he died, a Dominican, in 1862. From all accounts, his program of studies did not survive his departure.[32]

The Civil War passed by the Province of Saint Joseph. The Irishman William Dominic O'Carroll (d. 1880), whom the reform-minded Master, Vincent Jandel (d. 1872), chose to lead the Province after Appomattox (1865-69), wrote to Jandel saying, "I wish I had an able lector who could teach genuine Thomism and the Thomistic method."[33] This report dates from the fall of 1865. O'Carroll's successor, Joseph Francis Dunn (1869-73), provoked by his heedlessness the appointment of a plenipotentiary visitator, the highly renowned Irishman Fr. Tom Burke. His mandate for reform, however, ended abruptly with the death of the Master of the Order and without much apparent success, except that he sent certain unflattering reports on the state of the Province back to Rome.[34] Some evidence even suggests that Jandel's demise may have forestalled his removal of both novitiate and *studium* to Europe.[35]

Throughout these efforts to conform the Province of Saint Joseph to the standards of the Lacordaire restoration, the *studium* at Saint Joseph's continued to serve as a training ground for the Province's priests. Gradually, circumstances

[31] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 223.

[32] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 206.

[33] Ibid., 367.

[34] Ibid., 426. For an impartial but polite commentary on the success of Burke's mission to the Province, which ended in 1878, see Raymund Devas, O.P., *The Dominican Revival in the Nineteenth Century: Being Some Account of the Restoration of the Order of Preachers throughout the World under Fr. Jandel the Seventy-Third Master-General* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), 88: "The Province of St. Joseph in North America called to him [Jandel] across the Atlantic; and South America was badly in need of some regeneration. The Pope [Pius IX], however, would not allow the zealous General to risk the dangers of such a journey, nor to absent himself for so long a time from Rome; Jandel therefore had to satisfy himself with sending to America prudent visitators as his deputies: the good results obtained in the Southern Continent will be recorded in a later chapter."

[35] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 431.

improved. As the result of an 1881 visitation by the Italian Master Joseph Maria Larroca (d. 1891), Brs. Lawrence Francis Kearney and Daniel Joseph Kennedy were sent to Louvain for further studies, but not back to the English College which had been demolished in 1836. Afterwards, Kennedy found himself among the first Dominicans to teach at the University of Fribourg, while Fr. Kearney may be considered the founder of the present House of Studies. In his 2009 address at the opening of the new Academic Center and Theological Library, Archbishop Augustine Di Noia, O.P., observed, perceptively, that "the seeds of the present Dominican House of Studies were planted by [the abovementioned] Father Larroca."[36]

In 1889, Francis Aloysius Spencer was elected Provincial on the fifty-first ballot. A biblical scholar himself, Spencer summarized the state of studies in the Province during the Gilded Age: What we really need here, he wrote to Master Larroca, is at least one lector from Europe.[37] This report was filed in early 1890, eleven years after the publication of Pope Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* (1879).[38] At the same time, the impetus given to the study of Aquinas throughout the nineteenth century, especially after the restoration of the Jesuits in 1814, bore fruit for the Province of Saint Joseph. In 1896, during the term of Spencer's successor, Arthur Vincent Higgins (1893-97), Saint Joseph's Priory once again received recognition as a formal *studium*.[39] The intelligent and perspicacious Spencer had sent to Europe four of the five men who constituted the first Thomistic faculty at Somerset. The fifth, D. J. Kennedy, as

[36] J. A. Di Noia, O.P., "*Discere et docere*: The Identity and Mission of the Dominican House of Studies in the Twenty-First Century," *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 111-27, at 114.

[37] See Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 510, 511.

[38] For further information, see Romanus Cessario, *A Short History of Thomism* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 24-26; and Hector Scerri, "The Revival of Scholastic Sacramental Theology after the Publication of *Aeterni Patris*," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 77(2012): 265-85.

[39] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 526. Arthur Vincent Higgins was the first Master of Sacred Theology in the Province.

noted above, had been sent earlier.[40] Recall that in the 1840s, Eugene Pozzo was the only teacher in Somerset. When Lawrence Kearney was elected Provincial in 1897, his commitment to build the House of Studies in Washington, DC, put Dominicans on the road to realizing the circumstances that the Province of Saint Joseph now enjoys in the nation's capital. As one may surmise, however, this opening toward progress was not without its obstacles and challenges.

II. Twentieth-Century Thomist Triumphs

From this brief overview of nineteenth-century history, one may draw three conclusions about the Province of Saint Joseph and her early commitment to the Angelic Doctor: (1) Pastoral zeal for the Catholic religion did not translate into an equivalent zeal for studying and teaching Aquinas. As the historical accounts suggest, the practical concerns that imposed themselves on nineteenth-century Dominicans did not always accommodate assiduousness in pursuit of the intellectual life. (2) When, sporadically, American Dominicans took an interest in Thomist studies, the initiative for this awakening usually came from Europe. Eugene Hyacinth Pozzo affords the best example. Europeans also sent their American brethren monies and books. For example, Bishop Concanen donated his library to Saint Rose, as did another Irish Dominican, Bishop Francis J. O'Finan (d. 1847), to Saint Joseph's.[41] (3) The Dominican Order's insistence on promoting the study of Aquinas and his commentators persisted even when political circumstances in Europe impaired the operation of many educational institutions, including Dominican ones, especially in France and Belgium. In other words, the enkindled flame—*Ardet et Lucet*—never died out. The once accepted tripartite division of Thomist history

[40] Ibid., 545 n. 6. Walz, *Compendium*, 186, numbers Kennedy among the great Dominican theologians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[41] O'Daniel, *First Two Dominican Priories*, 77. For a transcription of Concanen's will, see Vincent Reginald Hughes, O.P., *The Right Reverend Richard Luke Concanen, O.P.: First Bishop of New York (1747-1810)* (Fribourg: Studia Friburgensia, 1926), 142, 143. For O'Finan, see Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 182.

misrepresents the historical givens.[42] From her first days, the Province of Saint Joseph understood that Thomist thought provided the model for the intellectual life, even though various institutional impediments and personal indispositions stalled its construction. So when the House of Studies was dedicated in 1905, no one was surprised to discover that prestigious secular universities did not provide the exemplar for the program of studies.[43] Instead, as Archbishop Di Noia states clearly about this moment, "The learning and teaching of philosophy and theology according to Thomistic principles in the Province of Saint Joseph was totally established on a solid institutional basis in a true *studium generale* that could meet all the requirements of Dominican legislation."[44]

Within a decade after the inauguration of the House of Studies, the Thomist commentatorial tradition received a boost from Rome. In 1914, the Holy See directed all Catholic teachers to observe the Twenty-Four Theses that, in the view of St. Pius X, expressed the foundation and principles of Thomist thought.[45] Shortly thereafter, the launching of Providence College carried the Thomist mission to New England. When the Provincial, Raymond Meagher (1913-20), wrote to the Master for permission to accept the Bishop of Providence's invitation to staff a college in Rhode Island, Meagher made the point clearly:

> "It is true that in the city of Providence there already exists a celebrated secular university but because of the doctrine taught there, no little danger presents itself to Catholic students." With the tradition of the Dominicans

[42] Some historians speak about First, Second, and Third Thomism, by which they refer to the work of Aquinas in the thirteenth century, the work of his commentators from the mid-fifteenth through the seventeenth century, and the renewal of interest in Thomas and the Thomists after the 1879 Encyclical of Leo XIII.

[43] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 516. In the early 1890s, F. A. Spencer strongly urged New Haven, a "center of civilization," as the location for the new *studium*.

[44] Di Noia, "*Discere et docere*," 116.

[45] See Cessario, *Short History*, 25-27.

"the sound Thomistic philosophy to be taught by us . . . would exercise a salutary influence against" the secular dangers.[46]

The Province had begun to exhibit a new Thomist self-confidence. In the 1890s, because of the fear that Yale, another celebrated secular university, would exercise a negative influence on Dominican students, members of the Province argued against moving the *studium* from Somerset to New Haven.[47] All in all, for the first fifty years of Providence College's history, its Thomist charter remained operative, especially in the departments of theology and philosophy. Afterwards, the postconciliar period witnessed modifications in the college's curriculum that favored historical paradigms for Catholic undergraduate education.

It would be impossible to list every member of the Province in the twentieth century who, before the Second Vatican Council, made a noteworthy contribution to the Province's Thomist heritage. Three representative figures, one in a profane discipline and two in the sacred sciences, may indicate the several kinds of Thomist work done by Dominicans at Providence College, the House of Studies, and the Catholic University of America. A broader view of the intellectual history of the Province of Saint Joseph would include mention of brethren such as Charles Jerome Callan (1877-1962) and John Ambrose McHugh (1880-1950), "co-authors of many well-known books dealing with Scripture, Theology and other religious subjects."[48]

Robert Edward Brennan (1897-1975), who was born in Lima, Ohio, at the end of the nineteenth century, taught at Providence College from 1931 until 1943. Brennan's 1925 doctoral thesis from the Catholic University of America

[46] "The Founding of Providence College" accessed October 20, 2016 at http://centennial.providence.edu/the-founding-of-providence-college/.

[47] Coffey, *American Dominicans*, 515, reports that several of the more grave Dominicans feared that a move of the *studium* from Ohio to New Haven would put Dominican students at risk of "a bad influence" from Yale University.

[48] V. F. O'Daniel, "Very Reverend Jerome Callan, O.P., S.T.M., New Consultor of the Biblical Commission," *Dominicana* 25 (1940): 246, 247.

presented "a theory of abnormal cognitive processes according to the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas." In 1937, the Macmillan Company based in Manhattan brought into print Brennan's *General Psychology*: *An Interpretation of the Science of Mind Based on Thomas Aquinas*; in 1941, his *Thomistic Psychology*: *A Philosophic Analysis of the Nature of Man*; and in 1945, his *History of Psychology: From the Standpoint of a Thomist*. These books drew international attention. In its issue of July 24, 1937, *The Tablet* of London reviewed *General Psychology*: "Dr. Brennan's book is a reasoned exposition of psychology in relation to sane science and sound philosophy."[49] In 1939, Brennan's essay "The Mansions of Thomistic Philosophy" appeared in the first issue of *The Thomist*, which was founded to support the House of Studies's petition to become a Pontifical Faculty.[50] This Thomist thinker, a sometime lecturer at the University of Montreal, spent his last days at Saint Joseph's near Somerset where he wrote on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.[51] A devout man, he died on the fiftieth anniversary of his priestly ordination. Brennan's writings have been translated into French, Spanish, German, Japanese, and Chinese. His books continued to be published into the late 1960s.

The first sixty years at 487 Michigan Avenue offer many examples of how Aquinas and his commentators guided the philosophical and theological work of the Dominican faculty. A contemporary of Fr. Brennan, Walter Farrell (1902-51), represents as well as anyone the promotion of Thomist thought that emanated from the Dominican House of Studies. Farrell matriculated at the University of Fribourg where his doctoral

[49] "A Thomist Psychologist," *The Tablet* 170 (July 24, 1937), 126.

[50] See Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., "The Mansions of Thomist Philosophy," *The Thomist* 1 (1939): 62-79. The 1931 apostolic constitution *Deus Scientiarum Dominus: De Universitatibus et Facultatibus Studiorum Ecclesiasticorum* that governed the erection of the Pontifical Faculty required proof of scientific research accomplished by the Faculty.

[51] Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., *The Seven Horns of the Lamb*: *A Study of the Gifts Based on Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1966).

thesis presented a Thomist critique of Suarezian natural-law theory. It was published using a traditional handpress at Saint Dominic's Press in Ditchling, where Eric Gill and Hilary Pepler formed the core of the Guild of Saint Joseph and Saint Dominic.[52] A student writer in *Dominicana*, "N.H."—probably Nicholas Halligan—reported on Farrell's high reputation outside of the Order that arose from "his learned and successful lectures, especially those on the *Summa*, delivered under the auspices of the Catholic Thought Association. The latter," the writer continued, "have been embodied in the highly popular volumes *A Companion to the Summa*, put out by Sheed & Ward, in which he [Farrell] has introduced and vitalized in the minds of thinking people the principles of St. Thomas."[53] A Chicago native, Fr. Farrell served as Regent of Studies for the Province, although he died in 1951 as a member of Saint Albert's Province. During his tenure as Regent, the Holy See on November 15, 1941 erected the *studium* as a Theological Faculty. Thus, the original name, the Pontifical Faculty of [the Convent of] the Immaculate Conception.

On the other side of Michigan Avenue, the Dominican House of Studies provided the first Dean for the School of Philosophy at Catholic University. Henry ("Harry") Ignatius Smith (1886-1957) hailed from Newark, New Jersey. Among his early accomplishments, he instructed the young Fulton J. Sheen on preaching. One success followed another. Smith's 1957 funeral at the Basilica of the National Shrine drew the archbishop of Washington, the Apostolic Delegate, and nine other bishops. J. Edgar Hoover stood among his numerous honorary pallbearers. In 1915, Smith published his doctoral dissertation which compared Aquinas and the sociology of Smith's era on the classification of desires.[54] Ten years after the

[52] Walter Farrell, O.P., *The Natural Moral Law according to St. Thomas and Suarez* (Ditchling: St Dominic's Press, 1930).

[53] N.H., *Dominicana* 25 (1940): 249.

[54] See Henry Ignatius Smith, *Classification of Desires in St. Thomas and in Modern Sociology: Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Philosophy of the Catholic University of America in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: National Capital Press, 1915).

opening of the House of Studies, the Province had begun to spread its Thomist wings. Ignatius Smith, a man of many talents, displayed an all-around Thomist approach to Catholic life. At the same time, his *Festschrift* amply illustrates his commitment to the furtherance of Thomist studies. Writing in the "Introduction" to this 1952 collection of essays, a member of the philosophy faculty, Monsignor John K. Ryan, captures Smith's devotion to Aquinas: "From the greatest of schoolmen the twentieth-century Dominican preacher has taken his philosophical principles, and likewise in St. Thomas Aquinas he has found his model and inspiration."[55]

Ignatius Smith represents a group of the brethren who spread Thomist teachings beyond the confines of the Province's own institutions. Before the momentous changes that occurred after the Second Vatican Council, many Dominicans of the Province brought Aquinas's doctrine to the theology and philosophy classrooms of Catholic colleges, including places such as Notre Dame. One sign of the dramatic change of climate that took place during the second half of the 1960s appears in the 1972 book by Gary Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion*. In this stinging though tendentious indictment of post-World War II Catholic life in the United States, the author, a onetime seminarian, laments that students "were being taught a second-hand Thomism from the manuals."[56] Wills then delights to report that none of the students he encountered had read "a single book of Saint Thomas through."[57] In fact, however, many teachers from the Province provided amiable and sound instruction to the Catholic institutions that helped form Americans of the "The Greatest Generation." Even now, the manuals these teachers chose for their courses of instruction

[55] *Philosophical Studies in Honor of the Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.*, ed. John K. Ryan (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1952), ix, x.

[56] Gary Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 31.

[57] Ibid.

would provide a sounder version of Catholicism than do many of the theology texts used at most Catholic institutions.

III. "SAINTLY SCHOLARS"

The formal inauguration of the Pontifical Faculty was celebrated on November 15, 1942. The archbishop of Cincinnati, John T. McNichols, O.P., promised in his homily that "the best efforts will be made here to prepare men to meet the conditions of our day, and to send forth, according to the traditions of the Order, saintly scholars."[58] Saintly scholars of course accord with the Dominican ideal. In the evening, a panel of distinguished speakers, which included Jesuit Father John Courtney Murray, talked about the communication of theology to the laity. The sole lay member of the panel also raised the question of the possession of theology by the laity. "However," as an anonymous rapporteur observed about the discussion that followed, "channels and obstacles to more perfect theological communication between clergy and laity were mainly considered."[59] Less than a year before this gala event, on December 8, 1941, the United States Congress declared war on the Empire of Japan after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The Second World War obviously impeded Dominican students from traveling to Europe. Those who pursued doctoral studies during this period often went to Canada. There, at Quebec, for example, future *studium* professors, such as Joseph Celestine Taylor (1911-82), met lay Thomists like Charles De Koninck (d. 1965), a founder of the Laval Thomist School.[60] At the same time, the haunting question about the possession of theological

[58] "Formal Inauguration of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology at Washington, D.C.," *Dominicana* 27 (1942): 259-61.

[59] Ibid., 260.

[60] Father Taylor spent fall 1939 until June 1942 in Quebec. He taught metaphysics and epistemology to the students of philosophy. For some information on Charles De Koninck, see Romanus Cessario, O.P., "*Ego Sapientia*: The Mariology of Laval Thomism" in *Theology Needs Philosophy*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 227-39.

wisdom continued to command the attention of those friars sent forth to enact Holy Preaching.

Alasdair MacIntyre delivered an address at the House of Studies on November 14, 1991 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Pontifical Faculty.[61] That the Dominican House of Studies survived to observe this important anniversary can only be attributed to the special protection of the Virgin Mother of God, Mary Immaculate. Archbishop Di Noia expressed this view and at the same time identified a dispositive cause in "the fact that during and after the years of the council the faculty and senior friars in the DHS community and in the province construed the conciliar teachings as being in essential continuity, rather than a disruption or break . . . with previous Catholic teaching and tradition."[62] For his part, MacIntyre explained the importance of the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception maintaining "a Thomistic framework." Then he elaborated the alternative to embracing Thomas and the Thomists: "One effect," said MacIntyre, "of the abandonment of Thomism in so much theology and in so much other American Catholic thinking in recent decades has been to reproduce the same predicaments and the same vulnerability to heterogeneity and fragmentation that afflict secular studies."[63] Twenty-five years later, these same predicaments and vulnerabilities continue to afflict both secular and theological studies. In the sacred sciences at least, agreement on first principles proves difficult to strike, not to mention on Pius X's Twenty-Four Theses.

In November 1942, as the Battle of Guadalcanal raged in the Pacific theater, Dominicans discussed the communication of theology from clerics to the laity. Today, as culture wars still rage in our country, their discussion should center on the

[61] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Mission of a Dominican House of Studies in Contemporary North America" (an address to an Academic Convocation of the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., November 14, 1991).

[62] Di Noia "*Discere et docere*," 117.

[63] MacIntyre, "Mission," 14.

communication of divine truth from authentic teachers of the Thomist tradition to all members of the Church, both lay and clerics, including members of the Order of Preachers.[64] Seventy-five years of the Pontifical Faculty, of which the present speaker recalls almost fifty, confirm that no one stands immune from developing a vulnerability to heterogeneity and fragmentation. The Province's 2016 *Official Directory* lists more Dominicans in the profession class of 2015 than remain from the first five years of the 1970s.

In a forthcoming book that Fr. Cajetan Cuddy and I have coauthored, we discuss the benefits that accrue from adherence by Dominicans and others to Thomas and the Thomists.[65] As the dimensions of the *Summa theologiae* indicate, sound Catholic theology requires holding many pieces of divine revelation together in a coherent account. The grace that St. Thomas Aquinas introduces into the world begins with his exposition about Holy Teaching.[66] A brief glance at nearly 800 years of the Thomist commentatorial tradition reveals that Thomists oftentimes correct the mistakes that other theologians have made about many of theology's constitutive pieces. Thomas and Thomists keep the parts together. They also order the parts in a way that reveals the saving plan of salvation. What else explains the significant place that the texts of Aquinas hold in the official documents that present the Catholic faith? To maintain the unity of the Holy Teaching, centered on the *revelabilia*, supplies the only defense against creeping fragmentation. One needs only to leaf through the course offerings at most Catholic universities and schools of theology to discover what this fragmentation looks like.

Because Holy Teaching concerns what God has revealed about himself and creatures, it not only instructs but transforms—"on knowing this," says Aquinas, "depends our

[64] See *Liber Constitutionum et Ordinationum Fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Rome: Curia Generalitia, 2010), no. 82.

[65] Romanus Cessario, O.P., and Cajetan Cuddy, O.P., *Thomas and the Thomists: The Achievement of Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Fortress Press, 2017).

[66] See *STh* I, q. 1.

whole welfare [*tota hominis salus*], which is in God."[67] One does not possess Holy Teaching only by mastering intellectual maneuvers. Holy Teaching produces saintly scholars, not stylish intellectuals. Seventy-five years after the erection of the Pontifical Faculty, the possession of theology still remains a question that affects, diversely, both laity and clerics. In 1991, MacIntyre rightly remarked that it makes a difference what a theologian says about life and events and histories. However, "it is the preacher," MacIntyre went on to insist, "that paradigmatic Dominican figure, who has to render the theologian's findings . . . audible and comprehensible in the everyday life of the parish and the mission, the family and the workplace."[68] The Dominican priest optimally enjoys both qualities, that of theologian and that of preacher. Minimally, the Dominican preacher must remain a student of Aquinas. Holy Teaching and Holy Preaching run ineluctably together.

This account of Thomas, Thomists, and the Province of Saint Joseph should encourage the Pontifical Faculty to stay the Thomist course. How else may one interpret the factors that have shaped Alma Mater's development? Is it plausible that both Masters of the Order and General Chapters repeatedly ordained adherence to the thought of Aquinas so that Dominicans could claim a heavenly mascot? Of course not. Is it likely that wise Dominicans active in the Province of Saint Joseph begged for Thomist teachers from Europe so that American Dominicans would learn how to construct the tribal totem? Hardly. Is it possible that the author of *Rerum Novarum* also promoted Thomas and his commentators—Cajetan, Sylvester of Ferrara—in order to mount a mediaeval fortress in which Catholics could hide from the difficult challenges posed by nineteenth-century philosophy? By no means. The Province, under the guidance of both Church and Order, has embraced Thomas and the Thomists because he and they provide a clear exposition of the Holy Teaching and a strong incentive to

[67] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 1.
[68] MacIntyre, "Mission," 15.

sustain the Holy Preaching. This does not mean that Dominicans should rely on Thomas and Thomists to provide above-average homily helps. Thomist instruction shapes Catholic preaching in a manner that no other resource does with the same exactitude. To single out one of the salient features of Thomist preaching, consider the uncommon theme of physical premotion. Truth to tell, when properly translated, correct instruction about the dynamics of divine grace and human freedom infuses a distinctive energy into Dominican preaching and evangelization that surpasses mightily whatever derives from intramural academic squabbles about the value of this or that modern theologian.

No reasonable person can ignore that the study of Aquinas and his commentators gives rise to more than one question. Testimony to this appears readily upon browsing the periodical section of the Theological Library. Caviling comes easy to scholastics; one can quibble about anything. When, however, the multiplicity of questions that arise from textual interpretations, historical investigations, and dialectical engagements obscure the simple unity of a saving doctrine, then the grace that Aquinas bequeaths to his confreres and students suffers diminishment. When spiritual diminishment sets in, some new Gary Wills easily will come along and opine that Thomists fuss over esotericisms, stand outside the mainstream, and incline toward the enigmatic. How do Thomists protect themselves against charges of intellectual effeteness? One of the above-mentioned members of the Province offers some still valuable advice.

In 1942, the prolific Robert Edward Brennan published a volume of *Essays in Thomism* that included contributions by some outstanding lay Thomists: Jacques Maritain, Mortimer Adler, Vernon Burke, Yves Simon, Anton Pegis. In his "Foreword," Fr. Brennan, the Thomist psychologist, recalled his editing of the project: "The adventure here made into the realm of speculation has also been an adventure into the sphere of living. Communication with the authors of the essays reached the intimacy where the buying of homes and the building of families was discussed. Such is the moving character of

Aquinas's philosophy that the love of truth which it instils also begets the love of friendship."[69] Authentic friendships built around the Truth, centered on him who is the Truth (see John 14:6), ensure that Thomists stay connected to the issues that serve the good of the whole Church and at the same time promote holiness of life in themselves and in those whom they instruct and to whom they preach.

This invitation to embrace truth and to practice friendship does not propose a romantic ideal, as if pointing to the stars provides an easy way to conclude this succinct account of Aquinas's influence on the Province of Saint Joseph. Our contemporary circumstances warrant something more than quixotic resolutions. Today indeed, the authentic Thomist may make his own the verse of the Psalm, "I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins. I lie awake and moan, like a lone sparrow on the roof" (Ps 102:7, 8) ("Similis factus sum pellicano solitudinis; factus sum sicut nycticorax in domicilio"). At the same time, to the extent that the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception continues to radiate Our Lady's brilliance, no one need fear desolation (see John 1:5). As long as the House of Studies remains a place that cherishes the truth and where friends unite, then the question of the possession of the faith by both clerics and laity will find a graceful resolution.

When studying at Louvain, the first American Dominicans discovered the motto of the College of Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Ardet et Lucet*.[70] Clearly, the English Dominicans had adapted the phrase that the Dominican Order takes from Aquinas: "Sicut enim majus est illuminare quam lucere solum, ita majus est contemplata aliis tradere quam solum contemplari."[71] We can best observe this important anniversary of the Pontifical Faculty by returning to our sources, back to the exiled English

[69] Robert E. Brennan, O.P., ed., *Essays in Thomism* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942), ix.

[70] Aquinas, in fact, uses the phrase, "ardet et lucet," in his *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, c. 10, v. 20. I acknowledge gratefully Timothy Bellamah, O.P., of the Leonine Commission, for this discovery.

[71] *STh* II-II, q. 188, a. 6.

Dominicans who sustained themselves outside of their native Britain which had become so inhospitable to the Catholic faith. There at Louvain in Flanders, these dedicated men, including Frs. Wilson and Tuite, took inspiration and encouragement from the college's motto. *Ardet et Lucet*. They surely must have recalled the Gospel of John: "The light shines in the darkness" (John 1:5).

Teachers and students of the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception should commit themselves to imitate the first Dominicans in the United States. Put otherwise, all should remain faithful to the motto of the Order: *contemplata aliis tradere*. Now it falls to a new generation of Dominicans to prepare for the centenary of the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception. In the meantime, each should recall Archbishop McNichols's promise of seventy-five years ago about theology and sanctity. The Order needs a new generation of "saintly scholars" who will embrace the heritage of philosophy and theology that comes from Thomas and the Thomists. Fear not that you will discover yourself the lone sparrow on the rooftop. Such remains, as Father Brennan noted, the moving character of Thomist teaching "that the love of truth which it instils also begets the love of friendship."

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