

## The Thomistic Doctrine of the Triune God and Spiritual Life

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DOING THEOLOGY WITH THOMAS AQUINAS means entering in possession of some fundamental theological and philosophical positions, from which we develop a certain way of understanding God and the world, that is to say, from which we acquire not only a set of doctrines but a specific attitude, a mentality, a disposition that shapes both thought and action. This is what Fr. Jean-Pierre Torrell meant by speaking of St. Thomas's "spirituality."<sup>1</sup> In this short essay, I will limit myself to four points: (1) the practice of Trinitarian theology as a spiritual exercise; (2) prayer and purification of the mind in doing Trinitarian theology; (3) the doctrine of the Word and Love, and the *imago Dei* as an imitation of God's immanent acts; (4) the meaning of preaching within the metaphysical doctrine of participated causality ("imitation" of God). The first three deal with the distinct persons of the Trinity, while the fourth concerns what is common to them.

### A Spiritual Exercise

Since the Trinity is a mystery in the strictest sense, it cannot be proved by rational arguments. Faith in the Trinity depends exclusively on revelation whose center is the Incarnation of the Son, his life in the flesh, and

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., "Ascèse intellectuelle et vie spirituelle," *La Vie Spirituelle* 153 (1999): 611–21, here at 612.

the sending of the Holy Spirit. St. Thomas not only rules out the possibility of natural reason attaining to knowledge of the Trinity, but also refuses to consider God's personal plurality as the fruit of an essential fecundity of the divine being.<sup>2</sup> Concerning Trinitarian faith, arguments advanced by the theologian are thus chiefly of two kinds. The first kind depends on the authority of Holy Scripture, which reveals that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct yet perfectly one. The other kind consists of "persuasions"<sup>3</sup> that do not demonstrate the Trinity but seek to render the Trinitarian faith *more intelligible* in the minds of believers (*fidei manifestatio*), and that show that what is proposed to faith is not impossible.<sup>4</sup> This purpose is achieved by considering the connection of mysteries, and by using created likenesses or analogies of the Trinity. The aim or nature of Trinitarian theology is well explained in the discussion of the "number of divine persons" (*numerus personarum in divinis*) in the *De potentia*:

The plurality of persons in God belongs to those realities that are held by faith and that natural human reason can neither investigate nor adequately grasp; but one hopes to grasp it in heaven, when God will be seen through his essence (*per essentiam*), as faith gives way to vision. However, the holy Fathers were obliged to treat it in view of objections raised by those who contradicted the faith in this matter and in others that also pertain to the faith; they have done it, however, modestly and reverently, without pretending to comprehend. And such an inquiry is not useless, since by it our spirit is elevated to get some glimpse of the truth sufficient for excluding errors (*nec talis inquisitio est inutilis, cum per eam elevetur animus ad aliquid veritatis capiendum quod sufficiat ad excludendos errores*). This is why St. Hilary explains: "Believing in this," namely the

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<sup>2</sup> *Summa theologiae* I, q. 32, a. 1; see Gilles Emery, O.P., *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca A. Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 22–31.

<sup>3</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2: "persuasiones quaedam." See also *In I Sent.* d. 3, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3: "adaptationes quaedam."

<sup>4</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2. In what follows, I borrow several elements from my *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 1–72.

plurality of persons in God, “set out, advance, persevere. And though I may know that you will not attain the end, still I shall praise you for your progress. He who pursues the infinite with reverent devotion, even though he never attains it, will profit from advancing forward.”<sup>5</sup>

These explanations summarize the purpose of speculative knowledge of the mystery of the Trinity. First, Trinitarian theology is directed toward a *contemplative* end that also supplies Christians with ways to *defend their faith*.<sup>6</sup> In this context, “contemplation” means theological contemplation, that is, the effort (*studium, inquisitio*) of the theologian in order to make the revealed truth more manifest to his own mind and to the minds of other believers.<sup>7</sup> Second, the purpose of Trinitarian theology is not to comprehend God, which is impossible, but to grasp something of the “droplet” (*parva stilla*) of revelation, as St. Thomas puts it in the first chapter of the fourth book of his *Summa contra gentiles*.<sup>8</sup> He explains: “The few things (*pauca*) that are revealed to us are set forth in likenesses and the obscurities of words, so that only the studious (*solii studiosi*) arrive at any grasp of them at all.”<sup>9</sup> Third, the study of the Trinity must be undertaken with humility: here more than anywhere else, one must ex-

<sup>5</sup> *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 5, resp., with reference to St. Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* II,10 (Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, vol. 1, *Libri I–VII*, ed. Pieter Smulders [Brepols: Turnhout, 1979], 48).

<sup>6</sup> As early as the first question of his *Scriptum super Sententiis* (*In I Sent.* Prologue, a. 5, resp.), St. Thomas noted: “We make our way to three things in Sacred Scripture (*in sacra Scriptura*), namely: to the destruction of errors . . . to the instruction of moral actions . . . [and] to the contemplation of truth in questions of Sacred Scripture.”

<sup>7</sup> On the meanings of “contemplation,” see Marie-Michel Labourdette, O.P., *Cours de théologie morale*, vol. 17, *Les formes et les états de vie* (Toulouse: Couvent des Dominicains, 1991), 17–26; Adriano Oliva, O.P., “La contemplation des philosophes selon Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 96 (2012): 585–662.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa contra gentiles* IV, ch. 1 (no. 3345): “Quod vero subdit, *et cum vix parvam stillam sermonum eius audiverimus* (Jb 26:14), ad secundam cognitionem pertinet, prout divina nobis credenda per modum locutionis revelantur.” In my references to Aquinas’s works, the numbers (no., nos.) refer to the Marietti edition.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*: “Haec etiam pauca quae nobis revelantur, sub quibusdam similitudinibus et obscuritatibus verborum nobis proponuntur: ut ad ea quomodocumque capienda soli studiosi perveniant.”

clude all presumption (*praesumptio*).<sup>10</sup> Fourth, such a study is long and slow, requiring perseverance. And lastly, its fruit is joy, as St. Thomas explains in the first chapters of the *Summa contra gentiles*, with the same reference to St. Hilary of Poitiers:

It is useful for the human mind to exercise itself (*utile . . . est ut . . . se mens humana exerceat*) over such reasons, however weak they are, provided there be no presumptuous attempt to comprehend or demonstrate. For the ability to perceive something of the highest realities, if only with feeble, limited understanding, gives the greatest joy.<sup>11</sup>

The words used by St. Thomas to signify this spiritual fruit are very suggestive: “a vehement joy” (*vehemens gaudium*),<sup>12</sup> “the highest joy” (*iucundissimum*).<sup>13</sup> This joy is the “joy of the truth” (*gaudium de veritate*), which St. Thomas (following St. Augustine) identifies with beatitude.<sup>14</sup> “It is impossible for any created intellect to comprehend God; yet ‘for the mind to attain to God in some degree is great beatitude,’ as Augustine says.”<sup>15</sup> St. Thomas also specifies that “the end (*finis*) of *sacra doctri-*

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<sup>10</sup> SCG IV, ch. 1 (no. 3348); *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 1. St. Thomas notes three forms of presumption: pretending to comprehend, placing reason before faith (wanting to know in order to believe), and wanting to surpass the limited mode of human knowledge.

<sup>11</sup> SCG I, ch. 8 (nos. 49–50). The text continues (no. 50): “In accord with this thought, St. Hilary declares in his book *On the Trinity*, speaking of this sort of truth: ‘In faith, set out, go forward, persevere. And though I may know that you will not attain the end, still I shall praise you for your progress. He who pursues the infinite with reverent devotion, even though he never attains it, always profits nonetheless from advancing forward. But in penetrating this secret, in plunging into the hidden depth of this Birth unlimited [the generation of the one God begotten by the one unbegotten God], beware of presumptuously thinking you have attained a full understanding. Know, rather, that this is incomprehensible.’” St. Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* II,10–11 (vol. 1, 48).

<sup>12</sup> SCG I, ch. 5 (no. 32).

<sup>13</sup> SCG I, ch. 8 (no. 49).

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., *ST I-II*, q. 3, a. 4, resp.; *ST I-II*, q. 4, a. 1, sc 1; *Super Ioan.* 10, lec. 1 (no. 1370): “Nihil aliud est beatitudo quam gaudium de veritate.”

<sup>15</sup> *ST I*, q. 12, a. 7, resp.: “Comprehendere Deum impossibile est cuicumque intellectui creato, attingere vero mente Deum qualitercumque, magna est beatitudo, ut dicit Augustinus.” In Augustine, these words apply to our present knowledge of God in faith: “*The Word was God* (Jn 1:1). We are talking about God; so why be surprised if

na is the contemplation of the First Truth in heaven,"<sup>16</sup> so that the end or goal of theology, even in its practical dimension, is eternal beatitude.<sup>17</sup>

The nature of theological research is formulated very suggestively in the *Summa contra gentiles*, in connection with the truths that faith alone makes known to us through our acceptance of revelation (among which the mystery of the Trinity and that of Christ occupy the first place): "In order to manifest this kind of truth, one must provide likely, probable reasons (*rationes aliquae verisimiles*) for the exercise and encouragement of the faithful (*ad fidelium quidem exercitium et solatium*)."<sup>18</sup>

The Latin word *solatium* means support, assistance, aid, consolation, domestic help, and sometimes even entertainment.<sup>19</sup> In the Latin text of Hebrews 6:18, *solatium* translates the Greek *paraklesis*: strengthening, encouragement, exhortation. St. Thomas means that, by showing the intelligibility of the faith (and thus responding to those who deny it), theology offers a support to believers.

As for the word *exercitium*, it is an echo of St. Augustine's *exercitatio*, that is to say, a training that disposes the believers' mind to the contemplation of God's truth.<sup>20</sup> The word *exercitium* indicates the nature and purpose of the theologian's study. St. Thomas often applies this theme of exercise (*exercitatio* or *exercitium*) to study and teaching sustained by

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you cannot grasp it? I mean, if you can grasp it, it is not God (*si enim comprehendis, non est Deus*). Let us rather make a devout confession of ignorance (*pia confessio ignorantiae*), instead of a brash profession of knowledge. Certainly it is great bliss to have a little touch or taste of God with the mind (*atingere aliquantum mente Deum, magna beatitudo est*); but completely to grasp him, to comprehend him, is altogether impossible." St. Augustine, *Sermon* 117,5 (*PL* 38, col. 663); English translation from St. Augustine, *Sermons*, vol. 4, *Sermons 94A-147A*, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1992), 211. Here we should recall that the formula *docta ignorantia* comes from St. Augustine, in a similar context: "There is therefore in us a certain learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*), so to speak, an ignorance which we learn from the Spirit of God (*docta Spiritu Dei*) who helps our infirmities." St. Augustine, *Letter to Proba* (=Letter 130) 15,28 (*PL* 33, col. 505).

<sup>16</sup> *In I Sent.* Prologue, a. 3, qa. 1, resp.: "Finis autem ultimus istius doctrinae est contemplatio primae veritatis in patria."

<sup>17</sup> *ST I*, q. 1, a. 5, resp.: "Finis autem huius doctrinae in quantum est practica, est beatitudo aeterna."

<sup>18</sup> *SCG I*, ch. 9 (no. 54).

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., *ST I*, q. 51, a. 1, obj. 1; *ST II-II*, q. 168, a. 3, ad 3.

<sup>20</sup> See Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris: De Boccard, 1958; reprint, 1983), 299-327: "Exercitatio animi."

perseverance, training, and frequent practice.<sup>21</sup> Study and teaching are counted among the “spiritual exercises” (*spiritualia exercitia*) that lead one to know God and to love him.<sup>22</sup> In the formula “spiritual exercise,” the adjective “spiritual” carries a religious sense (seeking knowledge of God in faith)<sup>23</sup> without losing its anthropological signification (*spiritual* as distinguished from *manual* or *corporeal*).<sup>24</sup> The theme of exercise is especially tied to difficulties, tribulations, and adversities: difficulties and tribulations are the occasion of an *exercitium* or *exercitatio* that makes it possible to overcome them. As far as doctrine is concerned, St. Thomas presents exercise as an “elevation” of the mind that takes place according to a progression. This elevation starts with the “easiest” things in order to reach the “most difficult” things. The exercise consists in passing from corporeal realities to spiritual ones, from easy things to the more arduous, from a simple doctrine to the more subtle, from faith to a spiritual understanding of the faith.<sup>25</sup> This theme of exercise often appears in the context of the challenges posed by heresies.<sup>26</sup> Errors are the occasion of an exercise (*exercitium*) that gives rise to a clearer (*limpidius*) grasp of the truth.<sup>27</sup> As a summary: the “reasons” adduced by the theologian in order to “manifest” the faith in the Trinity do not prove the faith but ex-

<sup>21</sup> ST III, q. 86, a. 5, ad 3; *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 10, resp.; *In III Sent.* d. 37, q. 1, a. 5, qa. 1, obj. 2.

<sup>22</sup> SCG III, ch. 132 (no. 3047): “Studium sapientiae, et doctrina, et alia huiusmodi spiritualia exercitia.” See also ST II-II, q. 122, a. 4, ad 3.

<sup>23</sup> The expression “spiritual exercise” is applied to study and teaching, to the religious state, and to activities proper to this state (ST II-II, q. 189, a. 1; *Contra impugnantes*, ch. 5, ad 8 [Leonine edition, vol. 41A, 92]) and, more generally, to the practice of virtue (*Super Eph.* 3, lec. 4 [no. 166]; ST III, q. 69, a. 3). Voluntary poverty constitutes an “exercise” as well (ST II-II, q. 186, a. 3, ad 4).

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., *Contra impugnantes*, ch. 5 (Leonine edition, vol. 41A, 89–90): the works of piety (among which Aquinas counts the study of Holy Scriptures, teaching, and preaching) are distinguished from *corporalis exercitatio*, *corporale exercitium*, and *labor manuum*. See also *ibid.*, ad 8: the *exercitia spiritualia* are distinguished from the *opera manualia* (92). For the nuances of the vocabulary of “spirituality,” see Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., “*Spiritualitas* chez saint Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 73 (1989): 575–84.

<sup>25</sup> *Super Heb.* 5, lec. 2 (nos. 269–74), with explicit reference to “the mystery of the Trinity and the sacrament of the Incarnation.”

<sup>26</sup> SCG IV, ch. 55 (no. 3939): “After the divine truth was manifested, certain errors arose on account of the weakness of human minds. But these errors have exercised (*exercuerunt*) the understanding of believers to search out and grasp the divine truths more attentively (*diligentius*).”

<sup>27</sup> *In Metaphysicam* II, lec. 1 (nos. 287–88).

ercise the believer's mind, giving him occasion to confirm the faith, and leading him to better grasp the truth of God with caution and precision. And thanks to studious men who refute errors, those who possess a simpler faith are confirmed in the faith. Such theological exercise is both the growth of the theologian himself and a service to the Church.

### Prayer and Purification of the Mind

In his *De Trinitate*, St. Augustine constantly recalled that God cannot be measured by visible and mortal things. Therefore, in order to grasp God to some extent, man needs a "purification of the mind,"<sup>28</sup> *both moral and intellectual*, because only purified minds (*purgatissimae mentes*) can glimpse God.<sup>29</sup> The primary means of this purification that renders the human mind capable of contemplating eternal realities is *faith*,<sup>30</sup> together with charity.<sup>31</sup> Along with faith, Augustine also underlined the purifying role of prayer (purification of desire), virtuous action, and abstention from sin, which are necessary to grasp the mystery of God.<sup>32</sup> Augustine emphasized in particular that in order to glimpse God, the mind must purify itself of corporeal representations and "phantasmata."<sup>33</sup> The mind must not stop at created likenesses of God but must rise to what the created realities "insinuate."<sup>34</sup> This is precisely the goal of the mind's *exercitatio*. Although St. Thomas distinguishes more clearly between acquired wisdom (study) and infused wisdom (a gift of the Holy Spirit),<sup>35</sup> he maintains that, as far as knowledge of the faith is concerned, the "spiritual doctrine" about the Triune God is not only a pure matter of understanding; rather, it demands as well a rightly ordered affectivity and inclination toward God. This distinguishes *sacra doctrina* from other domains of knowledge. In other sciences, intellectual perfection suffices. But the "doctrine of Sacred Scripture" requires a double perfection, intellectual and affective. St. Thomas clarifies: theology is not geometry!

<sup>28</sup> St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* I,1,3; IV,18,24.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, I,2,4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, IV,18,24; IV,19,25; XV,24,44.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII,4,6: "Nisi per fidem [Deus] diligatur, non poterit cor mundari."

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, IV,21,31.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, VII,6,11–12.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII,4,7.

<sup>35</sup> See Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

This perfection is twofold: one is perfection according to the intellect, when someone has that judgment of intellect to discern and judge rightly about those things that are proposed to him; the other is perfection according to the affection that charity makes, which is when someone adheres totally to God. . . . For the doctrine of Sacred Scripture has this, that in it are not things only to be pondered, as in geometry (*in ipsa non tantum traduntur speculanda, sicut in geometria*), but also to be approved through the affection (*sed etiam approbanda per affectum*). . . . Therefore, in other sciences it suffices that a man be perfect according to his understanding, but in these it is required that he be perfect according to understanding and affection (*in istis vero requiritur quod sit perfectus secundum intellectum et affectum*).<sup>36</sup>

Thus conceived, Trinitarian theology demands the practice of *prayer* (as the example of St. Thomas himself shows) by which the soul is purified, elevated toward the spiritual reality of God, and ordered to God by devotion.<sup>37</sup>

Among the many things that a good theologian should ask for are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the gifts of wisdom, understanding, science, and counsel. The gift of wisdom is of primary importance, since it allows one to have a right judgment about divine things by a certain connaturality with God. But the gift of understanding (*donum intellectus*) deserves special mention, since this gift is closely linked to the “exercise” and purification of the mind, insofar as it removes errors in the mind’s penetration of faith’s mysteries and keeps one from falling into the trap of erroneous judgments in matters of faith about God.<sup>38</sup> In his teaching about the gift of understanding and the corresponding

<sup>36</sup> *Super Heb.* 5, lec. 2 (no. 273). English translation: Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, trans. Chrysostom Baer, O. Praem. (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2006), 1:120.

<sup>37</sup> *In De div. nom.* 3, lec. 1 (nos. 232–33). For further reflections, see Gregory F. LaNave, “Why Holiness Is Necessary for Theology: Some Thomistic Distinctions,” *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 437–59.

<sup>38</sup> Bernard Blankenhorn, O.P., *Dionysian Mysticism in the Early Albertus Magnus and in Thomas Aquinas* (S.T.D. diss., University of Fribourg, 2012), 328.



beatitude of the “pure of heart,” St. Thomas explains that the gift of understanding brings about a special purification of the mind:

For purity (*munditia*) is twofold. One is a preamble and a disposition to seeing God, and consists in the affect being cleansed from disordered affections; and this purity of heart is effected by the virtues and gifts that pertain to the appetitive power. The other purity of heart is as perfective (*quasi completiva*) in view of the divine vision; and this is the purity of the mind (*munditia mentis*) purified of phantasms and errors, so that the things which are proposed about God are not taken by the mode of corporeal phantasms, nor according to heretical perversities (*ut scilicet ea quae de Deo proponuntur non accipiantur per modum corporalium phantasmatum, nec secundum haereticas perversitates*). And the gift of understanding brings about this purity (*et hanc munditiam facit donum intellectus*).<sup>39</sup>

One could perhaps object that the gift of understanding (which requires sanctifying grace and which is accessible to the unlearned or illiterate believer) works beyond concepts, so that it is not directly linked to the study of theology. But, as Bernard Blankenhorn brilliantly showed, the gift of understanding does not involve a metaconceptual type of knowledge. Rather, St. Thomas underlines its relation to the noetic content of Christian doctrine about God. For Aquinas, the perfect cognition of God and “what God is not” does not leave behind the grasp of divine perfections and their corresponding affirmative names.<sup>40</sup> As far as Trinitarian doctrine is concerned (“to get some glimpse of the truth sufficient for excluding the errors”), the gift of understanding is perhaps the most needed for a correct exercise of theology.

### To “Imitate” the Trinity

A look at the occurrences of the formula *imitare Deum* (*imitatio Dei, imitatores Dei*) in Aquinas shows that three themes, among many others, are especially connected with the imitation of God: the image of God

<sup>39</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 8, a. 7, resp.

<sup>40</sup> Blankenhorn, *Dionysian Mysticism*, 324–47.

(by far the most frequent theme), the participation of creatures in God's attributes, and the causality of creatures (including man's good works that imitate God's goodness). For the purpose of the present essay, I will limit myself to the first and third ones.

Aquinas's Trinitarian theology is built on the doctrine of the Word and Love. Beginning with the *Summa contra gentiles*, Aquinas accounts for the personal properties of the divine persons by relying on his mature doctrine of the Word and Love. In the human mind, a word (*verbum*) is the concept of the reality known, which the intellect *forms* and *expresses*, that is, the *term* of the act of understanding.<sup>41</sup> This analysis shows that a word is *distinct* from and *relative* to a principle. This makes it possible for Aquinas to show analogically that the name *Verbum* properly and exclusively signifies the Son who is conceived by the Father, who remains in the Father, and who is of the same nature as the Father. This is central to St. Thomas's Trinitarian theology: he uses the notion of *Verbum* in order to explain what "generation" means in God, what the names "Son"<sup>42</sup> and "Image"<sup>43</sup> signify, and even what the name "Father" signifies in God.<sup>44</sup> The relationship of the Son to the Holy Spirit is also described by means of the notion of "Word," insofar as the Word is "the Word who spirates Love" (*Verbum spirans Amorem*).<sup>45</sup> The theme of the

<sup>41</sup> SCG I, ch. 53; SCG IV, ch. 11; *De potentia*, q. 8, a. 1; ST I, q. 34, a. 1; *Super Ioan.* 1, lec. 1 (nos. 25–42).

<sup>42</sup> In the SCG, the notion of *Verbum* is developed in order to show "how generation is to be understood in God, and [how we should understand] what is said of the Son of God in Scripture" (SCG IV, ch. 11: "Quomodo accipienda sit generatio in divinis, et quae de Filio Dei dicuntur in Scripturis"). See also *De rationibus fidei*, ch. 3 ("Qualiter in divinis generatio sit accipienda"); ST I, q. 27, a. 2, resp. ("Unde processio Verbi in divinis dicitur generatio, et ipsum Verbum procedens dicitur Filius"); ST I, q. 28 a. 4, resp.; ST I, q. 32, a. 1, resp.; *Compendium theologiae* I, ch. 39 and 40.

<sup>43</sup> SCG IV, ch. 11 (no. 3476); ST I, q. 35, a. 2, resp.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., *De rationibus fidei*, ch. 3: "Hoc autem secundum humanae locutionis consuetudinem filius nominatur quod procedit ab alio in similitudinem eius, subsistens in eadem natura cum ipso. Secundum igitur quod divina verbis humanis nominari possunt, *Verbum intellectus divini Dei Filium nominamus; Deum vero cuius est Verbum nominamus Patrem, et processum Verbi dicimus esse generationem Filii, immaterialem quidem, non autem carnalem sicut carnales homines suspicantur.*" The emphases are mine.

<sup>45</sup> ST I, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2; *Super Ioan.* 6, lec. 5 (no. 946): "Verbum autem Dei Patris est spirans Amorem."

Son as *Word* is used again to account for the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son: Love proceeds from the Word.<sup>46</sup>

In a similar way, it is the property of *love* that Aquinas emphasizes in order to manifest the personal identity of the Holy Spirit. Just as St. Thomas shows that the knowing intellect forms a word, so he discerns an “imprint” of the beloved within the loving will. By “love,” in analogical fashion (and by an accommodation of language),<sup>47</sup> he does not mean the act of loving, but the dynamic “affection” that in the human will is found at the beginning of the act of loving, that is, what “moves and impels the will of the lover towards the beloved.” For what comes about in the will, St. Thomas uses either the active vocabulary of a “principle of impulsion” (“moving principle,” principle of “movement” toward the beloved),<sup>48</sup> or the formal vocabulary relating to an imprint: “From the fact that someone loves something in act, a certain imprint results, so to speak, of the thing loved in the affection of the lover; by reason of which the thing loved is said to be in the lover, as the thing understood is in the intellect of the one who understands.”<sup>49</sup> It is this “imprint” of the beloved, or this principle that moves the loving will toward the beloved, that allows one to account, by analogy, for the personal property of the Holy Spirit. This teaching on the Word and Love (together with the doctrine of subsistent relations) is the central pillar of Aquinas’s Trinitarian

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<sup>46</sup> *ST I*, q. 36, a. 2, resp.; *SCG IV*, ch. 24 (no. 3617): “Nam amor procedit a verbo.” See also *De potentia*, q. 10, a. 5; *Super Ioan.* 14, lec. 4 (no. 1916). In the *Compendium theologiae*, and in the *De rationibus fidei*, the theme of Love as proceeding from the Word is the sole argument used to account for the procession of the Spirit *a Filio*; see *De rationibus fidei*, ch. 4; *Compendium theologiae I*, ch. 49.

<sup>47</sup> This accommodation (*ST I*, q. 37, a. 1, resp.: *propter vocabulorum inopiam*) is explained and justified by means of the theory of *denominatio* (*ibid.*, a. 2, resp. and ad 2). See Emery, *Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas*, 62–69, 225–43, esp. 231 and 240.

<sup>48</sup> *ST I*, q. 27, a. 4, resp.: “Processio autem quae attenditur secundum rationem voluntatis, non consideratur secundum rationem similitudinis, sed magis secundum rationem impellentis et moventis in aliquid.” *ST I*, q. 36, a. 1, resp.: “Est autem proprium amoris, quod moveat et impellat voluntatem amantis in amatum.”

<sup>49</sup> *ST I*, q. 37, a. 1, resp.: “Sicut enim ex hoc quod aliquis rem aliquam intelligit, provenit quaedam intellectualis conceptio rei intellectae in intelligente, quae dicitur verbum; ita ex hoc quod aliquis rem aliquam amat, provenit quaedam impressio, ut ita loquar, rei amatae in affectu amantis, secundum quam amatum dicitur esse in amante, sicut et intellectum in intelligente. Ita quod, cum aliquis seipsum intelligit et amat, est in seipso non solum per identitatem rei, sed etiam ut intellectum in intelligente, et amatum in amante.”

theology. On this basis, the doctrine of the Word and Love is the theological key to the invisible missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

Since the Holy Spirit is Love, the likening (*assimilatur*) of the soul to the Holy Spirit occurs through the gift of charity and so the Holy Spirit's mission is accounted for by reason of charity. The Son in turn is the Word; not, however, just any word, but the Word breathing Love (*Verbum spirans Amorem*). . . . Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with just any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to an instruction of the intellect which breaks forth into the affection of love.<sup>50</sup>

The same teaching on the Word and Love is also the key to the doctrine of the *imago Dei* in man, insofar as the *imago Dei* is explained in terms of “knowing God” and “loving God.” The “image of the Trinity” in the human soul (*mens*) is explained as follows:

As the uncreated Trinity is distinguished by the procession of the Word (*Verbum*) from the Speaker (*Dicens*), and of Love (*Amor*) from both of these, as we have seen; so we may say that in rational creatures wherein we find a procession of a word in the intellect (*processio verbi secundum intellectum*), and a procession of love in the will (*processio amoris secundum voluntatem*), there exists an image of the uncreated Trinity (*imago Trinitatis increatae*).<sup>51</sup>

The emphasis that Aquinas puts on *acts* rests on the same basis: “For this reason, first and chiefly, the image of the Trinity is to be found in the acts of the soul, that is, inasmuch as from the knowledge that we possess, by actual thought we form an internal word; and thence break forth into love (*interius verbum formamus, et ex hoc in amorem prorumpimus*).”<sup>52</sup> Not only does this teaching account for the Trinitarian theocentrism

<sup>50</sup> *ST I*, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2.

<sup>51</sup> *ST I*, q. 93, a. 6, resp. The precision of vocabulary is remarkable: the Father is the “Speaker” (that is to say, the One who speaks the Word), the Son is the “Word,” and the Holy Spirit is “Love.”

<sup>52</sup> *ST I*, q. 93, a. 7, resp.

of the *imago Dei*, but it also shows that Christian spiritual life consists, first of all, in the *active imitation* of the Trinity by our immanent acts of graced knowing and loving God:

The divine persons, as we said above, are distinguished from each other according to the procession of the Word from the Speaker (*secundum processionem Verbi a Dicente*), and the procession of Love from both (*et Amoris ab utroque*). Now, the Word of God is born of God insofar as God knows himself (*secundum notitiam sui ipsius*); and Love proceeds from God insofar as he loves himself (*secundum quod seipsum amat*). . . . Hence the divine image (*divina imago*) is found in man according to the word conceived from the knowledge of God (*secundum verbum conceptum de Dei notitia*), and to the love derived therefrom (*et amorem exinde derivatum*).<sup>53</sup>

In this way, the fundamental structure of theological anthropology and of spiritual life is directly rooted in Trinitarian theology, insofar as it rests on the doctrine of the Word and of Love. The image of grace and the image of glory consist of the imitation of the “notional acts” in the Trinity, that is to say, of the “speaking of the Word” and of the “spiration of Love.” This “imitation” of God’s acts is not a mere “representation.” Rather, it must be understood as an inner “transformation,”<sup>54</sup> an ontological *conformation* to the Triune God.<sup>55</sup> It is a matter of “deification”

<sup>53</sup> ST I, q. 93, a. 8, resp.

<sup>54</sup> *Super II Cor.* 3, lec. 4 (no. 114): “[We know] the glorious God by the mirror of reason, in which there is an image of God (*quaedam imago ipsius*). We behold him when we rise from a consideration of ourselves to some knowledge of God, and we are transformed (*et transformatur*). For since all knowledge involves the knower’s being assimilated (*per assimilationem*) to the thing known, it is necessary that those who see be in some way transformed into God (*aliquo modo transformentur in Deum*). If they see perfectly, they are perfectly transformed (*perfecte transformantur*), as the blessed in heaven by the union of fruition: ‘When he appears we shall be like him’ (1 Jn 3:2); but if we see imperfectly, then we are transformed imperfectly, as here by faith: ‘Now we see in a mirror dimly’ (1 Cor 13:12).”

<sup>55</sup> *De veritate*, q. 10, a. 7, resp.: “In the knowledge by which the mind (*mens*) knows itself, there is a representation of the uncreated Trinity according to analogy (*repraesentatio Trinitatis increatae secundum analogiam*): as the mind knows itself, it begets a word expressing itself, and love proceeds from both. Thus the Father, in

or divinization in the active sense. Such human acts have the Trinity as their *model* (in the ontological sense: exemplary causality, participation), as their *moving principle*, as their *object* (knowing and loving *God himself*), and as their *end*. “The intellectual nature imitates God to the highest degree in this, that God understands and loves himself.”<sup>56</sup>

Insofar as God is the truth by essence, the same explanation applies to truth: while all creatures are from God by creation, some are said to be “of God” because they imitate him (*per imitationem*).<sup>57</sup> Holy men are “from the truth” insofar as they receive the transforming gifts of God’s grace by which “they believe the truth and love it.”<sup>58</sup>

The accomplishment of good works is explained, in the same way, as an imitation of God.<sup>59</sup> The clearest text is certainly the commentary on Ephesians 5:1 (“Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children”). Here God is considered as the model (*exemplar*); holy men are made his children by participating in him (*participatio sui ipsius*) through the gift of the Holy Spirit. God the Father is the model of charity, especially of kindness and mercy, “which are the effects of charity,” insofar as “God has forgiven you in Christ.”<sup>60</sup> In this Trinitarian exegesis, Christian life is understood as an imitation of the Father.

Among the many topics associated with the imitation of God, fraternal correction is worth a mention: since “God often rebukes sinners by secretly admonishing them with an inward inspiration,” we should “imitate God” in giving a private admonition to our brothers before de-

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speaking himself, begets his Word from all eternity, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both. Whereas, in the knowledge by which the mind knows God, the mind itself becomes conformed to God (*mens ipsa Deo conformatur*), in the way that every knower, as such, is assimilated (*assimilatur*) to the known object.”

<sup>56</sup> *ST I*, q. 93, a. 4, resp.: “Imitatur autem intellectualis natura maxime Deum quantum ad hoc, quod Deus seipsum intelligit et amat.” See also *ibid.*, a. 6, resp. In other similar texts, the theme of “imitation” is especially linked to free will (*In I Sent.* d. 3, q. 3, a. 1, ad 2) and to the conformation of man’s will to the will of God (*In I Sent.* d. 48, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4; a. 2, ad 6).

<sup>57</sup> *Super Ioan.* 16, lec. 6 (no. 2362): “Dicuntur etiam aliqui esse a Deo per affectum et imitationem.”

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* (no. 2363): “Cum tamen ideo credamus quia sumus ex veritate, in quantum scilicet accepimus donum Dei per quod credimus et amamus veritatem.”

<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., *Super Rom.* 6, lec. 4 (no. 515): *ad Dei imitationem*.

<sup>60</sup> *Super Eph.* 5, lec. 1 (nos. 266–67).

nouncing them.<sup>61</sup> Finally, a central way of “imitating God” consists in transmitting knowledge of God to others.<sup>62</sup> This leads to my next point.

### The Dignity of Being a Cause

All Thomists (and all Dominicans) know the famous phrase, *contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere* (“passing on to others what you have contemplated”): “For even as it is better to enlighten than merely to shine, so is it better to pass on to others the fruits of one’s contemplation than merely to contemplate.”<sup>63</sup> Following Simon Tugwell’s interpretation: “Those who propose to teach others, in whatever capacity, should ideally be ‘contemplating’ first. That is to say, they must love the truth for its own sake and find their chief delight in investigating it for their own satisfaction, if they are to be effective in communicating it to others.”<sup>64</sup> What is perhaps less known (or less often said) is the fact that, for St. Thomas, this justification of a religious Order dedicated to study and preaching is grounded in his metaphysics and in his doctrine of God.

In his discussion of God’s will, when explaining that God’s will extends to creatures, Aquinas formulates this transcendental, metaphysical law: every being (starting with physical beings) has a natural inclination not only toward its proper good (either to acquire it, or to rest in it), but also to spread this good to others, that is, to make others participate in its perfection, by a gratuitous superabundance. We may call it the *law of the generosity of being*. This law is the source of the mystery of causality. St. Thomas often refers to Pseudo-Dionysius’s famous phrase, *bonum diffusivum sui*, or to the following principle: “Every agent, insofar as it

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<sup>61</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 33, a. 7, obj. 1 and ad 1.

<sup>62</sup> *In De div. nom.* 13, lec. 4 (no. 1006): “Ipse [Dionysius] *nullum* sacrorum sermonum sibi traditorum, ad se contraxit, idest sibi avare retinuit, sed currendo sursum ad Dei imitationem, ea quae sibi tradita sunt, iam tradidit et in futuro tradere intendit et Timotheo et aliis sanctis viris.” Emphases in the original (Marietti edition). On this topic, see Pawel Klimczak, O.P., *Christus Magister: Le Christ Maître dans les commentaires évangéliques de saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2014).

<sup>63</sup> *ST* II-II, q. 188, a. 6, resp.: “Sicut enim maius est illuminare quam lucere solum, ita maius est contemplata aliis tradere quam solum contemplari.”

<sup>64</sup> Simon Tugwell, *Albert and Thomas: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 254.

is perfect and in act, produces its like.”<sup>65</sup> This metaphysical law applies first of all to God himself: “It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate as far as possible to others the good possessed; and especially does this pertain to the divine will, from which all perfection is derived in some kind of likeness (*per quamdam similitudinem derivatur*).”<sup>66</sup> St. Thomas refers to it in order to account for the divine will and the divine love toward creatures, for creation, and for divine providence as well.<sup>67</sup>

This law of generosity also applies to the communication of causality. Because of his superabundant goodness, and according to the disposition of his wisdom, God communicated to creatures the “dignity of causing” (*causandi dignitas*),<sup>68</sup> the “dignity of being a cause” or “the dignity of causality” (*dignitas causalitatis*).<sup>69</sup> At the center of this teaching is the understanding of the Triune God (“first cause”) and of the creature (“secondary cause”) as two *complete causes*. The collaboration of the action of creatures—including the free action of human beings—with the action of God is not understood as the sum of two partial causes, each of which would contribute to the production of an effect, but rather as the exercise of two causes united *per se*, one of which (the creature) is subordinate to the other (God), each being complete in its own order with respect to the effect produced,<sup>70</sup> so that “the same effect is not attributed to a natural cause and to divine power in such a way that it is partly done by God, and partly by the natural agent (*non . . . quasi partim . . . et partim*); rather, it is wholly done by both, according to a different way (*sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum*).”<sup>71</sup> In these explanations, St. Thomas underscores the universality, the immediacy, and the funda-

<sup>65</sup> *ST I*, q. 19, a. 2, resp.: “Omne agens, in quantum est actu et perfectum, facit sibi simile.”

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* Here “to communicate as far as possible to others” means: to the extent to which creatures can participate in God’s goodness, and “imitate” God’s goodness.

<sup>67</sup> See Fran O’Rourke, “Creative Diffusion in Aquinas,” in *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Creation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), chap. 9.

<sup>68</sup> *In I Sent.* d. 45, q. 1, a. 3, ad 4; *In II Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1.

<sup>69</sup> *ST I*, q. 22, a. 3, resp.; q. 23, a. 8, ad 2; *Super Ioan.* 1, lec. 4 (no. 119).

<sup>70</sup> See André de Muralt, *Lenjeu de la philosophie médiévale* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), esp. 331–51.

<sup>71</sup> *SCG III*, ch. 70 (no. 2466).



mental primacy of God's action. God acts "as the one moving chiefly" (*ut principaliter movens*),<sup>72</sup> by giving the creature *being*, the *faculty of acting*, and the *action itself*, in such a way that creatures receive from God the ability to act as a complete cause, and so that human beings act in a free manner. God's goodness is made especially manifest in this gift of a proper created causality subordinate to, and maintained by, divine causality. Among this doctrine's many applications is our collaboration with God:

The agent tends to make the patient like the agent, not only in regard to its act of being, but also in regard to causality. . . . Now, things tend to the likeness of God in the same way that effects tend to the likeness of the agent, as we have shown. Therefore, things naturally tend to become like God by the fact that they are the cause of others. . . . Since a created thing tends to the divine likeness in many ways, this one whereby it seeks the divine likeness by being the cause of others takes the ultimate place. Hence Dionysius says, in the third chapter of *On the Celestial Hierarchy*, that "of all things, the most divine is to become cooperators of God," in accordance with the statement of the Apostle (1 Cor 3:9): "we are God's coadjutors."<sup>73</sup>

According to Aquinas, cooperating with God by communicating one's own perfection to others is "the most noble way of imitating God (*nobilissimus modus divinae imitationis*)."<sup>74</sup> And an eminent mode of such cooperation with God consists in the collaboration with God's act of

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<sup>72</sup> *Super Rom.* 9, lec. 3 (no. 778).

<sup>73</sup> SCG III, ch. 21 (nos. 2022 and 2023): "Agens autem intendit sibi assimilare patiens non solum quantum ad esse ipsius, sed etiam quantum ad causalitatem. . . . Sic autem tendunt res in similitudinem Dei sicut effectus in similitudinem agentis, ut ostensum est. Intendunt igitur res naturaliter assimilari Deo in hoc quod sunt causae aliorum. . . . Cum igitur per multa tendat res creata in divinam similitudinem, hoc ultimum ei restat, ut divinam similitudinem quaerat per hoc quod sit aliorum causa. Unde Dionysius dicit, III cap. *Caelestis hierarchiae*, quod *omnium divinius est Dei cooperatorem fieri*: secundum quod Apostolus dicit, I Cor. III: *Dei adiutores sumus*."

<sup>74</sup> *De veritate*, q. 9, a. 2, resp. (with reference to Pseudo-Dionysius: *omnium divinius est Dei cooperatorem fieri*).

salvation.<sup>75</sup> Here I will consider only one aspect: the communication of revealed knowledge about God, that is, teaching and preaching the faith (and spiritual counseling).<sup>76</sup>

Before using the phrase “it is better to enlighten than merely to shine” (or “it is a greater thing to give light than simply to have light”) in describing a religious Order dedicated to studying and preaching, St. Thomas applies this principle to the causal action that one creature exercises on another, in the context of *creation* as a diffusion of God’s goodness, and he includes an explicit reference to the imitation of God: “The creature approaches more perfectly to God’s likeness if it is not only good, but can also act for the good of other things, than if it were good only in itself; that which both shines and casts light is more like the sun than that which only shines.”<sup>77</sup> This metaphysical principle also appears in the general discussion of how creatures imitate God’s goodness in the context of God’s *providence*. Being “assimilated” to God is the ultimate end of all creatures. Such assimilation does not consist only in creatures’ substantial being (*esse substantiale*), but also in the proper operation (*propria operatio*) by which they imitate God’s goodness,<sup>78</sup> so

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<sup>75</sup> This also applies, and in first place, to angels. See, e.g., *In II Sent.* d. 11, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1: “Deus est custos primus et principalis, apud quem summa providentia residet: nec est propter suam insufficientiam quod suam providentiam de hominibus exequitur per Angelos, sed propter ordinem suae sapientiae. Tum quia congruit Angelis, ut scilicet eis haec dignitas non negetur, quod sint duces hominum reductionis in Deum; et in hoc Deum quodammodo imitantur, in quantum cooperantur Deo in introductione hominum in finem.”

<sup>76</sup> On the association of hearing confessions with preaching, see *ST II-II*, q. 188, a. 4; *Contra impugnantes*, ch. 4. Hearing confessions (dispensing the sacrament of penance) belonged to the mission of the Order of Preachers from its beginning; see Leonard Boyle, O.P., *Facing History: A Different Thomas Aquinas* (Louvain-La-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’Études Médiévales, 2000), 141–59.

<sup>77</sup> *SCG II*, ch. 45 (no. 1222): “Perfectius igitur accedit res creata ad Dei similitudinem si non solum bona est sed etiam ad bonitatem aliorum agere potest, quam si solum in se bona esset: sicut similis est soli quod lucet et illuminat quam quod lucet tantum.” The context is the distinction of created things: “Oportuit igitur, ad hoc quod in creaturis esset perfecta Dei imitatio, quod diversi gradus in creaturis invenirentur” (*ibid.*). Note the mention of the “imitation of God.”

<sup>78</sup> *SCG III*, ch. 20 (nos. 2009–16): “To become like God is the ultimate end of all (*assimilari ad Deum est ultimus omnium finis*). . . . Things tend toward this objective, of becoming like God, inasmuch as he is good. . . . Each thing becomes like the divine goodness in respect of all the things that belong to its proper goodness. Now, the goodness of the thing consists not only in its mere being (*non solum in esse*

that “things also tend toward the divine likeness by the fact that they are the cause of other things (*res intendunt divinam similitudinem etiam in hoc quod sunt causae aliorum*).”<sup>79</sup> On this basis, St. Thomas recalls that “likeness to God is more perfect (*perfectior est assimilatio ad Deum*) in respect of conformity in action (*secundum conformitatem actionis*) than in respect of conformity in some form (*secundum conformitatem alicuius formae*): thus that which both shines and illuminates is more like the sun than that which shines only.”<sup>80</sup> Such texts allow us to speak of a “spirituality of creation and providence” in Aquinas, a spirituality that stresses the *active collaboration* of creatures through their causal action for the benefit of other creatures.

The phrase *contemplata aliis tradere* must be situated precisely within this metaphysical teaching.<sup>81</sup> It is directly connected to St. Thomas’s understanding of act, being, goodness, and operation. On the one hand, creatures imitate God by collaborating with him as secondary causes. On the other hand, while nonrational creatures are ordained to a similitude of the divine *goodness* (in both their being and operation), rational creatures are called by grace to participate in this supreme mode of God’s goodness, which is God’s *beatitudo*: their ultimate end consists in attaining to God *himself* by knowing him and loving him, that is to say, in finding their beatitudo in God (the accomplishment of the *imago Dei*, as we saw above).<sup>82</sup> For the human being, in both cases (participation in

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*suo*), but in all the things needed for its perfection (*sed in omnibus aliis quae ad suam perfectionem requiruntur*). . . . It is obvious, then, that things are ordered to God as an end, not merely according to their substantial act of being (*secundum esse substantiale*), but also according to those items which are added as pertinent to perfection, and even according to the proper operation (*et etiam secundum propriam operationem*) which also belongs to the thing’s perfection.”

<sup>79</sup> SCG III, ch. 21 (no. 2017).

<sup>80</sup> *De potentia*, q. 2, a. 4, obj. 4. The response (ad 4) confirms this principle: as the divine Son is like the Father in the divine nature, so too he is like the Father in the action following divine nature (essential action).

<sup>81</sup> For the kinds of causality involved in teaching and preaching, see Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, O.P., “Le mystère de la prédication,” *Revue Thomiste* 107 (2007): 355–74.

<sup>82</sup> *In IV Sent.* d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qa. 1, resp.: “Et quia omnia procedunt a Deo in quantum bonus est, ut dicit Augustinus, et Dionysius; ideo omnia creata secundum impressionem a creatore receptam inclinantur in bonum appetendum secundum suum modum; ut sic in rebus quaedam circulatio inveniatur; dum, a bono egredientia, in bonum tendunt. Haec autem circulatio in quibusdam perficitur

God's beatitude and in God's providence), it is a matter of *being assimilated to God's acts*: to his notional acts (the image of the Trinity), and to his creative act (the dignity of being a cause).<sup>83</sup> Contemplation and action are grounded in God; they are an "imitation" of, and a participation in, God's own operation.

A final remark is in order. Contemplation is not only the starting point of teaching and preaching the faith; it is also its *end*. In his discussion of the relationship between the active life and the contemplative life, St. Thomas explains:

A sacrifice is rendered to God spiritually when something is offered to him. And of all man's goods, God specially accepts that of the human soul when it is offered to him in sacrifice. Now a man ought to offer to God, in the first place, his soul . . . and in the second place, *the souls of others*. . . . And the more closely a man unites his own or another's soul to God, the more acceptable is his sacrifice to God. Wherefore it is more acceptable to God that one apply *one's own soul and the souls of others to contemplation* than to action.<sup>84</sup>

Teaching and preaching the faith are an eminent form of "spiritual sacrifice." They consist of leading others to the contemplation of God, so that the goal or end of teaching and preaching is reached when others


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creaturis, in quibusdam autem remanet imperfecta. Illae enim creaturae quae non ordinantur ut pertingant ad illud primum bonum a quo processerunt, sed solummodo ad consequendam ejus similitudinem qualemcumque, non perfecte habent hanc circulationem; sed solum illae creaturae quae ad ipsum primum principium aliquo modo pertingere possunt; quod solum est rationabilium creaturarum, quae Deum ipsum assequi possunt per cognitionem et amorem: in qua assecutione beatitudo eorum consistit, ut ex dictis patet."

<sup>83</sup> "Notional acts" (*actus notionales*) are the "speaking of the Word" and the "spiration of Love" (they entail a real distinction within God). Creation is an "essential act" (*actus essentialis*) insofar as it is common to the three persons.

<sup>84</sup> *ST II-II*, q. 182, a. 2, ad 3: "Sacrificium spiritualiter Deo offertur cum aliquid ei exhibetur. Inter omnia autem bona hominis Deus maxime acceptat bonum humanae animae, ut hoc sibi in sacrificium offeratur. Offerre autem debet aliquis Deo, primo quidem, animam suam . . . secundo autem, *animas aliorum*. . . . Quanto autem homo animam suam *vel alterius propinquius Deo* coniungit, tanto sacrificium est Deo magis acceptum. Unde magis acceptum est Deo quod aliquis *animam suam et aliorum applicet contemplationi*, quam actioni." The emphases are mine.

contemplate the objects of faith that a preacher has contemplated (in his study of the mystery of God) and passed on to them.<sup>85</sup>

In a *Quodlibet* held in Paris between 1268 and 1271, St. Thomas gave this definition of the theologian's mission (his own mission!) with respect to the *cura animarum*: "Doctors of theology are like 'principal artificers' who inquire and teach how others ought to procure the salvation of souls."<sup>86</sup> According to Leonard Boyle, this is what Aquinas intended to do in his *Summa theologiae*: not only theology at the service of pastoral care, but theology as pastoral care;<sup>87</sup> and this in a community of teachers and students, a *societas studii* ordained to teaching and learning.<sup>88</sup> 

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<sup>85</sup> On teaching and preaching as a sacrifice (*sacrificium doctrinae*), see Gilles Emery, O.P., "Le sacerdoce spirituel des fidèles chez saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 99 (1999): 211–43, here at 238–39.

<sup>86</sup> *Quodlibet* I, q. 7, a. 2, resp. (Leonine edition, vol. 25/2, 196): "Et similiter theologie doctores sunt quasi principales artifices, qui inquirunt et docent qualiter alii debeant salutem animarum procurare."

<sup>87</sup> Boyle, *Facing History*, 151: "C'est, je suppose, ce que Thomas, le 'doctor veritatis' voulut faire dans sa *Somme*—non pas, je me hâte d'ajouter, la théologie au service de la *cura animarum*, mais la théologie comme *cura animarum*."

<sup>88</sup> *Contra impugnantes*, ch. 3 (Leonine edition, vol. 41A, 65): "Societas studii est ordinata ad actum docendi et discendi."

