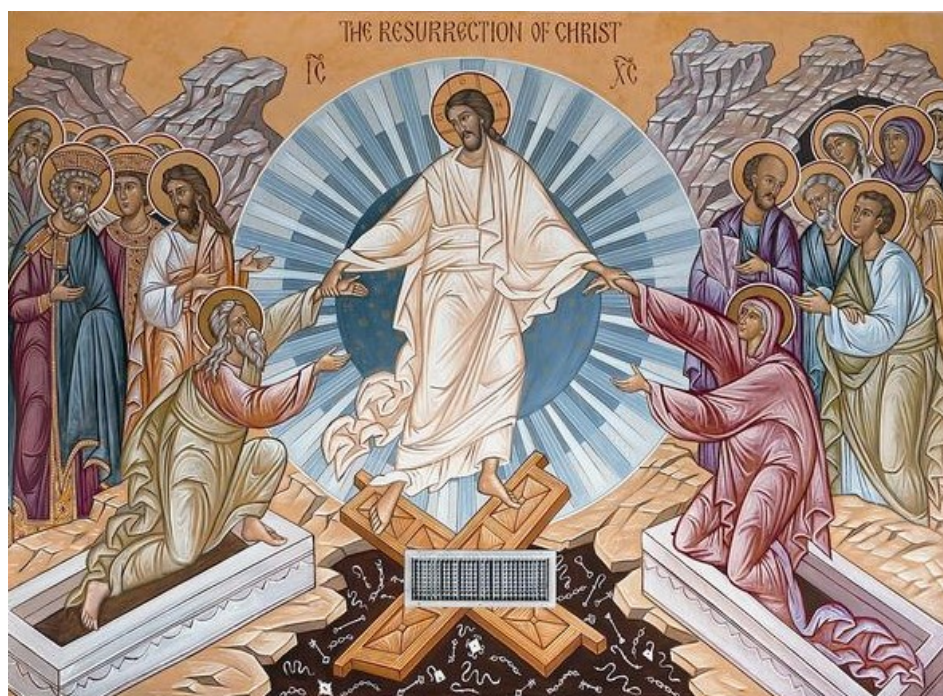


St. GASPAR BERTONI
AND THE “DEPTHS” OF THE HUMAN SOUL



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1st Week of Lent, 2017

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St. Gaspar Bertoni: *How very few are they who would realize what God has in store for them – were His was not impeded ...*

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ST. GASPAR BERTONI THE DEPTHS OF ONE'S SOUL

[31.] At St Joseph's. At the bottom of one's own nothingness God is found. On hearing very sublime things about God: a profound awareness of myself. [Diary, August 24, 18008]

Introduction:

[1] In friendly conversations, we might make the comment that an idea that we really want to emphasize comes "from the very depths of our being". We might say, 'this is my gut feeling', to live as the "spitting image"! Modern Spiritual writers sometimes go further: this is the gut feeling – heart of hearts – inner, spiritual self – this is one's heart and mind, soul; interior mind-set; one's spiritual center the profound nucleus, center of each individual.

[2] There is a broad array of expressions used in exegetical and theological experts, as well as by spiritual authors to describe 'living in Christ Jesus', "in the Spirit", "in Grace". Some of these are the following and would be synonymous:

- personal nucleus, center of one's being;
- each one's central unifying prefix;
- a kind of 'sacramental identification', becoming uni-personal, uni-Spiritual" with the Lord;
- a deep personal "putting on" the attitude of Christ Jesus until death;
- He is our ultimate Model;
- Real, total self-giving;
- interior attitude – fundamental essential respect for the Lord;
- each one's basic conviction;
- central, fundamental aspect, motivation;
- common vital principle; life-long Christian subordination to grace;
- total existential attitude of conversion, ever "turning toward the Merciful Lord"
- one psyche, one hart, mind and soul.

[3] While these terms [and perhaps many others] may be reduced to a mere expression of common parlance, they might also reflect the spiritual wisdom of our faith over the ages. In psychology, we all know of the epithet a 'shallow', a 'light weight' – person – one 'without depth roots'. Sometimes, in our spiritual lives, this could be the lived situation of some of us. We may be mediocre in our life's commitment. St. Pope John Paul gave us all a lived example of this ideal in his Papal Motto, *Totus Tuus* – for Lent and Holy Week and the entire Easter season then for Pentecost. Totality is the great contrast over 'mediocrity' – [perfection remains the Christian ideal!

[4] This reflection is offered in the hopes that we might all be encouraged to ponder a bit more deeply and then come to reflect on the Church's teaching, that we might all live more deeply the sublime 'every – day' spirit of St. Gaspar Bertoni - that we truly follow more closely for the rest of our lives his own Spirituality, his way of following Jesus Christ carrying His Cross toward the Resurrection – in order that through Him, the Father sends down His Holy Spirit for our Pentecost. This reflection is based on the tradition of the Church as lived by St. Gaspar and as being offered to us as a 'way' to follow after Jesus Christ – as St. Gaspar did in his long and pain-ridden life.

[5] In showing His Glorious Sacred Stigmata, retained in His Risen Body, to reveal to us this Portrait, Image, this Model of Jesus Christ. Let us try to make His words more meaningful for us all at this time:

Jesus came and stood among them and said: Peace be with you!...After He had said this, He showed to them His hands and His side. Then the Disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again: Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, so I send you...Receive the Holy Spirit...! [cf. Jn 20: 19, ff.]

[6] Here the sincere effort will be made to share some of these depths of Jesus as understood by St. Gaspar Bertoni:

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A. THOUGHTS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE

I. PSALM 130: A Cry of Repentance

Presentation:

(1) This is the 11th Song of the Ascents (Pss 120-134). They were most likely sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. On their way, they would have passed through the Valley of the Balsam – not unlike our “weeping willow” (cf. Ps 84:6, ff). This seems to have been at the point of the junction of the roads leading to Jerusalem.

(2) In the Latin Church, this psalm is almost universally known as the De Profundis – a time honored part of the prayers offered for the deceased. This Psalm is indeed a Prayer of Hope, while at the same time being one of the admission of one’s personal guilt: the Lord will watch over His people so that they will never be over-run by the wicked – nor, will the good give up their quest for the Lord: *lead us not into temptation!*

(3) This is a psalm that sounds very much like the prayer found in Jonah 2:3-11:

“Out of my distress, I cried to Yahweh – and he answered me. From the belly of Sheol, I cried out – and you heard my voice...

For you threw me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods closed round me...

But, You raised my life from the Pit, Yahweh, my God!

When my soul was growing ever weaker, Yahweh I remembered you – and my prayer reached you in your holy Temple.

Some abandon their faithful love by worshipping false gods, but I shall sacrifice to you, with songs of praise. The vow I have made, I shall fulfill...”

(4) The closing of the book of the prophet Micah also offers us consolation in the line of Psalm 130:

“... What god can compare with you for pardoning guilt, and for overlooking crime?

He does not harbor anger forever; since He delights in showing faithful love.

Once more have pity on us, tread down our faults; throw all our sins to the bottom of the sea.

Grant Jacob your faithfulness and Abraham your faithful love, as you swore to our ancestors long ago...” (Mi 7:18-20).

(5) Some of the Fathers of the Church (such as Hilary, John Chrysostom, Theodoretus) thought that this psalm was written for the cessation of the Babylonian Captivity. Many modern interpreters have held that this prayer is particularly suitable for anyone undergoing a very painful human experience, such as:

- sickness;
- persecution;
- prisoners;
- those suffering the fear of death, temptations, discouragement.

(a) The text seems to have been composed in the first place by one who has suffered the anguish of a sense of sinfulness.

(b) Biblical scholars do not think that this Penitential Psalm reaches the “pathos”, the spiritual richness and psychological depth of the MISERERE. Yet it seems to flow from the same religious inspiration. It is a most moving composition of spontaneous manner – proceeding from its sublime faith in the infinite Mercy of God: “... with You is forgiveness, O Lord ... I rely on your promise ... my whole being HOPES in the Lord ...: Its supplication of crying out from the depths is based on the divine Goodness.

(6) This psalm offers its own “theology” of the efficacy of every humble and trusting prayer. The writer of these verses was convinced of the Divine Goodness and that the culpable would indeed be redeemed. This is a spirit that was already looking far into the distance to the gospel times:

“... Take comfort, my child, your sins are forgiven!” (Jesus’ words to the paralytic – Mt 9:2).

“... Then Peter went up to Him and said: ‘Lord, how often must I FORGIVE MY BROTHER IF HE WRONGS ME? As often as seven times? Jesus answered: ‘Not seven, I tell you, but 70 x 7 ...’”

(7) Redemption then is the core and the grandeur of this psalm. The central concern of this suppliant has been his past sin – and one with this, and surpassing it – the pardon that the Lord will bestow. The entire psalm rests on the solid foundation, or the capital dogma of the gratuity of pardon. From this central belief, two factors emerge as certain:

- first of all, that God is Merciful Pardon– that the divine life [relative attribute of God] in our regard is His forgiveness;
- if this were not the case, humanity would simply cease to be.

(8) Three images seem to “circulate” throughout the psalm:

- the unhappy person, who cries out from the deep abyss;
- the watchmen, who long for the return of light into their lives – frequently looking to the distant horizon for this;
- the conviction of the fidelity of God and His generous ransom.

(a) These three circulate around these images:

- sin is compared to a Flood, a marine abyss, and the floods seem to engulf the wretched sinner – and only God can reach out a saving hand;
- there is the image of the Dark Night, and only the Dawn of the Divine Pardon can dissipate the gloom;
- thirdly, an unknown person, all weighted down by his Chaos. The Most High Himself has already made it known that He would be willing to pay the ransom price, to set the unhappy hostage free.

(b) Sin is presented by this anonymous believing Psalmist as the most profound distress of humanity – and it is a distress that only God can resolve by saving one from the flood, and by bringing a ray of hope to life.

(9) Many interpreters have read Psalm 130 as an “Individual Cantic” - as to make of it a “National Lament”, then applied to an individual would greatly lessen its impact, it seems to many interpreters. Yet, the author feels himself in profound solidarity with his people, “Israel” – comparing the nation, looking forward to the Messianic times, as a watchman looks for the dawn. This allows this “individual poem” to have a “collective interpretation.” (Some would see that the conclusion of the psalm [“... For with Yahweh is faithful love, with Him generous ransom – and he will forgive Israel of all his sins...”] – as a declaration taken from an ancient Penitential Ritual of the old Temple.

(10) Nonetheless – this psalm is a part of the Gradual Psalms, the Songs of Ascent. In the Liturgy of the Temple, a cantic such as this is eminently suited to inculcate in the pilgrims, sentiments of contrition for their personal faults – as well as for their national sins. Such sentiment would seem indispensable for any authentic piety toward the Lord. It would seem that the liturgical usage of this psalm would have been associated with an appropriate sacrifice for sin (cf. Lv 4-6):

“... Three times a year, you will hold a festival in my honor. You will observe the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. For 7 days you will eat unleavened bread, as I have commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in that month, you came out of the (land of slavery)... You will also observe the Feast of the Harvest of

the first-fruits of your labors... and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year... You will bring the best of the first-fruits of your soil to the house of Yahweh, you God..." (cf. Ex 23:15, ff.).

"... Three times a year you must appear before Yahweh, your God..." at the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, at the Feast of Shelters. No one must appear empty-handed before the Lord – each must give in proportion to the blessings which the Lord God has bestowed on you..." (Dt 16:16, ff.).

"... The Jewish Passover was drawing near, and many of the country people who had gone up to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves, were looking out for Jesus..." (cf. Jn 11:55).

(11) Some think that Psalm 130 might date from the time of Nehemiah, that era following the long and harsh exile. Some see the psalm in the spirit of St. Peter – after his denial of the Lord, when he went out and wept bitterly – and was pardoned by the Lord. In the feelings of being engulfed by what he had done, Peter in great humility asks for forgiveness.

The Supplication of the Penitent:

Verse 1

"... From the depths I cry to you, O Lord – Lord hear my cry.

Listen attentively to the sound of my pleading (vv. 1, 2).

[These depths find a strong biblical support: as in Creation and Redemption, each one is raised up from the darkness, the deep and the desert – thoughts that became 'spiritualized' in later biblical reading. Abraham realized it in the terrible offering of his son, both rescued by the Angel. Job experienced the 'depths of isolation in his own suffering – Moses found it in the Darkness of the Desert when with his family, he encountered the Angel of the Lord. IN the 'depths', the Abyss calls unto the Abyss. For Jonah, the abyss enveloped him – cf. Jon 2:6]:

a. There are numerous psalms that skillfully make use of images to convey their messages. Here there is a most artful description of the situation of one who is almost overwhelmed, engulfed by the sense of his own unhappiness – using the single simple metaphor: OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

b. In the early creation story, the powerful spirit of the Most High went out over the three enemies of humanity: the desert, the darkness and the deep. It may be that all three images are present here.

1) the Desert: as the watchman of the desert camp, looks furtively toward the eastern horizon for the first glimpses of the new day, he yearns for the passing of the terrible desert night.

2) the Darkness: yearning for the coming of the new dawn, the anonymous watchman of ancient times is a “type”, a kind of model of all who would yearn for the coming of Christ, the Light from the East, the Light of the Nations, to come to them;

3) the Deep: the conclusion of this trio of alliteration [in the original Hebrew this is accomplished by similar sounds] – these primordial powers of the chaos – which then “spiritualize” – as the great enemies in the spiritual life – the “deep” is most present as biblical theme of spirituality:

“... Yahweh is my rock and my fortress, my deliverer is my God. I take refuge in him, my rock, my shield, my saving strength... With death’s breakers closing in on me – Belial’s torrents ready to swallow me... Sheol’s snares on every side of me ... I called to Yahweh in my anguish ... and my cry came to his ears... (Ps 18).

“... I am exhausted with calling out, my throat is hoarse, my eyes are worn out searching for my God ... Let not the waters wash over me, nor the deep swallow me up, nor the Pit close its mouth on me...” (cf. Ps 69:3, 15).

“... the flood (of fear) is around me all day long, closes in on me all at once ... all that I know is darkness...” (Ps 88:17).

“... Was it not You, O Lord, Who dried up the sea, the waters of the great abyss; who made the sea-bed into a road for the redeemed to go across? ... they will enter Zion shouting for joy... their sorrow and sighing will take flight...” (Is 51:10, ff).

“... you have been wrecked by the waves, O Tyre, by the depths of the sea...” (cf. Ezk 27:34).

(4) The flood in the night is an almost overwhelming reality with which to cope – and the greater the darkness, the deeper the yearning for the dawn:

“... my being hopes in the Lord, as watchmen yearn for the daybreak ... (cf. v. 6).

“... You yourself, O Lord, are my lamp – my God lights up my darkness... (cf. Ps 18:29).

“... At the break of day, God comes to the rescue...” (cf. Ps 46:6 – the “dawn” is a special time for redemption: at dawn, of the 3rd day...).

“... you have plunged me into the darkness, into the depths ... I call to You O Lord, to You I stretch out my hands...” (cf. Ps 88:7).

“... each morning fill us with Your faithful love – and we shall sing and be happy all our days...” (Ps 90:14).

“... they cried out to the Lord in their distress, he rescued them from their plight. He brought them out from the gloom and the shadow dark as death, and shattered their chains...” (cf. Ps 107:13, ff.).

“... Let the dawn bring news of your faithful love, for I place my trust in you – show me the road to travel for you to relieve my heart...” (cf. Ps 143.8).

c. The metaphor of the flood in the night gives some description of the indescribable unhappiness that strikes this unknown Psalmist. He seems to find himself without recourse, without any exit from his plight. He seems to be bereft of all light, and is undergoing a long oppression, a sense of dereliction, having been abandoned, or having lost all that was dear to him. He seems to have “anticipated Sheol” in his life.

“... who could sing your praises in Sheol...? I am worn out with groaning every night I drench my pillow and soak my bed with tears...” (Ps 6:6).

d. In Sheol, at this stage of Revelation (cf. Nb 16:33, ff.), the dead are silent shadows of their former selves and have no relationship with God (cf. Ps 30:9;; 88:5, 10-13; Is 38:18).

“... You, O God, I cry – my Rock, do not be deaf to me! If you stay silent I shall be like those who sink into oblivion (Ps 28:1).

1) The agonies of which these writers express themselves seem to be those of a religious order – their misfortune very often assumes “biblical traits”, such as “desert” – “darkness” – or the “deep.”

2) The Psalmist is not one presently undergoing persecution – he is one who thinks of himself as a sinner. He seems to be groaning out under the weight of his own culpability, his wretchedness of mind and heart.

e. Biblically, “sin” itself comes across as an abyss, one that is very deep and quite dark. In faith, one who has an understanding of sin experiences an emptiness, perhaps like no other. It does seem that the ravines of an undulating desert – or the waves of the sea – or pitch blackness give some distant idea when used as metaphor.

1) Yet, the Prophets in their message of hope will remind the sinners of all ages that the hand of the Lord is not too short to reach out to them. He has not hardened His ear, by not listening to them. The faith-vision is that the sinner himself has set up a gulf between himself and God. Our sins have turned us away from the Lord.

“... No, the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear – our guilty deeds have made a gulf between us and God...” (cf. Is 59:1, ff.).

2) This is taking sin at its face value, and its full weight – its blinding reality – its deafening roar, that shuts out all else. The believing sinner may experience being struck by God – or that divine providence does not seem as welcoming. There are times when the sinner may feel overwhelmed, reduced to nothing, crushed by the realization of the goodness of God, and one’s own human weakness.

f. It seems that it is from a context such as this that the “appeal” of Ps 130 goes out – almost in the style of the Confessions of Jeremiah:

“... Pay attention to me, O Lord...! (Jr 18:19)

Such a cry begging for a hearing goes out from the Psalmist who finds himself before an enemy who seems beyond his capability. He begs the Lord to give heed, and not turn away from him. This sense of urgency is much in accord with the passages that follow:

“... Give ear to my words, O Lord, spare a thought for my sighing. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God. To you I pray, Yahweh. At daybreak you hear my voice... (cf. Ps 5:2, ff.).

Hear the sound of my prayer when I call upon you, when I raise my hands Yahweh, towards your Holy of Holies....”

Blessed be Yahweh, for he hears the sound of my prayer...” (cf. Ps 28:2, 6).

In a state of terror I cried: I have been cut off from your sight! Yet, you heard my plea for help, when I cried out for you...” (cf. Ps 32:22, ff.)

God, hear my prayer, do not hide away from my plea – give me a hearing, answer me, my troubles give me no peace...” (cf. Ps 55 :2, ff.).

Lord, you are kind and forgiving, rich in faithful love for all who call upon you. Yahweh, hear my prayer, listen to the sound of my pleading. In my day of distress I call upon you, because you answer me, O Lord.... (cf. Ps 86:6, ff).

I am filled with love when Yahweh listens, to the sound of my prayer, when he bends down to hear me, as I call...” (cf. Ps 116:1).

Listen to my calling, for I am miserably weak...” (cf. Ps 142:7).

From the belly of the fish [his “Depths”], Jonah prayed to God and said:

Out of my distress, I cried to Yahweh, and He answered me, from the belly of SHEOL, I cried out, you heard my voice! For you threw me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods closed round me... The waters round me rose to my neck the deep was closing in round me... But, you raised my life from the Pit, Yahweh my God – When my soul was growing weaker and my prayer reached you, as I remembered you, in your holy Temple.

Some abandon their faithful love by worshiping false gods – but I shall sacrifice to you, with songs of praise...” (Jon 2:3-10).

... The vow I have made I shall fulfill! Salvation comes from Yahweh!...”

1) This poem from Jonah is really a mosaic of psalm-texts and is constructed on the conventional pattern of thanksgiving psalms: description of sufferings undergone; account of deliverance from them. For the Psalmists, “grave danger” is

often “death” and deliverance a kind of “resurrection.” The “sea” is God’s primordial enemy (cf. Jb 7:12, ff.): often understood as the kingdom of death, or the way leading to it. Jonah’s adventure was used by Jesus (cf. Mt 12:40, Lk 11:30) as a figure of his own three days in the heart of the earth. The kingdom of death is depicted as a greedy monster which cannot hold Jesus and has to let him go in the resurrection. The analogy between Christian baptism and the resurrection of Jesus has led to the use of the figure of Jonah in baptismal typology. (cf. JB note for Jon 2:3, ff.).

2) “... For as Jonah remained in the belly of the sea-monster for three days and for three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights...” (cf. Mt 12:40).

This ready-made expression is borrowed from Jon 2:12 – and only approximately indicating the space of time between Jesus’ death and resurrection.

“... This is an evil generation; it is looking for a sign. The only sign that it will be given is the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be a sign to this generation.

... when Johan preached, they repented; and look, there is something greater than Jonah here... (cf. Lk 11:30, ff).

St. Augustine’s Commentary on Ps 130:

Verse 1: “Out of the depths have I called unto thee, O Lord...”

“Jonas cried from the deep: from within the whale (cf. Jon 2:2). He was not only beneath the waves, but also had been swallowed up.

Nevertheless, those waves and his tomb under them, did not prevent his prayer from reaching God – nothing could subdue the power of his prayer. Prayer penetrates all things – and reaches the very ears of God. The ears of God are in the heart of anyone who prays.

For all of us, this present life is our “depths.” Throughout the Scriptures, anyone who found himself overwhelmed, groaned, sighed and prayed to be delivered from whatever deep seemed to be threatening. The real depths – from which there is no rescue – would be the sin against the Holy Spirit: simply not to cry out in the Lord’s Name, to give up on prayer ... The Lord Himself directs us to pray out of the depths of this present moment in our lives.

Verse 2: “O Lord, hear my voice...”

Who is it in this psalm who is crying out from the depths of his own failure, discouragement? – he is a sinner. He prays with inspired hope, however – the One Who came on earth to absolve us from all our sins, to heal all our wounds – gives hope even to sinners who are engulfed in the self-made darkness & depths – in the events that happen to us.

Our depths are the human condition – which Christ Himself assumed in becoming one of us. He was like us in all things, save sin. Every conscience is accused of something – one who trusts in his/her own righteousness simply would not be welcomed by the Most High.

Here the “cry” is something like that of Exodus – when the roaring of God’s People came up to the ears of the Lord in heaven – perhaps a lamentation liturgy, pleasing to the Lord. Here the “cry” of these Psalmists is a prayer deeply inspired by hope for salvation! This is not an indication of any merely human hope, or an expression of some kind of natural optimism: this is much more a hope that flows out of a profound faith, in a personal and living God. This is what theologians would call “theological hope” – based immediately on the Infinite Mercy of God.

1) Psalm 22 [My God, my God, why have you forsaken me...?] seems to be a lament and entreaty of the innocent under persecution and ends in thanksgiving for the rescue (vv. 22-26). This canticle earned a place in the national liturgy, by its “inclusive language”:

“all the race of Jacob, revere Him – revere Him, all the race of Israel. (v. 23). The conclusion is also “universal”:

“... The whole wide world will remember and return to Yahweh – all the families of nations will bow down before Him... (cf. vv 27, ff.).

2) This is all to be kept in mind in that the opening verses of this psalm may set its style: beginning in the depths of discouragement, but eventually finding hope in the Lord:

“... My God, I call by day but you do not answer, at night, but I find no respite...” (v. 2).

3) Psalm 130, then, rightfully is put in the class of the MISERERE Psalm 51. The appeal and the prayer are for pardon, that the soul of the Psalmist be healed. Augustine is a good one to listen to in this psalm – he had the experience of the depths of his own life, distant from God. Whoever feels overwhelmed and still believes, almost characteristically cries out, appeals to the goodness of the Lord to be taken from these “depths”.

In this first part of the psalm, called its “supplication”, this anonymous believer of ancient times experiences the infinite distance from His God as Creator – and has added to this separation by his own choice of sin, detachment from the Lord. It is much like the way-farer who, already overwhelmed by the vast desert, has now fallen into a deep crevice, and cannot seem to get out. Or if the image is the sea, there is a long way to go – exhaustion is taking over, and the sea seems so unruly. This is a person hopelessly lost in the night – with increasing fears.

4) Yet, the believer instinctively cries out in prayer, and is deeply convinced that God is an upright and holy king. Ancient history is deeply lodged in the hearts of the believers of old: they remember that God spoke to his people through a pillar of fire, and all obeyed Him. The reward for the obedience of faith is the divine protection. God answered His people of old, He is a God of forgiveness. (cf. Ps 99).

5) The God of Israel does not sleep but attends on His people with open eyes:

Solomon’s Prayer for His People:

“... Now, O my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to prayer offered in this place... remember the faithful love of your servant, David... (cf. 2 Ch 6:40, ff.).

(Yahweh appears):

Now, and for the future my eyes are open and my ears attentive to prayer offered in this place – for now I have chosen and consecrated this Temple... (cf. 2 Ch 7:15, ff.).

6) The Lord is most attentive – especially to the needy – to the sinner. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who turns to Him in supplication. He is infinitely disposed to draw anyone up out of the abyss: the Lord is eternally disposed for His “Covenant of Mercy” seems to be the revealed principle behind the whole mystery of redemption.

“... May the words of my mouth always find favor and the whispering of my heart, in your presence, Yahweh, my Rock, my Redeemer...” (cf. Ps 19:14).

The Lord as “redeemer” is already noted by Job (19:25) – as in many of the psalms (Ps 19:14; 78:35). The prophet Jeremiah refers to it (cf. Jr 50:34), and it is a frequent theme in the “Book of Consolation” (cf. Is 41:14, 43:14; 44:6, 24: 49:7; 59:20). The Lord God is the Savior and the Rescuer from death of his people and His servants.

“... [Lament on the Sack of the Temple]:

“... Remember, Lord, the people you took to yourself long ago, your own tribe, which You redeemed, and this Mount Zion where you came to live... (cf. Ps 74:2).

“Do not let the downtrodden retreat in confusion – give the poor and needy cause to praise your name...” (v. 21).

There is a NT fulfillment of all of this:

[The Parable of the Prodigal Son, Merciful Father]:

“... I will leave this place and go to my Father, and say: Father I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired men. So he left the place and went back to his father...”

While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him...” (cf. Lk 15:17-19 – in fact, this whole Lk 15, and the Parables of Mercy].

“... If we say we have never sinned – we make him a liar, and his word has no place in us...” (cf. 1 Jn 1:10).

In the end, the MOTIVE FOR TRUST: is the DIVINE MERCY

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II. THE NEW TESTAMENT AND PAUL:

Rm 7:22: ...I delight in the Law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me a captive...[cf. Rm 7:22, ff.]

1 Co 2:15: ...those who are 'spiritual', discern all things...

1 Co 3:1: ... And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as 'spiritual' people...

2 Co 4:6: ... for it is God Who has said: 'Let light shine out of darkness' – Who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ...

Ep 4:2s, f.: ... be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness...

Jas 4:1: ... those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings at war within you?

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These texts, of course, and all those in the NT are written for the Baptized, for those honestly seeking God. We will take a brief look at the Baptismal vocation according to Paul¹: this is both an oft repeated formula as well as a continuing development in Paul's main ideas It occurs 64 times [and in the Lord another 37 x].

¹ Udo SCHNELLE, *Apostle Paul. His Life and Theology*. Grand Rapids: BAKER 2012, pp.481, f.

The in Christ formulation is shown in the pre-Pauline baptismal traditions [cf. 1 Co 1:3; 2 Co 5:7; Ga 3:26-28]. These terms serve as a concrete definition of what it means to be a 'Christian.' This is his 'core ecclesiological definition' By Baptism, the believer is incorporated, immersed into the sphere of the Spiritual Christ – the New Life is constituted by the conferral of the Holy Spirit, the down-payment on salvation. This will be fulfilled in the eschatological redemption. The sphere within which new life is lived between the beginning of salvation and its consummation, Paul describes with the phrase IN Christ. This leads to the following:

1. THE NEW LAW²

INTRODUCTION

[1] Theology is a human orientation of mind and heart, a direction that is acquired bringing the spiritually blind into the realm of the divine: This science can in a sense depend upon the philosophical sciences, not as though it stood in need of them, but only in order to make its teaching clearer. For it accepts its principles not from other sciences, but immediately from God, by revelation. Therefore, it does not depend upon other sciences [such as modern astronomy] as upon the higher, but makes use of them as of the lesser, and as handmaidens: even so the master sciences make use of the sciences that supply their materials, as the political aspects of military science. That it thus uses them is not due to its own defect or insufficiency, but to the defect of our intelligence, which is more easily led by what is known through natural reason (from which proceed the other sciences) to that which is above reason, such as are the teachings of this science... [I, q. 1., a. 5, ad 2 um]:

Reply to Objection 2: This science can in a sense depend upon the philosophical sciences, not as though it stood in need of them, but only in order to make its teaching clearer. For it accepts its principles not from other sciences, but immediately from God, by revelation. Therefore it does not depend upon other sciences as upon the higher, but makes use of them as of the lesser, and as handmaidens: even so the master sciences make use of the sciences that supply their materials, as political of military science. That it thus uses them is not due to its own defect or insufficiency, but to the defect of our intelligence, which is more easily led by what is known through natural reason (from which proceed the other sciences) to that which is above reason, such as are the teachings of this science.

[2] Theology is addressed primarily also invites the undecided, leading to ever deeper expressions, formulations of the Faith – Faith itself, however, is based in the Truth beyond the formulations. Its practical benefits lie in its external influence on faith, which has to be generated, nourished, defended, strengthened. [St. Augustine De tr. 14]. The *SUMMA* is addressed primarily to the mind which it instructs, aiding the intellect assisted by the will, to that reasonable, deferential oblation [*obsequium*

² Wojciech Giertych, OP, *The New Law as a Rule for Acts*. Romae: PUST 1989.

intellectus et voluntatis]. Through the Scriptures and the Magisterium of the Church, the data of Revelation are explained and worked out. What is important in theological endeavor is the transmission of revealed truths in a logically ordered manner.

[3] What is predominant in the New Law is described by Aquinas as the grace of the Holy Spirit. The term 'Law' is used analogously in the mysterious movement of the Holy Spirit. This leads to the study where the mode of the guidance, inclination, fervent suggestion, inclination, instinct of the New Law is to be pondered.

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2. THE NATURE OF THE NEW LAW

a. TERMS

1. God moves us to good in a two-fold manner: by instructing us through the Law and aiding us through grace [I-II, q. 90, prol.]. The term 'Law' is derived from the verb, *ligare* – to tie down as a vein ligation. Metaphorically this comes to 'oblige'. This induces one from the outside to act in a certain way, and to avoid other modes of activity, Grace, though, is purely internal – a gentle compulsion, expressing gratitude, thanksgiving. In this context, Divine Justice and Mercy are one – His Law and His Grace are two manners of Divine Self-expression that have the same finality: eternal salvation. Their concomitance assists in the understanding through faith of the normative guidance offered by God to His creatures.

2. The terms Law and Grace in Thomas' theology exhibit a clear *rapprochement* as the instruction offered by the Law is already an assistance and also a grace. Furthermore, the obligations that spring from an awareness of being graced have something normative about them.

3. The Incarnation was in no way limited to an addition of further precepts that would burden from without. Rather, through Christi, the Faithful enter into a new relationship with the entire Trinity. Thus, the Grace of the Holy Spirit, freely given and freely accepted, commands the entire moral life over all other laws – but not against any of the positive, unwritten, natural and divine laws. The emphasis is placed on 'inner' instruction, movement, teaching, instinct. To express all this, St. Thomas uses the terms "New Law" 154 times in the three questions of the I-II. Although not biblical, this terminology makes reference to the history of salvation – there is in it the recognition of the Holy Spirit in the moral, spiritual life, is a source of renewal. This is the fulfillment of Jr's famous promise of the New Covenant [Jr. 31:31, ff.; Heb 8:8-10]. The term: the Law of the Spirit – is Pauline, aptly used to denote the same divine reanimation. [Rm 8:2]. The 'Law of the Spirit' - the grace of the Spirit' – the very presence of the Spirit. The New Law comes to be called the 'Gospel Law' – the

'Gospel of Christ' – the 'Gospel of the Kingdom' – which builds the Kingdom of God. This is the 'Gospel itself'.

[4] The New Law is a Law of grace – this fills the soul with divine love the New Law is revealed as a gift, received and perceived only through faith. Thus, it is also called: the 'Law of Charity', "the Law of Grace", "the Law of Perfection" – it is the "Law of Faith", "the Grace of Faith", "the Law of Truth." The New Law frees one from the heavy baggage, burdens, that often paralyzed the old dispensation. This Law of Grace carries with it the motivating Power of the Holy Spirit, inspiring the free initiative of the Life in Christ. This is the "Law of Freedom."

b. ITS PRIMARY ELEMENT

[1] The primary element of this new law the abiding, in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. This presence if infused, implanted into the human soul, added on to the nature in which one is created – it is not innate, natural to one, while its presence moves the believer from within, being an inclination, impulse, instinct of the Holy Spirit. There are also secondary elements that dispose one the more for this grace of the Holy Spirit and its intensification.

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas considers this Gift of God in his treatise on the Third Person of the Trinity [I, qq. 36-38] – the sanctifying mission of the Holy Spirit is analyzed further in q. 43. The New Law of Grace introduces that classical treatise [I-II, qq.109-114].

†

1. The definition is rather terse: the grace of the Holy Spirit that is the New Law is given through faith in Christ, What is primary here, of course, is the grace of the Holy Spirit, shown in faith working through love. The implication here is a living faith, including hope and charity – it is a faith in the Incarnate and Risen Christ – and the sacraments of the Church flow from the open side of the Crucified Christ, from which we drink from the streams of salvation [Is 12:3, ff.], confirmed in the Resurrection.

2. The definition of the New Law is found in I-II, q.106, a. 1: The kernel of the New Law defined as the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Law" and "Gift" are joined they are not identical, nor interchangeable. The New Law is not defined essentially as the grace of the Holy Spirit – in which it consists principally, while there is more to it. The Gospel proclaims the Good News of Salvation; anything that brings home this truth, any means used by God and human beings which urge to follow the divine inclination of grace – all occupy a 'secondary' place in the New Law.

3. St. Thomas repeatedly uses the expression: the Grace of the Holy Spirit to define this principal element of the New Law. What Thomas seems to be insisting on in this repetition that the New Law brings with the vocation to an intense personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, Trinity.

4. The Angelic Doctor was much impressed with St Paul in all this: 27 *Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.* 28 *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law...* The term 'law of works' refers to a law that is externally proposed, directing merely the external actions of the believer, by command, prohibition. The 'Law of Faith', though, is written internally –it covers not only external works, but also the inner movements of the heart – and the faith is first among these. Such movements include love, trust and surrender to God. This is not at all 'legalistic', merely juridical.

5. The second reference for St Thomas also from Romans, is: "the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus'. This overcomes the law of sin and death. Law is used to induce believers, people, toward Good – sometimes the New Law is identified with the Person of the Holy Spirit. It is already promised that the Spirit will teach us all I have said to you, says the Lord. [cf. Rm 8:2]. The Vulgate translates this as suggeret vobis omnia - the Holy Spirit thus suggests, moves from within, causes a positive reaction in the willing and emotional involvement. This calling to mind is also far more than reminding one of something – here the Holy Spirit is the driving force in the Faithful, whom He inhabits personally.

6. A further appreciation of the Law of the Spirit refers to that effect of the Holy Spirit that is faith, operating through love. A faith in the darkness of itself offers sufficient light to assess the immediate acts, and supplies the love that urges one to act: it is the anointing of the Spirit that offers universal recollection, instruction:

... 25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. 26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. 28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him... [1 Jn 2]

This all leads to the overwhelming love of Christ, which elicits the act in that New Covenant as promised by Jr [31:31-34]. The laws of are written by God Himself in our hearts and this is the very presence of the Holy Spirit [according to St. Augustine].

7. The expression "grace of the Holy Spirit" can be either an objective, or a subjective genitive: it seems to mean wither the Gift or the Giver. The Holy Spirit

operates in the soul through His Gifts – of which, charity is the greatest. The presence of the Spirit is the primordial gift.

8. Thomas contrasts the Law of Faith and the Law of the Spirit on one hand – and, on the other, the works of sin and death, the Law of works. An individual sin is a freely chosen act, a free decision, not to follow the eternal law in a concrete moment. Living bound by sin, is a continuous disposition. The ‘law of works’ is a constant appeal to a justifying external rule that demands of life of acts in multiple prudential decisions. The Law of the Spirit refers to a permanent one, a habitual manner of reacting. Like the ‘Old Law’, of the Spirit of Life was also given on Pentecost. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the infant Church initiates the era of the ‘New Law of Life’ which instructs one from within. [Ad Heb., c. 3, 1, 2 (404)]:

404. – He says, therefore, This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days. ‘Making’ implies a suitable order; hence, he says, after those days, i.e., after the Law was given. For a new law should have been given after the old; just as a master is given after a pedagogue, in order that man recognize his infirmity. This, therefore, shows the fitness of the time when the New Testament was given.

The manner in which it was given is twofold: in one way by externals, by proposing words suited to their understanding. This man can do; and that is the way the Old Testament was given.

In another way by acting inwardly, and this is peculiar to God: ‘the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding’ (Jb. 32:8). This is the way the New Testament was given, because it consists in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Who instructs inwardly.

But it is not enough to know, for one must act. Therefore, He first enlightens the intellect to understand; hence, he says, I will put my laws into their minds. He uses the plural, because there are various precepts and counsel. This the Holy Spirit does: ‘His unction teaches you’ (1 Jn. 2:27); ‘He will teach you all things (Jn. 14:26).

Furthermore, He inclines the will to act well; hence, it is impressed on their heart. In regard to this he says, and write them on their hearts, i.e., I will write charity on their knowledge: ‘Above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection’ (Col. 3:14); ‘The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us’ (Rom. 5:5). This is the epistle of which he says in 2 Cor. (3:3): ‘Not in ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone, but in the fleshly tablets of the heart.’

The infusion of the Holy Spirit ‘inclines’ our hearts – this constitutes the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit is personally active from within and absolutely free [cf. Ga 5:13]. Man becomes freely bound, in the service of, the Holy Spirit. This Law is not only from the Holy Spirit, but is an expression of the Spirit Himself [Ad Rom, c. 7, 1, 3].

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3. THREE-FOLD IMPACT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Three distinct modalities of the influence of the Holy Spirit are distinguished by St. Thomas leading to 3 different levels of decision making:

- the Holy Spirit is present to all by creation;
- He inhabits the soul of the just;
- and He creates effects in the soul He inhabits, that furnish the soul. He inhabits with an array of supernatural powers. [4 CG cc. 20, 21]:

Chapter 20: ON THE EFFECTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SCRIPTURE REGARDING THE WHOLE CREATION

[1] One must, of course, in harmony with what has been said, give thought to the effects which sacred Scripture attributes to the Holy Spirit.

[2] For it was shown in the foregoing that the goodness of God is His reason for willing that other things be, and that by His will He produces things in being. The love, then, by which He loves His own goodness is the cause of the creation of things: whence, even certain ancient philosophers held that “the love of the gods” is the cause of all things as is plain in *Metaphysics* I [4]; and Dionysius says that “the divine love did not allow itself to be without seed” [*De div. nom.* 4]. But it was held in the preceding that the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of the love by which God loves Himself. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the principle of the creation of things. And this is signified in the word of the Psalmist: “Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created” (Ps. 103:30).

[3] It is also from the fact that the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of love—and love has a kind of driving and moving force—that the movement which is from God in things seems properly to be attributed to the Holy Spirit. Of course, the first existing mutation in things from God is understood to be this: He produced the different species out of formless created matter. Hence, this work is what sacred Scripture attributes to the Holy Spirit. For we read in Genesis (1:2): “The Spirit of God moved over the waters.” For by “waters” Augustine wants one to understand prime matter over which the Spirit of the Lord is said to be borne, not as though He Himself is moved, but because He is the principle of the movement.

[4] Again, the government of things by God is understood to be according to a kind of motion, in that God directs and moves all things to their proper ends. If, then, drive and motion belong to the Holy Spirit by reason of love, the government and propagation of things is fittingly attributed to the Holy Spirit. Hence Job (33:4) says: “The Spirit of God made me”; and the Psalmist: “Thy good spirit shall lead me into the right land” (Ps. 142:10).

[5] And because a master’s proper act is to govern subjects, dominion is fittingly attributed to the Holy Spirit, for the Apostle says: “Now the Lord is a Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17); and the Creed of our faith says: “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord.”

[6] Life also is especially manifested in motion, for we say that self-moving things live

and in general we say this of everything which puts itself into operation. If, then, by reason of love, drive and motion are suited to the Holy Spirit, life is also suitably attributed to Him. For John (6:64) says: “It is the Spirit who gives life”; and Ezekiel (37:5): “I will send Spirit into you, and you shall live”; and in the Creed of our faith we profess to believe in the Holy Spirit, “the giver of life.” This also harmonizes with the name “Spirit,” for even the bodily life of animals is due to a vital spirit diffused from the principle of life into the rest of the members.

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Chapter 21

ON THE EFFECTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SCRIPTURE REGARDING THE RATIONAL CREATURE, SO FAR

AS GOD’S GIFTS TO US ARE CONCERNED

[1] Looking to the effects which He properly produces in the rational nature, we must also give consideration to this fact: When we are somehow made like a divine perfection, perfection of this kind is said to be given us by God; so wisdom is said to be a gift from God to us when we are somehow made like the divine wisdom. Since, then, the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of the love by which God loves Himself, as was shown, from the fact that in loving God we are made like to this love, the Holy Spirit is said to be given to us by God. Hence the Apostle says: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit, who, is given to us” (Rom. 5:5).

[2] One should realize, for all that, that what is in us from God is related to God as to an efficient and as to an exemplar cause. We say as to an efficient cause inasmuch as something is accomplished in us by the divine operative power. We say as to an exemplar cause so far as we are, thanks to that in us which is from God, imitating God. Since, then, the power of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is identical just as the essence is, necessarily whatever God effects in us must be, as from an efficient cause, simultaneously from the Father and the Son and the, Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the “word of wisdom” (cf. Dan. 1:20) by which we know God, and which God sends into us, is properly representative of the Son. And in like fashion the love by which we love God is properly representative of the Holy Spirit. And thus the charity which is in us, although it is an effect of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is nonetheless for a special sort of reason said to be in us through the Holy Spirit.

[3] However the divine effects not only begin to be by the divine operation, by it they are also maintained in being (as is clear from the foregoing). And nothing operates where it is not, for the agent and that acted upon must be simultaneously in fact, just as the mover and the moved. Necessarily, then, wherever there is an effect of God, there God Himself is efficient. Hence, since the charity by which we love God is in us by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit Himself must also be in us, so long as the charity is in us. And so the Apostle says: “Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16). Therefore, since we are made lovers of God by the Holy Spirit, and every beloved is in the lover as such, by the Holy Spirit necessarily the Father and the Son dwell in us also. And so our Lord says: “We will come to him”—He means to one who loves God—“and will make our abode with him” (John 14:23). And in 1 John. (3:7.4) we read: “In this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has

given us.”

[4] Moreover, God manifestly loves in the greatest degree those whom He has made lovers of Himself through the Holy Spirit, for He would not confer so great a good save by loving us. Hence, we read in Proverbs (8:17) from the Person of God: “I love those who love Me”; “not as though we had loved God, but because He has first loved us,” as we read in 1 John (4:10). Of course, every beloved is in a lover. Therefore, by the Holy Spirit not only is God in us, but we also are in God. Hence, we read in 1 John (4:16, 13): “He who abides in charity abides in God, and God in him;” and: “In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us: because He has given us of His Spirit.”

[5] Of course, this is the proper mark of friendship: that one reveal his secrets to his friend. For, since charity unites affections and makes, as it were, one heart of two, one seems not to have dismissed from his heart that which he reveals to a friend; and so our Lord says to His disciples: “I will not now call you servants but friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15). Therefore, since by the Holy Spirit we are established as friends of God, fittingly enough it is by the Holy Spirit that men are said to receive the revelation of the divine mysteries. Hence, the Apostle says: “It is written that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love Him. But to us God has revealed them, by His Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:9-10).

[6] It is from the things a man knows that his speech is formed; fittingly, therefore, a man speaks the mysteries through the Holy Spirit. Hence, the words of 1 Corinthians (14:2): “By the Spirit He speaks mysteries”; and Matthew (10:20): “It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.” And of prophets, 2 Peter (1:21) says that “the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit.” Hence, also, in the Creed of our faith we say of the Holy Spirit: “Who spoke through the prophets.”

[7] Now, it is not only proper to love that one reveal his secrets to a friend by reason of their unity in affection, but the same unity requires that what he has he have in common with the friend. For, “since a man has a friend as another self,” he must help the friend as he does himself, making his own possessions common with the friend, and so one takes this as the property of friendship “to will and to do the good for a friend.” This agrees with 1 John (3:17): “He who has the substance of this world, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his bowels from him: how does the charity of God abide in him?” But such is especially the case with God whose will is efficacious on its effect. Therefore, it is fitting that all the gifts of God are said to be gifts from the Holy Spirit; thus, in 1 Corinthians (12:8, 11): “To one, indeed, by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit”; and later on, having mentioned many, it says: “One and the same Spirit works, dividing to everyone according as He will.”

[8] This, too, is manifest: just as, to get a body to the place of fire, it must be likened to fire by acquiring that lightness according to which fire is moved by its own motion; so also, to get a man to the beatitude of divine enjoyment which is proper to God in His own nature, these are necessary: first, that by spiritual perfections he be likened to God; then, that he operate with these perfections; and thus, lastly, achieve that beatitude we mentioned. Of course, the spiritual gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit, as was shown.

And thus by the Holy Spirit we are configured to God and through Him we are made ready for good operation. And by the same Spirit the road to beatitude is opened to us. The Apostle implies all three of these when he says: “He who confirms us... is God who also has sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. 1:21, 22). And in Ephesians (1:13, 14): ‘You were signed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance: For the “signing” seems to belong to the likeness of configuration; the “confirming” to man’s readiness for perfect operation; the “pledge,” of course, to the hope by which we are ordered to the heavenly inheritance, and this is perfect beatitude.’

[9] Further, since out of the good will which one has to another it comes about that he adopt that other as his son—and so the inheritance belongs to that other as adopted—it is fitting that the adoption of the sons of God is attributed to the Holy Spirit, in the words of Romans (8:15): “You have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father).”

[10] Of course, by the fact that one is established as the friend of another, every offense is removed, because friendship and offense are contraries. Thus, we read in Proverbs (10:12): “Charity covers all sins.” Therefore, since we are established as friends of God by the Holy Spirit, it is by Him that God remits our sins, and so our Lord says to His disciples (John 20:22-23): “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven.” Therefore, also, in Matthew (12:31) blasphemers against the Holy Spirit are denied the remission of sins, as though they do not have that by which a man achieves the remission of his sins.

[11] Hence, also, it is by the Holy Spirit that we are said to be renewed, and cleansed or washed; as the Psalmist has it: “Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth” (Ps. 103:30); and Ephesians (4:23): “Be renewed in the Spirit of your mind”; and Isaiah (4:4): “If the Lord shall wash away the filth of the sons of Zion and cleanse away the blood of her daughters in the midst by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning.”

a. By virtue of creation: the general movement of God moves and directs, inclines, ordains, invites, suggests, incites, ex-cites, all things toward their pre-ordained end. The Creator Spirit maintains all constantly through His omnipotent presence. Creation is a common act of the Trinity but its government and the giving of life are appropriated. While Creation itself does not convincingly exhibit the Trinitarian structure of God – but it does reveal an intrinsic order which points to a Creator.

b. By virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the Faithful: this is a study apart, but this bit of data might be of some help: In this divine action, there is more than the presence of ‘immensity’. In this indwelling, God is not only present but He dwells there in relationship, of truth and love. Here the Temple imagery comes into play – through this manner of presence, the human soul can the more sublimely participate in the divine word and over-flowing Love. This involves the loving knowledge of the Persons of the Trinity which is implied by the

inhabitation. The long exercise of loving contact with the indwelling Divine Persons are a participation in the divine secrets that surpass human imagination. It is here, that the spiritual meaning of the word of God, the marvels of the wonders of God, the contemplation of the 'arcane' aspects of our faith.

c. By virtue of the created gifts of grace: the indwelling brings about an ontological change in the human soul. Created gifts are included in the "grace of the Holy Spirit". The changes that grace affects in the soul is an elevation of that soul above its natural condition. This is compared to re-birth, re-creation. Grace in the soul describes a permanent state, and an accompanying inclination to action.

2. The over-all direction of the Holy Spirit: once a person has been elevated – the healing of the soul is not yet perfected. The understanding, illumined by faith, is not totally out of the dark Illuminated by faith in the acts of the Gifts, the Faithful believer follows the guidance, instinct, teaching of the Spirit.

a. Even with grace and faith, the believer needs the help of the gifts and other graces due to the absolute disproportion between the human faculties of intellect and will – and the faculties remained wounded and weak. The Gifts and Fruits fill the gap. Human nature remains wounded and infected – for Ignatius of Antioch the Eucharist is a healing pharmacum an antidote to heal the devil's venom from original and personal sin: *Say only the word and my soul will be cleansed!*

b. The Seven Gifts supply not only an exterior motive for action – they are also seen as impulses given by the Holy Spirit, which endows them with a guiding dimension in their own right. They exact 'obedience to the Holy Spirit': [I-II, q. 68, a. 1]:

On the contrary, Gregory (Moral. i, 12) distinguishes seven gifts, which he states to be denoted by the seven sons of Job, from the three theological virtues, which, he says, are signified by Job's three daughters. He also distinguishes (Moral. ii, 26) the same seven gifts from the four cardinal virtues, which he says were signified by the four corners of the house.

I answer that, If we speak of gift and virtue with regard to the notion conveyed by the words themselves, there is no opposition between them. Because the word "virtue" conveys the notion that it perfects man in relation to well-doing, while the word "gift" refers to the cause from which it proceeds. Now there is no reason why that which proceeds from one as a gift should not perfect another in well-doing: especially as we have already stated (Question [63], Article [3]) that some virtues are infused into us by God. Wherefore in this respect we cannot differentiate gifts from virtues. Consequently some have held that the gifts are not to be distinguished from the virtues. But there remains no less a difficulty for them to solve; for they must explain why some virtues are called gifts and some not; and why among the gifts there are some, fear, for instance, that are not reckoned virtues.

Hence it is that others have said that the gifts should be held as being distinct from the virtues; yet they have not assigned a suitable reason for this distinction, a reason, to wit, which would apply either to all the virtues, and to none of the gifts, or vice versa. For, seeing that of the seven gifts, four belong to the reason, viz. wisdom, knowledge, understanding and counsel, and three to the appetite, viz. fortitude, piety and fear; they held that the gifts perfect the free-will according as it is a faculty of the reason, while the virtues perfect it as a faculty of the will: since they observed only two virtues in the reason or intellect, viz. faith and prudence, the others being in the appetitive power or the affections. If this distinction were true, all the virtues would have to be in the appetite, and all the gifts in the reason.

Others observing that Gregory says (Moral. ii, 26) that "the gift of the Holy Ghost, by coming into the soul endows it with prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude, and at the same time strengthens it against every kind of temptation by His sevenfold gift," said that the virtues are given us that we may do good works, and the gifts, that we may resist temptation. But neither is this distinction sufficient. Because the virtues also resist those temptations which lead to the sins that are contrary to the virtues; for everything naturally resists its contrary: which is especially clear with regard to charity, of which it is written (Cant 8:7): "Many waters cannot quench charity."

Others again, seeing that these gifts are set down in Holy Writ as having been in Christ, according to Is. 11:2,3, said that the virtues are given simply that we may do good works, but the gifts, in order to conform us to Christ, chiefly with regard to His Passion, for it was then that these gifts shone with the greatest splendor. Yet neither does this appear to be a satisfactory distinction. Because Our Lord Himself wished us to be conformed to Him, chiefly in humility and meekness, according to Mt. 11:29: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart," and in charity, according to Jn. 15:12: "Love one another, as I have loved you." Moreover, these virtues were especially resplendent in Christ's Passion.

Accordingly, in order to differentiate the gifts from the virtues, we must be guided by the way in which Scripture expresses itself, for we find there that the term employed is "spirit" rather than "gift." For thus it is written (Is. 11:2,3): "The spirit . . . of wisdom and of understanding . . . shall rest upon him," etc.: from which words we are clearly given to understand that these seven are there set down as being in us by Divine inspiration. Now inspiration denotes motion from without. For it must be noted that in man there is a twofold principle of movement, one within him, viz. the reason; the other extrinsic to him, viz. God, as stated above (Question [9], Articles [4],6): moreover the Philosopher says this in the chapter On Good Fortune (Ethic. Eudem. vii, 8).

Now it is evident that whatever is moved must be proportionate to its mover: and the perfection of the mobile as such, consists in a disposition whereby it is disposed to be well moved by its mover. Hence the more exalted the mover, the more perfect must be the disposition whereby the mobile is made proportionate to its mover: thus we see that a disciple needs a more perfect disposition in order to receive a higher teaching from his master. Now it is manifest that human virtues perfect man according as it is natural for him to be moved by his reason in his interior and exterior actions.

Consequently man needs yet higher perfections, whereby to be disposed to be moved by God. These perfections are called gifts, not only because they are infused by God, but

also because by them man is disposed to become amenable to the Divine inspiration, according to Is. 50:5: "The Lord . . . hath opened my ear, and I do not resist; I have not gone back." Even the Philosopher says in the chapter On Good Fortune (Ethic. Eudem., vii, 8) that for those who are moved by Divine instinct, there is no need to take counsel according to human reason, but only to follow their inner promptings, since they are moved by a principle higher than human reason. This then is what some say, viz. that the gifts perfect man for acts which are higher than acts of virtue.

The Gifts are the superior commanding element within 'the grace of the Holy Spirit' and this constitutes the primary element of the New Law. A personal relationship established with the Person of the Holy Spirit is required for the New Law to function in the moral life of Christians.

c. Too often the remission of sins has been the most noted consequence of grace – leaving behind at the same time, all the other extraordinary aspects of the divine interest in the hearts and minds of the Faithful. In this context, the metaphor most developed were seen as healing remedies, perceived in the context of sin. If this were the only metaphor, there would be a clear integral reduction of the meaning of grace.

d. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of the Faithful is a permanent presence. Grace presents a positive finality: it entails a continuous divine support and direction that was needed even before sin. In addition to the effects of grace, the Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son personally move and protect that individual Christian.

e. One enters into this relationship through faith in Jesus Christ. The New Law, as has been noted, is the very grace of the Holy Spirit given to those who believe in Jesus Christ [I-II, q. 106, a. 1]:

On the contrary, The New Law is the Law of the New Testament. But the law of the New Testament is instilled in our hearts. For the Apostle, quoting the authority of Jeremiah 31:31,33: "Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord; and I will perfect unto the house of Israel, and unto the house of Judah, a new testament," says, explaining what this statement is (Heb. 8:8,10): "For this is the testament which I will make to the house of Israel . . . by giving [Vulg.: 'I will give'] My laws into their mind, and in their heart will I write them." Therefore the New Law is instilled in our hearts.

I answer that, "Each thing appears to be that which preponderates in it," as the Philosopher states (Ethic. ix, 8). Now that which is preponderant in the law of the New Testament, and whereon all its efficacy is based, is the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given through faith in Christ. Consequently the New Law is chiefly the grace itself of the Holy Ghost, which is given to those who believe in Christ. This is manifestly stated by the Apostle who says (Rm. 3:27): "Where is . . . thy boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith": for he calls the grace itself of faith "a law." And still more clearly it is written (Rm. 8:2): "The law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death." Hence Augustine says (De Spir. et Lit.

xxiv) that "as the law of deeds was written on tables of stone, so is the law of faith inscribed on the hearts of the faithful": and elsewhere, in the same book (xxi): "What else are the Divine laws written by God Himself on our hearts, but the very presence of His Holy Spirit?"

Nevertheless the New Law contains certain things that dispose us to receive the grace of the Holy Ghost, and pertaining to the use of that grace: such things are of secondary importance, so to speak, in the New Law; and the faithful need to be instructed concerning them, both by word and writing, both as to what they should believe and as to what they should do. Consequently we must say that the New Law is in the first place a law that is inscribed on our hearts, but that secondarily it is a written law.

Reply to Objection 1: The Gospel writings contain only such things as pertain to the grace of the Holy Ghost, either by disposing us thereto, or by directing us to the use thereof. Thus with regard to the intellect, the Gospel contains certain matters pertaining to the manifestation of Christ's Godhead or humanity, which dispose us by means of faith through which we receive the grace of the Holy Ghost: and with regard to the affections, it contains matters touching the contempt of the world, whereby man is rendered fit to receive the grace of the Holy Ghost: for "the world," i.e. worldly men, "cannot receive" the Holy Ghost (Jn. 14:17). As to the use of spiritual grace, this consists in works of virtue to which the writings of the New Testament exhort men in diverse ways.

Reply to Objection 2: There are two ways in which a thing may be instilled into man. First, through being part of his nature, and thus the natural law is instilled into man. Secondly, a thing is instilled into man by being, as it were, added on to his nature by a gift of grace. In this way the New Law is instilled into man, not only by indicating to him what he should do, but also by helping him to accomplish it.

Reply to Objection 3: No man ever had the grace of the Holy Ghost except through faith in Christ either explicit or implicit: and by faith in Christ man belongs to the New Testament. Consequently whoever had the law of grace instilled into them belonged to the New Testament.

The infusion of faith is a disposition, a preparation of the mind leading to the infusion of the grace of the Holy Spirit. The faith received is then developed, lived, through charity that hopes. [Ad Gal, .c. 5, lect. 2 (286)]:

This is the loving abandonment to divine love, described as spiritual infancy – implying a humble practice of the theological virtues.

3. Interiority of the Primary Element: the gift of grace of the Holy Spirit, involving the indwelling within the human soul, performs a revolutionary change in the manner on which human acts are undertaken and assessed.

a. The interiority of the New Law is deeper than any psychological interiorization – this is ontological impact, changing the very being of the believer. The Latin word is *indita*, [inward Law] - contrasted with the *Lex Addita*. The natural Law is inward by virtue of its origin – thus, it could be called innate.

b. The New Law is inward because it is added to nature, infused into, and thus is present by virtue of the gift of Grace. While the virtues are infused into the faculties of the soul but the New Law has a deeper 'seat', namely, the human nature of the Faithful, ingrained into the very nature of the believer.

c. This is a novel, supernatural gift, formally distinct from nature, even though in its superiority it does not alienate nature. This New Law does not only demonstrate what should be done, but is also the assistance of the Holy Spirit to achieve this. The inward order of the New Law heals the wounds of nature, infuses charity – re-invigorates the entire spiritual apparatus. All this leads to an ever intensifying participation in the divine life that exceeds nature.

d. Only the Divinity can penetrate the human soul and not overwhelm it, nor suspend its faculty, nor annihilate its freedom. The divine fecundity of this New Law in the human soul spills out into all the spiritual faculties, including the emotions hat together with the intellectual powers forms the heart [in the biblical sense]. This is the surprising fulfillment of the ancient prophecy of Jr 31, on the infusion into one's heart of the New Heart, Covenant. Ezk [36; 25-27] speaks of a spiritual heart 'transplant' removing the heart of stone in favor of the heart of flesh. This teaching blends a number of currents [cf. 2 Co 3:31-34; Heb 8:8-12].

e. While there is urgency to His actions, the Holy Spirit does not drive, hurl, or toss the soul about. The recognition of a divine inhabitation equals the renunciation of self, which lays out a program of contemplation and activity supported from within by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

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4. THREE DIMENSIONS OF THE NEW LAW

[Christ – Spirit – Church]

Introduction:

[1] It is obvious that the New Law does not belong only to Christ, but also to the Holy Spirit [cf. I-II, 106, a. 4, ad 3^{um}]:

Reply to Objection 3: The Old Law corresponded not only to the Father, but also to the Son: because Christ was foreshadowed in the Old Law. Hence Our Lord said (Jn. 5:46): "If you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also; for he wrote of Me." In like manner the New Law corresponds not only to Christ, but also to the Holy Ghost; according to Rm. 8:2: "The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," etc. Hence we are not to look forward to another law corresponding to the Holy Ghost.

This is contrary to those Millenarists, or 'Third Age' thinkers, according to whom: the OT pertained to the Father; the NT was the epoch of the Son and His Church; this is to

be followed by a third period of time, that of the Holy Spirit. St. Thomas in this Article 4 rejects such dreams of some fuzzy future mystical state in which the grace of the Holy Spirit will be received more perfectly than ever before. For the main-stream Church, following St. Thomas, the Gift of the Holy Spirit has continually been available since it was offered through faith in Christ. No other means is there of obtaining except through Christ our Lord.

[2] The revelation of the Trinity happened so that the Church would realize, once the 'veil had been removed', [re-velation] that this central mystery is meant to have some profound, sublime, impact on humanity. With all this Mystery's insistence on Truth and Freedom, on Personality and on Relationship, there needs to be more of an impact of the Trinity on Moral and Spiritual Theology. There are specific roles that the divine persons have in our lives that have been worked out by theologians and the deep mystical experience of the Church, along with the Magisterium.

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[a] The Christological Dimension of the New Law

1. Law is meant to be an act of reason – our age has witnessed so many unreasonable, irrational Laws! Law was intended by the divine Law-giver to provide that order, orientation, inclination, direction that is in the mind of God. The New Law, therefore, is a supreme expression of the divine reason, the Logos, that is the Eternal Word of the Father, incarnate, sent and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be crucified and raised up, ever uniquely present on the Eucharistic table through time – until the Reality beyond the visible species is realized by divine glory]. This 'Logos' is the Father's ultimate idea, truth, Good and Beauty.

2. This New Law has the sublime capacity of presenting a reasonable order, orientation, ordination, inclination, direction, suggestion, invitation, toward an 'address' to the human mind and heart, while being 'appropriated' to the Son. Jesus has fulfilled this Personal Mission received in loving obedience from the Father [as we receive His Word of Faith] most lovingly through His Incarnation, human sojourn and life-long teaching. The acts and deeds of Jesus offer the model, the most sublime image, as a source of instruction, received in faith and experienced to the utmost in holiness. The central divine message based on the personal facta, dicta of Jesus is:

- The Cross of Christ is the Cathedra of the Rabbi, the Teacher, bearing an infallible message;
- This is the Podium of the Anointed Sage, where the Wisdom and the Truthful Good are shared eternally in the Divine Communion and offered now to all those disciples, being 'taught by God' – this is My Son, the beloved! Listen to Him! [*Shema, Israel!*]

- This is the Throne of the Heavenly Regent, as well as the earthly Altar for the Eternal High Priest of Mercy – with His central message: Be merciful as the Father is merciful!!! [cf. Lk 6] – as the New Code, Law, Constitution of Holiness. This inspires the Faithful to grow in charity – to practice forgiveness more widely.

3. Jesus' re-shaping the moral instruction of the old law is a triple undertaking, offering:

- The true sense of the former Law, bring out the need of the control of interior acts of heart and mind;
- The manner of how the moral precepts of the earlier Covenant are to be observed;
- The inclusion of the evangelical counsels, beatitudes, leading to higher perfection.

4. Formerly there was no visible 'image' of God that was permitted – the Incarnation changed all that – we now see the human face of God. And more importantly, the redemptive act of Jesus removes the obstacle of sin, allowing the super-abundant infusion of the Holy Spirit. It is through faith also that we have a truer concept of 'sin' [*felix culpa*] that has merited such, and so great a Redeemer [cf. Holy Saturday '*Exultet*'!]. And we share in the copious redemption that overcame the presence of sin – when this abounds, God's mercy super-abounds [Rm 5:12-21]. The redemptive work of Jesus Who is the con-joined instrument used by God in opening up each of the Faithful for the movement and protection of the Holy Spirit.

5. The Material Elements of the New Law – as the interior Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Fruits – such as the Sacraments, and the magisterial moral instruction mediated to us – all this fits into God's plan as the extension of the Incarnation. The reception of the grace of the Holy Spirit requires, by a necessity [*sine qua non!*] and condition of the initiating relationship of faith in Jesus Christ.

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[b] The Pneumatological Dimension of the New Law

1. All the while, the predominant, decisive factor in all of this contemplation on the New Law is that it is the Law of the Holy Spirit. The direct participation of the soul in the same Spirit that is the love of the Father and of the Son, this is the ultimate stage conceivable in the divine regulation of human affairs.

2. This relationship between the role of Christ and the role of the Holy Spirit within the New Law can only be fathomed by a return to the treatise on the Most

Blessed Trinity. Before knowledge appears in the mind, et here is a real desire to know – the object that is to be known is searched. Once the Object is understood in the mind it is as it were, ‘born’ An idea generated in the mind, when it can be expressed in the form of a word. This new understanding often causes joy – thus, the desire to know becomes a joy. The word is generated as the Son of the Father; the Spirit that is Trinitarian Love proceeds from the Father and/ or, through [!] the Word. This is the Augustinian metaphor – criticized sometimes of its lack of ‘economy’ [of salvation], and is totally interior.

3. The procession that is in the intellect carries with it the idea of similitude – and can thus be termed “generation’. The volitional procession has no similitude, but rather an impelling movement – to reach out to both God and Creation. This is best termed as the breathing of a spirit, the driving force of love. The eternal generation of the Word by the Father is followed up eternally by the [in-; con-; re-; con-; per-] *spiration* of love – the procession of the Holy Spirit.

4. In theological terms the grace that is appropriated to the Holy Spirit prolongs in us, through the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, the eternal generation of the Word. The different images of the seed, the life, the light, [or the vapor of a steam engine!] help us somewhat to approach the mystery which is the activity of the entire Trinity. Christ presents Himself as the dynamic Model of all this: His Words, Acts and witness express the ideal of the Father. The Word eternally generated in the Father’s mind and heart is revealed to us by the Gospel event. This Divine Model, the Eternal Word of the Father, is generated consciously in the human soul through an infused faith that is lived.

5. Once the divine Word, the reflection of Jesus Christ, is perceived in faith in the eyes of a neighbor or in ourselves – this similarity incites a fascination, a movement of the will in love. The Sermon on the Mount suggests how to express that love best. The generation of the Divine Word of the Father in the human soul is then followed up by the gift of divine love that is the Holy Spirit Himself. This, then, is followed up by the gift of divine Love which re; con-; in-forms, that is the Holy Spirit Himself. In order to be effective, it has to be a living Faith, not one that is un-formed, de-formed by sin. The Holy Spirit can only strengthen the movement of the will with the gift of divine charity. As in human affairs, one can often know what is to be done, but not have the will to do it.

6. Merely human instruction would not suffice. This could conceivably inspire a natural fascination. However, the externals of the New Law, received in faith, leads not just to the birth of new ideas in the mind – they present rather, the living, resurrected Christ. This seems to be a temporal participation in the eternal generation and procession of the Trinity. The regulating force that impels by love to follow the Divine Model generated in the soul is the infused grace of the Holy Spirit.

The divine implantation, in graft of the God of Love is the essence of sanctification. Both the Word of God and the Love of God [the Two Hands of the Father!] are active here together, with an appropriated distinctiveness with the Word serving the development of Love:

6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. 7 But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. 13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. [1 Co 2]

7. The term 'spirit' in its original meaning taken up by Revelation, expresses a breath that denotes the fascination of a love attracted to a Model, a Word that has been presented. Thus we have: in-spire; con-spire [breathe together]; ex-spire; re-spire; per-spire; a-spire. All this is an appropriation, but one that pin-points, through the comparison with the psychological phenomena of friendship and free response, choice – indicating the manner of divine guidance.

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[c] The Ecclesiological dimensions of the New Law

1. Christians: the Holy Spirit can be compared to the Heart that invisibly animates the Church – and is often compared to the 'soul' of the Church. To Christ is reserved that Head, which visibly instructs and commands the entire structure. [The Metaphor "Body" of Christ emphasizes Union – the metaphor of Souse of Christ emphasizes u].

2. The ideal of a Thomistic treatise [cf. Journet; Pinckaers] on the Church might be found dispersed by the Angelic Doctor within the treatises of Grace, the Sacraments, his Christology – and his short treatise on the New Law. The Church in some way, is the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit – our belief in the Holy Spirit is that it is He Who makes the Church holy. The Trinitarian source of grace motivates

spiritually and dynamically, giving life to the Church and her members. The Church grows from within, numerically and by intensifying. The marriage of Adam and Eve inspired St. Paul's image of the Church as Spouse of Christ – Who sacrificed Himself for her [Ep 5]. 'Power' in the Church has as its ultimate finality that of serving the practical exercise of grace.

3. The humanity of Christ has served as the con-joined instrument as the prime receptacle of the fullness of grace. The visible side of the Church continues the incarnational expression of God. The saints of the OT, in the foreseen merits of Christ, could exercise their faith and hope in the promises of God, and in their earnest awaiting the coming of the Messiah were able to be gifted with charity. And, of course, the Grace of the Holy Spirit existed from all eternity, before the Incarnation. Sin was a block that inhibited the inhabitation of God. All the OT 'Saints', who preceded the Incarnation, were justified by their faith in the future passion of Christ. The most hidden and interior graced act of charity incarnates the dynamic and vital instinct, the inclination, the orientation, of the Law and each church member is called by Baptismal grace to cultivate her beauty ['something beautiful for God!'] – and through the mystical life to be with the Trinity for all eternity.

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d. The Dimension of the New Law as Teacher

[I] The Instructive Character of the New Law

1. The divine origin of the moral law through its dependence on the Eternal Law, can be perceived in such an overwhelming way that no other approaches to God need be sought. A false sense of security that this offers can close one to the free but risky realm opened up by faith. The basic reason why the Moral Law is given is that it is meant to be instructive – Law teaches what is right and wrong [cf. I-II, 90, prol.; *Ad Rm* c. 3, lectio 2 (298). The Law is given also to teach us about sin [cf. *Ad 1 Tm*, c. 2, lect. 3, 21]:

But the extrinsic principle moving to good is God, Who both instructs us by means of His Law, and assists us by His Grace: wherefore

- in the first place we must speak of law;
- in the second place, of grace. [I-II, q. 90, prol.]

2. The idea of sin denotes an absence of the recognized relationship to reason in an act. In this sense, sin that lacks the required order, form or measure. The rationality which Law has as its end, is worked out of two values:

- the first is eternal beatitude, which is the ultimate purpose of each human being;

- the second, is the common good of the community.

3. Ultimately the source of instruction for reason in its moral decision-making is the Eternal Law of God. This instructs – the reason of God, the eternal *Logos*, utters His word. [cf. I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1 um]:

Law is exterior in its origin but not in its functioning – it can only function properly when it has been interiorized, when it succeeds in instructing reason, which then commands from within, on its own authority, the moral life. The interiorization of the New Law is supreme, since it penetrates the reason from within, from the very essence of the soul in which all the faculties are rooted, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells. The promptings of the Holy Spirit are followed by reason in the New Law – human reason which has taken the humble step of faith, then accepts divine guidance.

4. Just Law is always reasonable, the New Law supremely so! Reason can also be seen as infused wisdom, the '*ordinatio rationis*' - is in the general definition of law [ib., a. 1]. The rationality of Law is seen by St Thomas as both elevating it – and also reducing it to the level of exterior instruction given to human reason. The un-coerced creative activity of each person, who freely decides to act in a good manner - lacks none of its originality that depicts the abundant fecundity of God, when the believer is enlightened by the instructive fecundity of the Moral Law.

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[II] *The Quasi experimentalis cognitio Dei*

1. The communication with the indwelling of the divine Persons, established through Wisdom and Love, is described by the Angelic Doctor as a *quasi experimentalis cognitio Dei* [cf. Sent. I, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3 um]. While this phrase is rare, it is repeated [cf. Sent I, d. 16, q. 1, a. 2] – as part of the invisible Mission of the Holy Spirit . 'Experimental' [cf. DV 8] does not easily fit to describe a mystical relationship with God. This is not necessarily a mediate, supra-discursive knowledge [as Fr. Garrigou taught] . Aquinas' intention here is to teach that in faith, there is established with the indwelling divine Persons, a reflection of the relationships of both Wisdom of the Word and the Love of the Holy Spirit – it is that cognition of Wisdom permeated by love.

2. The taste for the divine goodness and delight in his will that are in us, can in some way be experienced. The affective taste for God that is immediately perceived points to the divine presence. It is simply knowledge, accompanied by love [cf. II-II, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2 um]:

***Reply to Objection 2:* There is a twofold knowledge of God's goodness or will. One is speculative and as to this it is not lawful to doubt or to prove whether God's will be good, or whether God is sweet. The other knowledge of God's will or goodness is effective or experimental and thereby a man experiences in himself the taste of God's**

sweetness, and complacency in God's will, as Dionysius says of Hierotheos (Div. Nom. ii) that "he learnt divine thing through experience of them." It is in this way that we are told to prove God's will, and to taste His sweetness.

On further study it seems that for Aquinas *experimentalis* refers to an affective reaction concomitant with cognition.

3. This is a cognition which is the fruit of an inference, deduced only, from the absolute immediacy of the object [I-II, q. 112, a. 5, ad 1 um]:

Reply to Objection 1: Those things which are in the soul by their physical reality, are known through experimental knowledge; in so far as through acts man has experience of their inward principles: thus when we wish, we perceive that we have a will; and when we exercise the functions of life, we observe that there is life in us.

The cognition of the indwelling Divine Persons through Love and Wisdom is described as "perception" – but is not through the senses or emotions, but it carries with it a taste for the divine goodness and delight in His will, within us – can be experienced. [Surprisingly, for many spiritual directors, St. Thomas suggests: the Christian who receives daily Communion should experientially discern whether his/her love and reverence grow or not – then, if deemed necessary, one should refrain from a too frequent reception of the sacrament! – [cf. I Sent, d. 12, q. 3, a. 1 b].

3. The cognition that takes place due to the Divine Indwelling offers therefore a taste in which the characteristics of the divine Persons that are known from elsewhere to be appropriated to them, are recognized. Fr. Patfoort OP notes that this cognition is not immersed in light, but takes place in the darkness of faith, without any possibility of verification of the authenticity and supernatural character of the act in which contact with God is experienced [cf. I-II, q. 112, a. 5]:

I answer that, There are three ways of knowing a thing:

First, by revelation, and thus anyone may know that he has grace, for God by a special privilege reveals this at times to some, in order that the joy of safety may begin in them even in this life, and that they may carry on toilsome works with greater trust and greater energy, and may bear the evils of this present life, as when it was said to Paul (2 Cor. 12:9): "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Secondly, a man may, of himself, know something, and with certainty; and in this way no one can know that he has grace. For certitude about a thing can only be had when we may judge of it by its proper principle. Thus it is by un-demonstrable universal principles that certitude is obtained concerning demonstrative conclusions. Now no one can know he has the knowledge of a conclusion if he does not know its principle. But the principle of grace and its object is God, Who by reason of His very excellence is unknown to us, according to Job 36:26: "Behold God is great, exceeding our knowledge." And hence His presence in us and His absence cannot be known with certainty, according to Job 9:11: "If He come to me, I shall not see Him; if He depart I shall not understand." And hence man cannot judge with certainty that he has grace, according to 1 Cor. 4:3,4:

"But neither do I judge my own self . . . but He that judgeth me is the Lord."

Thirdly, things are known conjecturally by signs; and thus anyone may know he has grace, when he is conscious of delighting in God, and of despising worldly things, and inasmuch as a man is not conscious of any mortal sin. And thus it is written (Apoc. 2:17): "To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna . . . which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it," because whoever receives it knows, by experiencing a certain sweetness, which he who does not receive it, does not experience. Yet this knowledge is imperfect; hence the Apostle says (1 Cor. 4:4): "I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified," since, according to Ps. 18:13: "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant."

Quasi is not to be understood as having a diminutive meaning – but that the resulting cognition is experiential. Aquinas differentiates between the proper meaning of 'experience' which refers to sense cognition – and the analogical transposition of the term to an intellectual cognition – that has an affective experience of love and taste attached, which makes the cognition *quasi experiential*.

4. However, one may interpret *quasi*, the meaning is clear: the contact with the Indwelling Divine Persons grants an affective, delightful experience, showing a fervor of love, through which the cognition of Wisdom takes place. In this, the appropriated characteristics of the divine Persons are recognized. This 'experience' constitutes a spiritual fact that includes among its repercussions a willingness to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

[e] *Instinctus Spiriti Sancti*

1. This is the expression from Aquinas describing the movement of the Holy Spirit within the New Law [I-II, 108, a. 1 & ad 2 um]:

On the contrary, Through the New Law, men are made "children of light": wherefore it is written (Jn. 12:36): "Believe in the light that you may be the children of light." Now it is becoming that children of the light should do deeds of light and cast aside deeds of darkness, according to Eph. 5:8: "You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk . . . as children of the light." Therefore the New Law had to forbid certain external acts and prescribe others.

I answer that, As stated above (Question [106], Articles [1],2), the New Law consists chiefly in the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is shown forth by faith that worketh through love. Now men become receivers of this grace through God's Son made man, Whose humanity grace filled first, and thence flowed forth to us. Hence it is written (Jn. 1:14): "The Word was made flesh," and afterwards: "full of grace and truth"; and further on: "Of His fullness we all have received, and grace for grace." Hence it is added that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Consequently it was becoming that the grace flows from the incarnate Word should be given to us by means of certain external sensible objects; and that from this inward grace, whereby the flesh is subjected to the Spirit, certain external works should ensue.

Accordingly external acts may have a twofold connection with grace. In the first place, as leading in some way to grace. Such are the sacramental acts which are instituted in the New Law, e.g. Baptism, the Eucharist, and the like.

In the second place there are those external acts which ensue from the promptings of grace: and herein we must observe a difference.

For there are some which are necessarily in keeping with, or in opposition to inward grace consisting in faith that worketh through love. Such external works are prescribed or forbidden in the New Law; thus confession of faith is prescribed, and denial of faith is forbidden; for it is written (Mt. 10:32,33) "(Every one) that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father . . . But he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father."

On the other hand, there are works which are not necessarily opposed to, or in keeping with faith that worketh through love. Such works are not prescribed or forbidden in the New Law, by virtue of its primitive institution; but have been left by the Lawgiver, i.e. Christ, to the discretion of each individual. And so to each one it is free to decide what he should do or avoid; and to each superior, to direct his subjects in such matters as regards what they must do or avoid. Wherefore also in this respect the Gospel is called the "law of liberty" [Cf. Reply Objection [2]]: since the Old Law decided many points and left few to man to decide as he chose.

Reply to Objection 2: According to the Philosopher (Metaph. i, 2), what is "free is cause of itself." Therefore he acts freely, who acts of his own accord. Now man does of his own accord that which he does from a habit that is suitable to his nature: since a habit inclines one as a second nature. If, however, a habit be in opposition to nature, man would not act according to his nature, but according to some corruption affecting that nature. Since then the grace of the Holy Ghost is like an interior habit bestowed on us and inclining us to act aright, it makes us do freely those things that are becoming to grace, and shun what is opposed to it.

Accordingly, the New Law is called the law of liberty in two respects. First, because it does not bind us to do or avoid certain things, except such as care of themselves necessary or opposed to salvation, and come under the prescription or prohibition of the law. Secondly, because it also makes us comply freely with these precepts and prohibitions, inasmuch as we do so through the promptings of grace. It is for these two reasons that the New Law is called "the law of perfect liberty" (James 1:25).

This occurs then 16 times in q. 68 of the I-II. This confirms his teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit containing the primary clarification on the practical application of the normative guidance of the New Law. This expression, then, denotes the drive that arises from natural, and divine promptings as well as those from the evil One! Animals live on instinct. The human sensitive powers, if abstracted from their dependence on reason, follow the drive of natural instinct. The corruption of the flesh and the weakness of will can instigate one to evil, resembling the diabolical instinct in fallen nature. The Eucharist is a healing agent that is the antidote for the Evil venom.

2. God acts within the human will prompting, inclining, urging through the interior instinct toward the good. Before God revealed His New Law, people responded to an interior instinct found means to worship the unknown God [III, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3 um]:

Reply to Objection 3: As Augustine says (Contra Faust. xix), diverse sacraments suit different times; just as different times are signified by different parts of the verb, viz. present, past, and future. Consequently, just as under the state of the Law of nature man was moved by inward instinct and without any outward law, to worship God, so also the sensible things to be employed in the worship of God were determined by inward instinct.

But later on it became necessary for a law to be given (to man) from without: both because the Law of nature had become obscured by man's sins; and in order to signify more expressly the grace of Christ, by which the human race is sanctified. And hence the need for those things to be determinate, of which men have to make use in the sacraments. Nor is the way of salvation narrowed thereby: because the things which need to be used in the sacraments, are either in everyone's possession or can be had with little trouble.

3. The term *instinctus* is also used to denote the divine stirring of the prophet which is tantamount for such a person as a private law. [Ad Gal c. 2, lect. 4 (94)]. It is distinguished from revelation, in which the prophet who is inspired seems to be aware of the divine source. When the prophet just receives the stimulus to act, without being elevated to the contemplation of the divine, and without being able to distinguish clearly between his own interior movement and that which comes from God [II-II, 171, a. 5]. The prophetic instinct is an imperfect form of prophecy, although all true prophets were not capable of fully appreciating what the Holy Spirit intended within the prophecy [II-II, 173, a. 4]:

On the contrary, It is written (Jn. 11:51): "And this he" (Caiphas) "spoke, not of himself, but being the High Priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation," etc. Now Caiphas knew this not. Therefore not every prophet knows what he prophesies.

I answer that, In prophetic revelation the prophet's mind is moved by the Holy Ghost, as an instrument that is deficient in regard to the principal agent. Now the prophet's mind is moved not only to apprehend something, but also to speak or to do something; sometimes indeed to all these three together, sometimes to two, sometimes to one only, and in each case there may be a defect in the prophet's knowledge. For when the prophet's mind is moved to think or apprehend a thing, sometimes he is led merely to apprehend that thing, and sometimes he is further led to know that it is divinely revealed to him.

4. *Instinctus*, for Aquinas has therefore a wide range of applications, while always denoting some prompting. This event comes specifically from the Holy Spirit and was traditionally termed *inspiratio*, a word with rich biblical connotations. This suggests

an action originating from without, from a higher principle, analogous to blowing. The term is not used by Aquinas to indicate that prompting deriving from a natural source – this novelty seems to have Aristotelian backing [I-II, 68, a. 1]:

On the contrary, Gregory (Moral. i, 12) distinguishes seven gifts, which he states to be denoted by the seven sons of Job, from the three theological virtues, which, he says, are signified by Job's three daughters. He also distinguishes (Moral. ii, 26) the same seven gifts from the four cardinal virtues, which he says were signified by the four corners of the house.

I answer that, If we speak of gift and virtue with regard to the notion conveyed by the words themselves, there is no opposition between them. Because the word "virtue" conveys the notion that it perfects man in relation to well-doing, while the word "gift" refers to the cause from which it proceeds. Now there is no reason why that which proceeds from one as a gift should not perfect another in well-doing: especially as we have already stated (Question [63], Article [3]) that some virtues are infused into us by God. Wherefore in this respect we cannot differentiate gifts from virtues.

Consequently some have held that the gifts are not to be distinguished from the virtues. But there remains no less a difficulty for them to solve; for they must explain why some virtues are called gifts and some not; and why among the gifts there are some, fear, for instance, that are not reckoned virtues.

Hence it is that others have said that the gifts should be held as being distinct from the virtues; yet they have not assigned a suitable reason for this distinction, a reason, to wit, which would apply either to all the virtues, and to none of the gifts, or vice versa. For, seeing that of the seven gifts, four belong to the reason, viz. wisdom, knowledge, understanding and counsel, and three to the appetite, viz. fortitude, piety and fear; they held that the gifts perfect the free-will according as it is a faculty of the reason, while the virtues perfect it as a faculty of the will: since they observed only two virtues in the reason or intellect, viz. faith and prudence, the others being in the appetitive power or the affections. If this distinction were true, all the virtues would have to be in the appetite, and all the gifts in the reason.

Others observing that Gregory says (Moral. ii, 26) that "the gift of the Holy Ghost, by coming into the soul endows it with prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude, and at the same time strengthens it against every kind of temptation by His sevenfold gift," said that the virtues are given us that we may do good works, and the gifts, that we may resist temptation. But neither is this distinction sufficient. Because the virtues also resist those temptations which lead to the sins that are contrary to the virtues; for everything naturally resists its contrary: which is especially clear with regard to charity, of which it is written (Cant 8:7): "Many waters cannot quench charity."

Others again, seeing that these gifts are set down in Holy Writ as having been in Christ, according to Is. 11:2,3, said that the virtues are given simply that we may do good works, but the gifts, in order to conform us to Christ, chiefly with regard to His Passion, for it was then that these gifts shone with the greatest splendor. Yet neither does this appear to be a satisfactory distinction. Because Our Lord Himself wished us to be conformed to Him, chiefly in humility and meekness, according to Mt. 11:29: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart," and in charity, according to Jn. 15:12:

"Love one another, as I have loved you." Moreover, these virtues were especially resplendent in Christ's Passion.

Accordingly, in order to differentiate the gifts from the virtues, we must be guided by the way in which Scripture expresses itself, for we find there that the term employed is "spirit" rather than "gift." For thus it is written (Is. 11:2,3): "The spirit . . . of wisdom and of understanding . . . shall rest upon him," etc.: from which words we are clearly given to understand that these seven are there set down as being in us by Divine inspiration. Now inspiration denotes motion from without. For it must be noted that in man there is a twofold principle of movement, one within him, viz. the reason; the other extrinsic to him, viz. God, as stated above (Question [9], Articles [4],6): moreover the Philosopher says this in the chapter On Good Fortune (Ethic. Eudem. vii, 8).

Nothing is said about the nature of this divine influence –or its form, or whether it was an impulse, invitation, illumination or strengthening of the will. Sometimes Aquinas qualifies this particular type of instinct: an invitation, call to conversion, assent of faith, directly touching the heart.

5. The preference for instinctus over inspiration seems to suggest the movement of the divine instinct is not necessarily accompanied by the immediate conviction that the instinct does in fact come from the Holy Spirit. – and is both human and divine at the same time [Ad Gal c. 5, lect. 1, 5 (318)]:

1 Stand fast and be not held again under the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold I Paul tell you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 And I testify again to every man circumcising himself that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 You are made void of Christ, you who are justified in the law; you are fallen from grace.

Above, the Apostle showed that justice is not through the Law; here he leads them back from error to a state of rectitude. First, with respect to divine matters. Secondly, with respect to human affairs (6:1).

As to the first, he does two things: First, he admonishes them; Secondly, he gives the reason underlying his admonition (v. 2).

In the admonition itself he includes two things: one is an inducement to good: the other is a caution against evil. He induces to good when he says, Stand fast. As if to say: Since you have been set free from the bondage of the Law through Christ, stand fast and, with your faith firm and feet planted, persevere in freedom. And so when he says, Stand fast, he exhorts them to rectitude. For he that stands is erect: "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12). Likewise he exhorts them to be firm: "Therefore, be ye steadfast and unmovable" (1 Cor 15:58); "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth" (Eph 6:14).

But he cautions and draws them from evil, when he adds: and be not held again under the yoke of bondage, i.e., do not subject yourself to the Law which engenders unto bondage. Of this yoke, it is written in Acts (15:10): "This is a yoke which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear," a yoke from which we have been loosed by Christ alone: "For the yoke of their burden, and the rod of their shoulder, and the sceptre of

their oppressor, thou hast overcome" (Is 9:4). The reason for adding, again, is not that they had been under the Law before, but that, as Jerome says, to observe the legal ceremonies after the Gospel is so great a sin as to border on idolatry. Hence, because they had been idolaters, if they were to submit themselves to the yoke of circumcision and the other legal observances, they would be, as it were, returning to the very things wherein they had formerly practiced idolatry.

However, according to Augustine in *Epistle 19*, three periods of time are distinguished with respect to the observance of the legal ceremonies: namely, the time before the passion, the time before the spreading of grace and the time after the spreading of grace. To observe the legal ceremonies after grace had been preached is a mortal sin for the Jews.

But during the interim, i.e., before the preaching of grace, they could be observed without sin even by those who had been converted from Judaism, provided they set no hope on them. However, those converted from paganism could not observe them without sin. Therefore, because the Galatians had not come from Judaism but wanted, nevertheless, to observe the legal ceremonies and put their hope in them, they were in effect returning to the yoke of bondage. For in their case, observances of this sort were akin to idolatry, inasmuch as they entertained a false notion touching Christ, believing that salvation cannot be obtained by Him without the observances of the Law.

Then when he says, Behold, I Paul tell you, he explains these two parts of his admonition: First, the second part; Secondly, the first part (v. 5).

As to the first, he does two things: First, he shows what the yoke of bondage is that they ought not submit to; Secondly, he proves it (v. 4).

Regarding the first, he does two things: First, he shows that this yoke is a source of great harm; Secondly, that it is terribly burdensome (v. 3).

The yoke of the Law is harmful because it nullifies the effect of the Lord's passion. Hence he says, be not held again under the yoke of bondage, because behold, I Paul, who am speaking with the voice of authority, tell you, and well, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing, i.e., faith in Christ.

But against this is something recorded in Acts (16:3), namely, that Paul circumcised Timothy. Hence in effect he brought it about that Christ profited him nothing; furthermore, he was deceiving him. I answer that, according to Jerome, Paul did not circumcise Timothy as though intending to observe the Law, but he feigned circumcision in working circumcision on him. For, according to him, the apostles feigned observing the works of the Law to avoid scandalizing the believers from Judaism. In other words, they performed the actions of the Law without the intention of observing them, and so they departed not from the faith. Hence he did not deceive Timothy.

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performed the actions of the Law without the intention of observing them, and so they departed not from the faith. Hence he did not deceive Timothy.

However, according to Augustine, the answer is that the apostles did in very truth observe the works of the Law and had the intention of observing them; because, according to the teaching of the apostles, it was lawful at that time, i.e., before grace had become widespread, for converts from Judaism to observe them. Therefore, because Timothy was born of a Jewish mother, the Apostle circumcised him with the intention of observing the Law.

But because the Galatians were putting their hope in the legal observances after the spreading of grace, as though without them grace was not sufficient to save them, and they observed them in that frame of mind, for that reason the Apostle declared to them that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For it followed from this that they did not correctly estimate Christ, to signify Whom circumcision was given: "That it may be a sign of the covenant between me and you" (Gen 17:11). Therefore, those who submitted to circumcision believed that the sign was still in vogue and that the one signified had not yet come. Thus they were fallen away from Christ. In this way, then, it is plain that the yoke of the Law is harmful.

Furthermore, it is a heavy burden, because it obliges to the impossible. And this is what he states: I testify again to every man circumcising himself, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. As if to say: I say that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. But in addition to this, I testify to every man, both Jew and Gentile, circumcising himself, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. For one who professes a religion makes himself a debtor to all that pertains to the observances of that religion. And, as Augustine says: "There has never been a religion without some visible sign to which those who live in that religion are obligated; as in the Christian religion the visible sign is Baptism, which all Christians are held to undergo. Furthermore, they are obligated to everything that pertains to the Christian religion." Now the sign of the Mosaic Law was circumcision. Therefore, whoever circumcised himself was put under obligation to observe and fulfill all the matters of the Law. And that is what he says: he is a debtor to do the whole law: "Whosoever offends in one point, is become guilty of all" (Jam 2:10). No one, however, was able to keep the Law, according to Acts (15:10): "This is a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear."

But suppose someone is circumcised; then according to the aforesaid he is obligated to observe all the matters of the Law. But this is to sin mortally. Therefore, he is obligated to sin mortally and thus he sins in either case.

I answer that on the assumption that the same conviction prevails, he is obliged to observe the matters of the Law: for example, if one is convinced that he would sin mortally unless he were circumcised, then, having become circumcised, if the same conviction remains, he would sin mortally were he not to observe the matters of the Law. The reason for this is that the conviction that something must be done is nothing else but a judgment that it would be against God's will not to do it. If this is the case, I say that unless he did what his convictions dictate, he would sin mortally, not by reason of the work done but by reason of his conscience. Likewise, if he does it, he sins, because ignorance of this kind does not excuse him, since he is ignorant of a precept. Nevertheless, he is not absolutely perplexed, but only in a qualified sense, because it is

within his power to correct his erroneous conscience. And this is the way the Apostle is here testifying to everyone who circumcises himself that he is obliged to observe the ceremonies of the Law.

Then when he says, You are made void of Christ, he proves what he said, namely, that they must not embrace the observances of the Law, because it involves a double injury: first, the loss of Christ; secondly, the loss of grace. Moreover, the first is the cause of the second, because you who are justified in the law are fallen from grace.

He says therefore, You are made void of Christ. As if to say: Verily Christ will profit you nothing, because you are made void of Christ, i.e., of living in Christ. The second injury is the loss of grace. Hence he says: you are fallen from grace,, i.e., you who were full of the grace of Christ, “because of his fullness we have all received” (Jn 1:16); “The heart of a fool is like a broken vessel and no wisdom at all shall it hold” (Sir 22:17). You, I say, who are justified in the law, i.e., who believe that you are justified, are fallen—“Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen and do penance” (Rev 2:5).—from grace, namely, from possessing future happiness or even from the grace you once had.

CHAPTER 5

Lecture 2

5 For we in spirit, by faith, wait for the hope of justice. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith that worketh by charity. 7 You did run well. Who hath hindered you, that you should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion is not from him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven corrupteth the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will not be of another mind; but he that troubleth you shall bear the judgment, whosoever he be. 11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the scandal of the cross made void. 12 I would they were even cut off, who trouble you.

Having explained the second point, namely, that they must not submit to the yoke of serving the Law, the Apostle here returns to the first and shows that they must stand fast. First, he gives an example of standing; Secondly, he removes an obstacle to standing (v. 7); Thirdly, he tells them its mode (v. 13).

As to the first, he does two things: First, he proposes an example of standing; Secondly, he assigns its cause (v. 6).

He says therefore: Those who want to be justified in the Law, Christ profits them nothing, because they are fallen from grace. But we, namely, the apostles, stand through hope, because we wait for the hope of justice, i.e., for justice and hope, namely, eternal happiness: “He hath regenerated us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). Or, the hope of justice, i.e., Christ, by Whom we have a hope for justice, because we are justified by Him: “We look for the savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:20); “Who of God is made unto us wisdom and justice and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30). Or, the hope of justice, i.e., the hope which is concerned with justice; that we be justified not by the Law but by faith: “We account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law” (Rom 3:28). Or, the hope of justice, i.e., the things we hope for, and unto which justice tends, namely, eternal life: “As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day” (2 Tim 4:8).

And this by faith, “because the justice of God is by faith of Jesus Christ,” as is said in Romans (3:22). Which faith is not of man but of the Holy Spirit Who inspires it. “You have received the spirit of adoption of Sons, whereby we cry: Abba, (Father)” (Rom 8:15). Therefore, as faith is from the Spirit, so from faith is hope, and from hope the justice through which we reach eternal life. However, this hope does not come from circumcision or from paganism, because these contribute nothing to it. Hence he says, For in Christ Jesus, i.e., in those who live in the faith of Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, i.e., they make no difference; but faith, not unformed, but the kind that worketh by charity: “Faith without works is dead” (Jam 2:26). For faith is a knowledge of the word of God—“That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts” (Eph 3:17)—which word is not perfectly possessed or perfectly known unless the love which it hopes for is possessed.

Here a Gloss raises two problems. The first is that he says circumcision and uncircumcision to be indifferent, whereas above he had said, If you be circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. I answer that it is from the general nature of the work that they are indifferent, namely, to those who do not put any trust in them; however, they are not indifferent, if you consider the intention of the one acting. For they are deadly to those who put their trust in them.

The second problem concerns his saying that those who do not believe are worse than demons, for the demons believe and tremble. I answer that if you consider the nature of the work, they are worse; but not if you consider the will. For the demons are displeased by the fact of their believing; furthermore, there is not as much malice in the will of a man who does not believe as there is in the demon who hates what he believes.

Then when he says, You did run well. Who hath hindered you that you should not obey the truth? he deals with the obstacle to standing. First, he mentions the obstacle; Secondly, he teaches its removal (v. 8).

The obstacle to their standing fast was great and harmful, for the harmfulness of anything is reckoned according to the greater good it hinders. Therefore, when someone is kept from many spiritual goods, it is an indication that he is faced with a great obstacle. Accordingly, in order to show them that they have a great obstacle, he reminds them of the spiritual goods they have lost, when he says: You did run well, namely, by means of the works of faith formed by charity, which incites one to run: “I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart” (Ps 118:32). And this did indeed apply to you formerly; but while you were thus running, you came upon an obstacle. Therefore he says: Who hath bewitched you? (This has been discussed already in Chapter 3, hence we pass over it now).

Therefore, who has bewitched you, i.e., hindered the truth, namely, of the Gospel, that you should not obey it? This is appropriately said: for obedience is the application of the will to the edict of the one who commands. That is why faith is a science of the will and of the understanding. It is suitable, therefore, for the will to obey the faith. But this is done by willing to believe that the grace of Christ is sufficient for salvation without the legal observances.

Then when he says, Consent to no one [not in Vulgate], he removes the obstacle. First, on their part; Secondly, on God’s part (v. 10); Thirdly, on the Apostle’s part (v. 11).

On their part when he says, Consent to no one. Herein he shows what is required on their part to overcome this obstacle, namely, that henceforth they not give their consent to any deceiver: "We are not of the night nor of the darkness; therefore, let us not sleep" (1 Thes 5:5); "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them" (Eph 5:11); "And their speech spreadeth like a canker" (2 Tim 2:17). From this it can be gathered that they were not yet corrupted, but he was concerned.

Secondly, he gives an explanation of this, when he says, This persuasion is not from him that calleth you, and it is twofold. First, because a man, when he gives himself to someone, ought to do nothing save what is of advantage to the latter. But you have been given to Christ. Therefore, you should not heed or consent to anyone but those who come from Him. Hence because this persuasion, by which they wish to set you under the yoke of the Law, is not from him, i.e., from God who calleth you to life, but from the devil, for it is degrading, you should not consent to them. Or, not from him, i.e., against Him.

The second explanation is that they might suppose that consenting to a few is not a great matter, since it constitutes no danger. But he says that they must not consent to them at all, nor underestimate their artifices; rather they must oppose them at the start, because a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump, i.e., those few who are persuading you. Or, This persuasion small in the beginning corrupts the whole lump, i.e., the congregation of the faithful: "Neither shall any leaven or honey be burnt in the sacrifice to the Lord" (Lev. 2:11).

Then when he says, I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will not be of another mind, he removes the obstacle on the part of God Who offers His help to this end. And he mentions a twofold help: one as to the deceivers; the other as to the trouble makers. He says therefore, I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will not be of another mind. As if to say: I have told you not to obey the deceivers and I have confidence in you: "I rejoice that in all things I have confidence in you" (2 Cor 7:16); "But, dearly beloved, we trust better things of you and nearer to salvation" (Heb 6:9). I have confidence, I say, in this, namely, that you will not be of another mind than what I have taught you—but though we or an angel from heaven preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema (1:8); "Fulfill ye my joy, that you be of one mind" (Phil 2:2)—and this with God's help. Hence he says, in the Lord God working: "And such confidence we have through Christ towards God" (2 Cor 3:4), because the Lord will give you a mind according with the standard of the Catholic Faith: "It is good to have confidence in the Lord rather than to have confidence in a man" (Ps 117:8).

As to the trouble makers, he says, he that troubleth you shall bear the judgment, whosoever he be, i.e., he that perverts you from right order so as to be turned from spiritual to corporeal things, whereas it should be the contrary: "Yet that was not first which was spiritual, but that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual" (1 Cor 15:46).

Therefore, he shall bear the judgment, i.e., he will undergo damnation. For as one who urges another to good is rewarded—"They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan. 12:3)—so one who urges another to evil is condemned: "Because thou hast troubled us, the Lord trouble thee this day" (Jos. 7:25); "Curst be he that maketh the blind to wander out of his way" (Deut 27:18). And this, whosoever he

be, i.e., whatever his dignity, he will not be spared.

But Porphyry and Julian censure Paul for presumption, and assert that in saying this he defames Peter (since he wrote above that he withstood him to his face) so that the meaning would be: whosoever he be, i.e., even if it be Peter, he would be punished. But as Augustine says, one should not believe that Paul was calling down a curse on the Prince of the Church—for it is written in Exodus (22:28): “Thou shalt not curse the prince of thy people”—or that Peter committed an offence worthy of damnation. Therefore the Apostle is speaking of someone else who, coming from Judea, claimed to be a disciple of the important apostles and with that authority he and other false teachers were subverting the Galatians, because of false brethren unawares brought in (2:4).

Then when he says, And I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?, he removes the obstacle on his part. First, he presents his defense; Secondly, he rebukes his slanderers (v. 12).

He refutes the false charge against him. First, a charge that pertains to himself alone; Secondly, one that pertains to all (v. 11).

With respect to the first, it should be noted that the false brethren, when the Galatians excused themselves from observing the legal ceremonies because they had been so taught by the Apostle, declared that the Apostle misled them and that he persuaded them to this in order to lord it over them. As confirmation of this they alleged that when he preached in Judea, Paul taught that the legal ceremonies should be observed. But the Apostle clears himself of this, when he says, And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution from the Jews? “We are persecuted and we suffer it” (1 Cor 4:12). For the Jews persecuted Paul precisely because he taught that the legal ceremonies should not be observed. Indeed in Acts (21:21) James says to Paul: “They have heard of thee that thou teachest those Jews who are among the Gentiles to depart from Moses; saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor walk according to custom.” It is plain, therefore, that their charge is not true; otherwise, he would not have suffered their persecutions.

False, too, is that which they impute to me because of something generally held by others; because if I preach circumcision, Then is the scandal of the cross made void. For not only I but all the apostles “Preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block and unto the Gentiles, foolishness,” as is said in 1 Corinthians (1:23). And the main reason why they are scandalized is because we preach that through the Cross of Christ the legal ceremonies are made void. Therefore, if I preach circumcision, the stumbling-block is removed, i.e., there will no longer be a stumbling-block for the Jews from the Cross. For they would endure it patiently; indeed, they would welcome it, if along with the Cross we preached the obligation to observe the legal ceremonies. Or, according to Augustine (on this passage) the scandal of the cross is made void, i.e., the Cross is made void; which is a scandal. As if to say: The Cross has lost its effect and its power: If justice be by the law, then Christ died in vain (2:21). Now the Apostle specifically says, the scandal of the cross is made void, to denote that the reason the Jews killed Christ was because He did not observe the legal ceremonies and taught that they were not to be observed: “This man is not of God who keepeth not the Sabbath” (Jn 9:16).

Then he rebukes the false brethren who had slandered him, saying, I would they were

even cut off who trouble you. As if to say: They trouble you on one matter, namely, they want you to be circumcised; but I would that they be not only circumcised but wholly emasculated.

But this is contrary to Romans (12:14): “Bless, and curse not.” To this there are two responses: first, that the Apostle was not calling down an evil on them but rather a blessing; because he was wishing them to be emasculated spiritually, i.e., abolish the legal ceremonies, that they might preserve spiritual chastity: “There are eunuchs who have made themselves such for the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19:12). The second is that he is wishing them the impotence that eunuchs have, so that they might not procreate. Hence he says: I would they were even cut off who trouble you, i.e., that they lose the power of engendering among you and others. And this deservedly, because they engender sons unto error and subject them to the bondage of the Law: “Give them a womb without children, and dry breasts” (Hos. 9:14)....

CHAPTER 5

Lecture 5

18 But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are: fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, 20 Idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissension, sects, 21 Envy, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.

After showing that through the spirit we are freed from the desires of the flesh, the Apostle here shows that through it we are released from the bondage of the Law. First, he mentions a benefit of the spirit; Secondly, he manifests it by certain effects (v. 19).

He says therefore: I say that if you walk in the spirit, not only will you not carry out the desires of the flesh, but, what is more, if you are led by the spirit (which happens when you do what the spirit suggests, as director and guide, and not what your sense desires urge, you are not under the law: “Thy good spirit shall lead me into the right land,” not by compelling, but by guiding (Ps 142:10).

Jerome infers from these words that after the coming of Christ no one having the Holy Spirit is obliged to observe the Law. But it should be recognized that the saying, if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law, can be referred either to the ceremonial or to the moral precepts of the Law. If it is referred to the ceremonial precepts, then it is one thing to observe the Law and another to be under the Law. For to observe the Law is to carry out the works of the Law without putting any hope in them; but to be under the Law is to put one’s hope in the works of the Law. Now in the early Church there were some just men who observed the Law without being under the Law, inasmuch as they observed the works of the Law; but they were not under the Law in the sense of putting their hope in them. In this way even Christ was under the Law: Made under the law (4:4). Thus Jerome’s opinion is excluded.

But if it is referred to the moral precepts, then to be under the Law can be taken in two ways: either as to its obliging force, and then all the faithful are under the Law, because it was given to all—hence it is said: I have not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it” (Mt 5:17)—or as to its compelling forces, and then the just are not under the Law, because the movements and breathings of the Holy Spirit in them are their inspiration; for charity

inclines to the very things that the Law prescribes. Therefore, because the just have an inward law, they willingly do what the Law commands and are not constrained by it. But those who would do evil but are held back by a sense of shame or by fear of the Law are compelled. Accordingly, the just are under the Law as obliging but not as compelling, in which sense the unjust alone are under it: "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor 3:17); "The law," as compelling, is not made for the just man" (1 Tim 1:9).

Then when he says, the works of the flesh are manifest, he proves what he has said through certain effects. First, he mentions the works of the flesh which are opposed to the Holy Spirit; Secondly, he shows how the works of the Spirit are not forbidden by the Law (23b).

As to the first, he does two things: First, he mentions the works of the flesh that are forbidden by the Law; Secondly, the works of the Spirit which are not forbidden by it (v. 22).

As to the first, he does two things: First, he enumerates the works of the flesh; Secondly, he mentions the harm that follows from them (v. 21).

With respect to the first, two doubts arise. First, as to the Apostle's mentioning things that do not pertain to the flesh, but which he says are works of the flesh, such as idolatry, sects, emulations, and the like. I answer that, according to Augustine in *The City of God*, (Bk. 14), he lives according to the flesh who lives according to himself. Hence flesh is taken here as referring to the whole man. Accordingly, whatever springs from disordered self-love is called a work of the flesh. Or, one should say that a sin can be called "of the flesh" in two ways: namely, with respect to fulfillment, and in this sense only those are sins of the flesh that are fulfilled in the pleasure of the flesh, namely, lust and gluttony; or with respect to their root, and in this sense all sins are called sins of the flesh, inasmuch as the soul is so weighed down by the weakness of the flesh (as is written in Wisdom 9:15) that the enfeebled intellect can be easily misled and hindered from operating perfectly. As a consequence, certain vices follow therefrom, namely, heresies, sects and the like. In this way it is said that the "*fomes*" is the source of all sins.

The second doubt is that, since the Apostle says that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God, whereas no one is excluded from the kingdom of God except for mortal sin, it follows that all the sins enumerated are mortal sins. But the contrary seems to be the case, because in this list he enumerates many that are not mortal sins, such as contention, emulation, and the like. I answer that all the sins listed here are mortal one way or another: some are so according to their genus, as murder, fornication, idolatry, and the like; but others are mortal with respect to fulfillment, as anger, whose fulfillment consists in harm to neighbor. Hence if one consents to that harm, there is mortal sin. In like manner, eating is directed to the pleasure of food, but if one places his end in such pleasures, he sins mortally; accordingly, he does not say "eating" but revellings. And the same must be said of the others that are like this

Thirdly, there is a doubt about the order followed in this list. However, it should be recognized that when the Apostle varies his enumeration of various vices in various texts, it is not his intention to enumerate all the vices in perfect order and according to the rules of the art, but only those in which the persons to whom he is writing abound and in

which they are excessive. Therefore in these lists one should look not for completeness but for the cause of the variation.

Having settled these doubts, we should next observe that the Apostle lists certain vices of the flesh that concern things not necessary to life and others that concern things necessary to life. As to the first, he mentions certain vices that a man commits against himself; then those that are against God; finally, those that are against the neighbor.

Against the self are four. These he mentions first, because they obviously spring from the flesh. Two of these pertain to the carnal act of lust, namely, fornication, when an unmarried man becomes one with an unmarried woman with respect to the natural use of lust. The other is uncleanness as to a use which is contrary to nature—"No fornicator or unclean... hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph 5:5); "They have not done penance for the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness that they have committed" (2 Cor 12:21). The other two are ordained to the aforesaid acts: one is performed outwardly, as touches, looks, kisses and the like; as to these he says, immodesty: "Who despairing, have given themselves up to immodesty unto the working of all uncleanness" (Eph 4:19). The other inwardly, namely, unclean thoughts; as to this he says, luxury: "When they have grown wanton in Christ, they will marry" (1 Tim 5:11).

Against God he lists two: one of these is that whereby divine worship is hindered by the enemies of God; as to this he says, idolatry: "Neither become ye idolaters as some of them" (1 Cor 10:7); "For the worship of abominable idols is the cause and beginning and end of all evil" (Wis 14:27). The other is that in which a pact is struck with demons; as to this he says, witchcrafts, which are performed through magical arts, and are called in Latin *veneficia*, from venom, because they result in great harm to man: I would not that you should be made partakers with devils" (1 Cor 10:20); "Without are dogs and sorcerers" (Rev 22:15).

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The second is emulation, which consists in contending with another to obtain a same thing; hence he says, emulations, which arise from contention.

The third arises when one is hindered by someone else who is tending to a same thing, so that on this account anger arises against him. Hence he says, wraths: "The anger of men worketh not the justice of God" (Jam 1:20); "Let not the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26).

The fourth is when anger of spirit leads to blows; and with respect to this he says, quarrels: "Hatred stirs up strifes" (Prov 10:12).

The fifth, namely, dissensions, arise from quarrels: if they concern human matters they are called dissensions: for example, when factions arise in the Church—"Mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and

avoid them” (Rom 16:17) —if they concern divine matters, they are called sects, i.e., heresies: “They shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord who bought them,” and “They fear not to bring in sects, blaspheming” (2 Pet. 2:1, 10).

From these envy follows, when those they vie with prosper: “Envy slayeth the little one” (Job 5:2). And from these follow murders in heart and deed: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (I Jn 3:15).

Finally, of vices that pertain to the ordering of the necessities of life he mentions two: one concerns drink; hence he says, drunkenness, i.e., continual: “Take heed lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the -cares of this life” (Lk 21:34). The other concerns food, touching which he says, revellings: “Not in rioting and drunkenness” (Rom 13:13).

The instinct, so understood, leads through Faith in Jesus Christ, toward a filial relationship with the Father [He is the Spirit of the Father] and the Son is shared. This interior instinct of the Holy Spirit builds up prayer and devotion – fidelity to this instinct leads forward to prayer ‘in spirit and in truth’ even though recollection might be tried by distractions[cf. II-II, 83, a. 13, ad 1 um]:

Reply to Objection 1: To pray in spirit and in truth is to set about praying through the instigation of the Spirit, even though afterwards the mind wander through weakness. [II-II, 83, 13, ad 1 um]

This instinct is the decisive means by which human acts receive a divine touch. It is the prompting of the Holy Spirit that provides the normativity of the New Law in its ultimate exercise.

6. All 7 Gifts are permanent habits rooted in the intellectual and appetitive powers, making one docile to the promptings of the Spirit. The spiritual instinct of the Gifts is given in order to supplement the natural deficiency of reason, which even when it is perfected by the theological virtues, remains enfeebled due to the sublimity of the proposed supernatural end – and the inherent weakness in the faculties of fallen human nature – and the total lack of proportion of the total object of both intellect and will. The human faculties – due to both the sublimity of their divine goal, and their basic weakness invariably are subject to vacillation and incertitude. This is contact with the most sublime Mystery.

7. The theological virtues precede and regulate the Gifts – but the Gifts then as they dispose one freely to follow the instinct of the Spirit, precede the moral virtues – empowering the human acts with a direct and salutary qualification. The Gifts render the faculties both amenable, docile, to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The Divine instinctus, therefore, is in both intellect and will. This divine prompting, urging in no way negates the value of reason, nor the freedom of will. The Divine Instinct, therefore, and so intellect and will follow the will of God in a rational, free and creative manner.

8. As his thought developed, Aquinas abandoned the attempt to fix a certain

sector of the theological, moral and spiritual life to a specific gift. The 7 Gifts are not for some kind of an elite within the Church – they form an essential component of the supernatural life. This instinct grants a divine quality to the most ordinary of activities.

Conclusion:

[1] This instinct of the Holy Spirit expresses the on-going, life-long availability toward the habitual tutelage of the Holy Spirit in the theological life of the Faithful. The supreme divine guidance becomes a rule for those acts which take place through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The intensity of this relationship influences the capacity of the human soul with all its faculties directed by reason to receive the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

[2] The greater the contact with God, the higher is the type of divine rule that is applied. The exterior nature of the Divine Law coincides, by a certain 'con-naturality' with the interior nature of the divine guidance. Divine Transcendence meets with the Divine Immanence within the mystery of a lived out spiritual life.

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III. 1st PETER & ESCHATOLOGY

18 For Christ also died * for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; **19** in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, **20*** who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. **21** Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22** who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him... **5** but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. **6** For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God. [1 P 3; 4:6].



ESCHATOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

"He descended into Hell" (Jonah; Ezk 37—Field of Dry Bones)

This article of the faith often finds its chief support in St. Peter (cfr. 1 p 3:18-20; 4:6):

... in the spirit He was raised to life and in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. ..(He) is ready to judge the living and the dead. And because he is their judge, too, the dead had to be told the Good News as well, so that

though, in their life on earth, they had been through the judgment that comes to all humanity, they might come to God's life in the spirit...[1 P 3].

...5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God." [1 P 4]

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Introduction:

(1) All are in agreement that this article of the faith has scant biblical support and some would even write it off either as "mythological" -or, an archaic remnant of the old three-fold division of this world. It is thought by some to have out-lived its usefulness, and in fact was a "late comer" to the Creed -it has little impact on the daily life of the believer.

(2) Others give it little attention because of the real difficulty there is in its interpretation -however, it might not be out of place to remember the oft-quoted statement attributed to Cardinal Newman that countless difficulties never constitute a single doubt in matters of the faith. There is the pervading impression, however, that for a long time only scant attention was paid to this article of the faith. The Eastern Liturgies and art in this regard have much to teach the west. While the mystery will remain even after the most scholarly investigations, the mystery will remain.

(3) A further problem is that recent exegesis has improved much on the translation of the Petrine texts in question. Even with this, the dogma of the Church simply states the fact of a privileged encounter between Christ and the dead following Good Friday. Just precisely who are these "dead" and what was the direct result or effect of

this meeting, remains shrouded in mystery: e.g., did this mean the deliverance of all the dead prior to the coming of Christ -or, only some were liberated.

(4) Of far greater importance would be the insistence on the solidarity of Christ with every human being. This "union" of Christ with every person is for the Church her ultimate hope and guarantee. This dogma on the "descent" also reveals aspects of the mysteries nature of God and His Plan of redemption: the divine solidarity includes death and burial, even to that point where it was previously thought that God had no sway. The second person of the Most Blessed Trinity descended into the realm of the dead. The Spirit of God, this Holy Spirit of total self-giving, leads Christ into this most terrible abyss in carrying out the Father's Plan of Mercy.

(5) For many interpreters (As Hans Urs von Balthasar) the terms of this mystery are the most obscure in Christianity: the Son of God seeks His Father precisely where it is most characterized by the divine "absence". In this "lower region" Christ proclaims His praises. Two vital segments of Christianity ponder this mystery the more:

(a) The Eastern Church: with its wondrous Icons, that present the "Descent" as a glorious event in which Christ proclaims the triumph of the Father's plan.

(b) The Western Mystics (particularly in the Middle Ages} saw the "Descent" still as part of Holy Week, and an integrating aspect of the belief in the Son's "Death." (cfr. Editorial, in: *Communio* : Strumento internazionale per un lavoro teologico. "La discesa agli Inferi". n. 55, gennaio-febbraio 1981, pp. 1, f., passim}.

(6) The formula, "descent into hell", did indeed come to the Creed late, only in the IVth century. Nonetheless, its essential content was familiar to Christian believers from the beginning. All the articles of faith are a mystery of grace and salvation. The Father gave up His only Son (cfr. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16} to win back a sinful world. To do this, the Son also assumed humanity's distance from God. Death and burial were not only assumed on Good Friday -but He went to the innumerable dead who had expired from the beginning.

(a) According to the Psalms and the Wisdom tradition especially (e.g., Jb, Qo}, death cut off all communication between the deceased and other human beings -even with God. In His descent, Jesus becomes one with all out of love - all who were engulfed in anonymity, solitude. He brought communion with the Trinity, in some way.

(b) This is the Mystery of Holy Saturday: it continues Good Friday and brings its benefits to the world beyond: These (i.e. the cloud of OT witnesses) are all heroes of the faith, but they did not receive what was promised, since God

made provision for us to have something better, and they were not able to reach except with us (cfr Heb 11:40).

(c) In this entire discussion, the categories of here and now cannot be objectively applied to the "world beyond". By the word "hell", or "underworld", Hades, Scheol -we would mean the realm of the deceased. However, the traditional faith of the Church carefully distinguished the lot of the good and evil. In the popular mind, there was a waiting threshold, in expectancy for the coming of Jesus Christ. In the dialogue between Abraham and the Rich Man, there is this pertinent statement: between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to ours. (cfr Lk 16:26).

Truly, in this Christ is the only Way, Truth and Life.

(7) It might be useful to set parameters in this entire discussion: that of wanting to know the minute details, and that of writing the entire article of faith off as outmoded.

(a) There is always some fascination in the unanswerable: the number of the damned; the lot of the unbaptized infant. The "*terminus ad quem*", the point to which Jesus descended: Scheol, or Hell proper? What is hell? Was the "descent" accomplished with Jesus 1 soul alone, or also including His body?

(b) While theories regarding these and so many other perplexing questions may be multiplied, in most cases, there has not yet been discerned any satisfactory answer that would content most. The Father's universal salvific will (cfr. 1 Tm 2:4). Some would be willing to stop here -the facts are not very numerous on which to judge much further.

(8) Nonetheless, it is always true that Faith seeks to be understood. This dogma of the faith is not "mythological", but "Christological", a consequence to the Incarnation. "Hell" has come alive in other concepts, such as the "total loss, absence of God" -"the death of God." Where humanity dies, there is not much space for theology -and without theology, humanity is indeed in dire straits. There are some horrendous, deaths in orphanages.

(a) Holy Saturday is mid-way between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. It is not yet the total victory over death. And yet, this Day of Silence demonstrates an expectancy that death will be defeated from within.

(b) A much celebrated Icon shows the doors of the underworld broken open, with Christ extending a hand to Adam and Eve, inviting them to come forward. Already there is something of the victory of light. In this extreme acceptance on

the part of the Son: was His message - "the Lord be with you"?-or, as it was to the apostles dead in sin: "Peace be with you"? Love is as strong-even stronger than death (cfr Sgs 8:6). (cfr Hans Urs von Balthasar, "La discesa agli inferi", in: *Communio : strumento internazionale per un lavoro teologico*, n. 55, 1981, pp.4-6,passim).

BRIEF STUDY OF THE TEXTS

Introduction:

(1) 1 P has been described as a stupendous master-piece of simplicity and transparency, a passionate support for Christian of the communities of Asia Minor who are subject to the ridicule and persecution on the part of non-believers. Yet, for exegesis this remarkable document has tormented interpreters for centuries and continues to do so.

(2) This famous passage (3:19, f.; 4:6) refers to a kind of "proclamation" on the part of Christ to the spirits following His death.

(a) After having spoken of the need of bearing up confidently under the persecutions that have broken out against them -with absolutely no provocation on their part -Peter presents to them the noble example of Jesus Christ. He more than anyone has been a victim of human injustice.

(b) In the lines under discussion, Peter mentions the figure of Baptism that is now salvific: this is not the removal of any bodily filth, but the invocation of salvation directed to God from a good conscience: and all is from the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is now at the right hand of God, after having gone up to heaven, and obtained sovereignty over the angels, principalities and powers (cfr. 1 P 3:18-22).

1. A very difficult Passage:

a. From a technical point of view there seems to be here a much worked over section: there is a Christological theme) cfr. vv. 18-19,22), then a baptismal theme (vv. 20-21). In a certain sense, this latter has interrupted the first, even interfering with its logical development. This seems evident from the fact that v. 22 completes vv. 18 & 19, implying that vv. 20 & 21 are a kind of insertion. So, already from the level of the literary arrangement there is an initial problem. b. Pondering the content further, it is clear that vv. 19 & 20 were not clear even in the Patristic Age: hence, there is supreme difficulty with the content itself. There is no agreement on just who these "spirits" are; nor on the meaning of Christ's announcement, proclamation. The attempts to respond to these two questions vary:

1.) The "spirits", for some interpreters, are the "just" of the OT -they had been disobedient, but were converted on the occasion of the flood. Another view is that these "spirits" are the "angels, the children of God" (cfr Gn 6:1,ff.). In this view, Christ's proclamation is seen to be the offering of salvation.

2.) The implication here is that Christ's announcement is a genuine liberation, offered to the "just" of the OT. This aspect has drawn many adherents over the years, from the time of the Fathers of the Church to our own day. This would mean that Jesus Christ offers salvation to the contemporaries of Noah (St. Augustine) -it would imply also a confirmation of the condemnation of the sinful angels.

3.) This means that Christ's proclamation is simply one way of expressing the universal dominion of Jesus Christ.

b. To show that any one interpretation was the central view is most difficult. It seems most likely that the early Fathers leaned toward a more generic reading of these lines: in the mystery of the Paschal Mystery, Jesus Christ received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Lead by the Spirit, His orientation was to save all of humanity -including those who preceded Him in time, even the most perverse, as the contemporaries of Noah. This view is that Jesus Christ has offered salvation to all. Nonetheless, it needs to be pointed out that this interpretation is based on the cosmology of the time, steeped in mythological rhetoric: all the dead continue to exist in the Realm of the Dead. Jesus was imagined as having gone to this dreary Kingdom to bring His announcement of salvation to all.

1.) One aspect in this view is that there is revealed in these passages of St. Peter a genuine "descent" on the part of Jesus Christ yet, it is one expressed in mythological terms. The emphasis in this view is that Christ would not exclude anyone from his announcement. This view seems to be based on a brilliant study by W.J. Dalton, SJ, who wrote his doctoral thesis at the Biblicum on this passage -and whose influence has deeply marked all successive readings of the passage.

2.) Fr. Dalton's final view was that this passage from Peter really has nothing at all to do with Christ's "Descent into Hell." This view was difficult to accept for all those who maintained that the only biblical passage supporting the dogma of the Church regarding Peter's descent is precisely this passage from Peter. Yet, it needs to be pointed out that so many of the great interpreters of the West, such as St. Augustine, all the way to St. Robert Bellarmine -were practically unanimous in excluding Christ's Descent as the true meaning of Peter's passage here.

3.) It can be said that this Latin reading of Peter was in vogue for a good 1,000 years. The much used Catechism of the Council of Trent (published in 1566) cites other biblical passages in support of Christ's Descent into Hell:

So, my heart exults, my very soul rejoices, my body, too, will rest securely -for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor allow the one you love to see the Pit. You will reveal the path of life to me, give me unbounded joy in your presence, and at your right hand, everlasting pleasures (cfr. Ps 15 16 ff.) .

Am I to save them from the power of Sheol? AM I to rescue them from Death? Where is your plague, Death? Where are your scourges, Sheol? have no eyes for pity... (cfr. Ho 13:14).

As for you, because of the blood of your covenant, I am sending back your prisoners from the pit (in which there is no water). To you, Daughter of Sion, the hopeful captives will return. In compensation for your days of banishment, I will give you back double.. (cfr Zc 9:11).

(Peter's address to the crowd): ...you killed Him but God raised Him to life, freeing Him from the pangs of Hades for it was impossible for Him to be held in its power since David says of Him . . . (there follows here a quote from Ps 16:8-11))cfr Ac 2:24).

...all beings in heaven, on earth and in the underworld, should bend their knee at the name of Jesus (cfr. Ph 2:10) .

... he got rid of the Sovereignities and Powers, and paraded them in public, behind Him in His triumphal procession ... (cfr. Col 2:15).

Indeed, I promise you, that this day you will be with Me in paradise (cfr. Lk 23:43).

4.) The Jerusalem Bible offers this explanation as a footnote to the text of I P 3:19, to describe "the spirits in prison": This is a probable allusion to the Descent of Christ to Hades: And I say to you, that you are Peter and the gates of the Underworld can never hold out against you (cfr. Mt 16:18).

The Greek hades is the Hebrew SHEOL, the dwelling place of the dead (cfr. Nb 16:33). Here its personified gates suggest the powers of evil which first lead man into that death which is sin and then inflict imprisonment once and for all in eternal death. The Church's role is traditionally understood as an element of salvation, redemption -to lead those who will accept it to eternal life.

a.) The prediction during Christ's lifetime on earth was that He would spend three days in the "heart of the earth", just as Jonah was three days in the belly of a whale (cfr. Mt 12:40). There is frequent allusion to this "Interim" period, between Good Friday and the Resurrection (cfr. Ac 2:24, 31; Rm 10:7; Ep 4:9; Heb 13:20).

b.) Jesus is described as going to the underworld "in spirit": (The Good News) is about Jesus Christ Our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in Him, was proclaimed the Son of God in all His power through His resurrection from the dead... (cfr Rm 1:4).

c.) These "spirits" in prison for some, are the demons mentioned in the Book of Enoch -all, however, are to be put under the authority of Jesus Christ (cfr. Ep 1:21,f.; Ph 2:8-10; I Co 15:24 24,f.). For those who understand these imprisoned as the ones who perished in the Deluge cite also Mt {27:52,f.) -or the saints, the holy ones, waiting for Him for their liberation (cfr. Heb 11:39,f.; 12:23). They are given their freedom of the heavenly Jerusalem.

5.) Hence, the Catechism of Trent does not refer to these lines of 1 P as biblical support for the dogma of the Descent - nor do other noteworthy and classical studies on the dogma. (Hence, the dogma would not depend on this one text of St. Peter as biblical support for the article of the faith in the Creed regarding Christ's descent.

a.) The emphasis in the Letter is on the situation of suffering in which the addressees of this letter find themselves that p so often cites the example of Jesus Christ (cf. 1: 11 ; 2:21-25; 4: 1, f., 13; 5:1 - and others). The ultimate scope of the citations is to encourage the hard-pressed Christians to persevere. In the context under discussion (cf. 4:18), there is mention of the Passion of Christ but, it is undeniable that there predominates the sense of triumph and of "glory" that results: there is specific mention of Jesus' subjecting all to the plan of redemption (cf. 3:22). Hence, to understand this passage one has to keep in mind one of the predominant "models of redemption", i.e. Victory.

1.) There is specific reference to Christ's victory in these words of v. 18: 11 in the spirit, He was raised to life... 11 These words refer to the resurrection -for many exegetes, the "spirit" means the "soul" of Christ -but, many others hold that this refers to the Holy Spirit. If this majority view holds up, it would put an end to the endless earlier discussions whether Christ "descended" into the lower regions in His separated soul only, or also with His body.

2.) In whatever manner these intricacies might be interpreted, it is evident that the text speaks of the risen Christ, in the splendor of His glory and in the totality of His being vivified by the Holy Spirit. This would give v. 19 almost a "temporal", or "circumstantial" reading: at that time ... on that occasion.

2. "He went to preach to the spirits in prison" (v. 19):

a. This is where the real challenge for exegesis begins: it refers to the risen Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, has gone, has proclaimed to the spirits in

prison. The "place" is not mentioned: to insert Hades here, or the Realm of the Dead, is "*eis-egesis*" for many modern interpreters. Such an insertion would stand up only if it were clear that this "prison" was indeed the place where the "spirits" are kept: this cannot be proven.

b. A good exegetical rule is always to try to explain what is obscure by what is clear. In v. 22, it speaks of Christ, risen from the dead "has entered heaven and is at God's right hand". The same verb is used as in v. 19 that is translated: "he went (to preach) ...". In v. 19, there may also be a hint of the Ascension, His being "raised to life". This is somewhat in the background because of the relatively extended material referring to the Flood as a "type" of Baptism. The ascension appears explicitly in v. 22: He "entered heaven" and is at God's right hand. **c.** This leads to the central difficulty here: to the "spirits" held "in prison" -who have had some connection with the Flood. Many modern exegetes openly claim that this passage defies interpretation which would be acceptable to all. Here are some of the major interpretations:

1.) The souls of the deceased: this view would be possible also in the light of other NT texts (cfr. Heb 12:23; Lk 24:37-39). The question would arise why Christ would have "announced, proclaimed" something only to the contemporaries of Noah, and not to others -as all those who preceded Christ in time. This is a theological view hard to sustain -and if this is the view, the other OT just seem to be specifically excluded in the context.

2.) The angelic beings: this seems to be the most common understanding of "spirit" in both singular and plural, as it indicates an angel, or a superhuman being, whether good or evil (cfr. e.g. Mt 8:16; 12:45; Lk 10:20; II:26 -and elsewhere). This draws the attention of those who would connect the "angels" with the Flood:

a.) This would be based on the apocryphal Book of Enoch, written perhaps in the 1st century before Christ -most likely originally in Hebrew. It seems to have been known to NT writers. It is explicitly quoted by Jude (vv. 14,f. -and perhaps implied in vv. 4,6-13). It is also found in 2 P (2:4; 3:13). Hence, there would be little wonder if this is what is implied in 1 P.

b.) The Book of Enoch is of interest for the mysterious "children of God" (cf. Gn 6:1-4): the sons and daughters of God came together and have generated violent and perverse giants, who would have corrupted all of humanity. This is what provoked the divine wrath, bring about the destructive flood.

c.) These "sons of God" are rendered in the LXX as "angels", and later were mixed in with the "fallen angels." The Patriarch Enoch is presented as

having been sent to them precisely to announce the messianic judgment, one of condemnation.

d.) There are surprising textual parallels with this book about Enoch: these angels are indeed in prison, in chains, and Enoch is ordered "to go" to them. However, the message that he brings is one of eternal condemnation

3.) A hypothesis: because of these parallels with Enoch many modern exegetes hold today that 1 P is referring to this apocryphal work, which would have been well known to his readers. This would mean that Peter is using mythological language to speak of the effective salvation of Jesus Christ. By rising from the dead, He has "gone" to heaven, and celebrates there His Victory over all the perverse, adverse "powers", personified by the imaginary "disobedient spirits" who caused the Flood in the time of Noah.

a.) There would be nothing extraordinary in this "encounter" between Jesus and these "spirits" in His ascent to heaven. St. Paul does speak of the "spirits" who reside in the celestial regions (cf. Ep 6:12). This was a time of a conception of the cosmos common at that time, and is used to provide the terminology to describe the theological truth: the victory of Jesus Christ over all the evil spirits.

b.) There would thus be anticipated here what is stated in v. 22: going up to heaven, he subjected to Himself the angels, the principalities and the powers. St. Paul has a like expression:

... the strength of His power at work in Christ, when He used it to raise Him from the dead, and make Him sit at His right hand in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age but in the age to come. He has put all things under His feet, and made Him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church. (cf. Ep 1:20,ff.).

This is simply the declaration of the universal sovereignty of Jesus Christ, that is being thus celebrated and is extended to the totality of time and space.

c.) If this hypothesis stands, it would mean that the proclamation that Jesus makes to the "spirits" is to be understood as the solemn announcement of His Victory -perhaps even more than His Gospel in the limited sense. His victory is the definitive condemnation of all evil and of all who are its most artful representatives. The verb used: "proclaim" surely does mean the announcement of something vital, the content of which needs to be specified from the context. Here, the overall context is the celebration of the event of Christ's victory and power.

d.) This explanation then would shed much light on why 1 P goes into some detail regarding these "spirits", even though they remain marginal. This

would also perhaps explain why the author shows the Flood as a type of Baptism, in that this sacrament obtains its vigor from the resurrection. Christians have to find here the power of overcoming all the opposition that is heaped upon them, and herein they will find the stamina not to give in to the attractions of a dissolute life, which surrounds them on all sides.

e.) Therefore, the proclamation of Christ's triumph expressed with the mythological imagery of that era serves to offer a solid foundation for the faith and confidence of believers surrounded by the continuing trials of a hostile environment, one that has rebelled against God. They have been called by means of their perseverance to participate in Christ's victory His definitive overcoming over all those "powers" that rebel against the human spirit. It is a victory over all who would refuse the divine magnanimity and patience, prior to the definitive judgment of God.

f.) This would explain the baptismal catechesis found here: it takes its inspiration for the biblical record of the Flood, a perennial symbol of the divine judgment, either for condemnation, or for salvation. The very element of water that punishes the wicked, becomes an instrument of salvation for the renewed world, thanks to the Ark that brought salvation. (The midrash found in the last chapters of the Book of Wisdom make a similar application regarding light and darkness: the darkness which confused Israel's enemies, served to save the People of God from their pursuers).

g.) The specific, explicit reference to Christ's resurrection at the conclusion of the baptismal catechesis not only allows the taking up again of the theme of the Christological celebration (cfr 3:18-22), but also offers a solid support to the central core of the message of salvation: the passion and glorification of Jesus, and the baptismal experience of believers. The final divine judgment: either for eternal ruin or salvation, has already begun in Jesus Who now sits at the right hand of God. He has been constituted the "Lord" of the universe, subjecting all of its powers to Himself. This ultimate aspect of Christology (cfr 3:22) is phrased in formularies already known to the early Church. It plays a special role here in 1 P, addressed to those who are struggling, to inspire confidence in all those who are threatened to be engulfed by the continuing waves of hostility. The invitation to follow after Christ for all who share in His victory through Baptism, are being called to share His integral destiny.

4.) A Summary: many commentators today broaden this reading from 1 P. The Jerusalem Bible still maintains that 1 P here "probably" refers to Christ's "Descent into Hades." However, many other scholars read this difficult passage 1 P 3:19,f. - no longer as the biblical text in support of Christ's Descent - but much more regarding His Ascent into Glory. This triumph of Jesus is at one and the same time condemnation and salvation: it is a judgment against all the incredulous of all times,

of whom the evil spirits are a kind of generalization. Christ's victory at the same time is a judgment in favor of all who remain faithful in their beliefs.

5.) The "Good News" was also announced to the Deceased (cf. 4:6): a. In this same sense, perhaps, one might read this second very difficult passage. There is in 1 P an exhortation to break definitively with sin, no longer to serve human passions (cf. 4:2). The document alludes to the hostility that Christian behavior seems to arouse. Good conduct is a condemnation of those who choose to live in their wickedness. There should be no fear, as all will be called to give an account to the Judge of the living and the dead. The Gospel has been proclaimed also to the Dead - even though they have already suffered the penalty in their deaths, that punishment common to all -but live now in harmony with God (cf. 4:5,f.).

a.] There is a certain similarity between this text and the above and most interpreters are in agreement that the understanding of what has preceded will also determine the reading of this passage.

1.) The "dead" here, then, are the "spirits" noted above (3:20). The announcement of the Good News is the proclamation made to the "spirits."

2.) Yet, it must be remembered that some of these "spirits" have been described as "incredulous" at the time of the Flood. Whereas this subsequent mention of the "deceased" makes no such distinction. Another point is that two separate words are used to describe the preaching of the Good News: up above, the usual translation is "proclaim", and the subject of this verb is the Risen Christ. In this second instance, the verb is in the passive voice: the good news were announced (evangelized), with an explicit reference to the Gospel. The Gospel is understood as announcing salvation and not of condemnation.

3.) Furthermore in the latter text, there is no reference to the "going" of Christ -even though in itself the text could refer to either the "Descent" as well as to the "Ascent" of Christ.

b.] For these reason, there are many interpreters now who would read 4:6 independent of 3:18-22. This lays down the challenge to read this 4:6 in its proper understanding, in their view:

1.) If the hypothesis suggested above can still hold viz., that this text from St. Peter does not pertain to the "Descent into Hell" on the part of Christ to announce salvation there to all who had died before His coming: whether the good or the evil; or restricting His proclamation solely to the OT "saints", another interpretation can be offered, too, for 4:6. The interpretation of 3:18, ff. offers different points of detail than what is found in 4:6. Only in the above text is the mention made of Christ's "going". Some of the Fathers of the Church (such as

Clement of Alexandria, Cyril of Alexandria and especially St. Augustine) held that Christ proclaimed salvation also to sinners, those who were dead "spiritually" so that they might be saved.

2.) Modern exegesis, however, tends more to reject this view of some of the Fathers: there is not an automatic passing over from the "physically" dead to those "spiritually" dead. It is true that the overall context here is one of Judgment against non-believers, those who ridicule Christians for their good conduct. The fact that the evil will have to "render an account to the One Who will judge the living and the dead" is an expression taken from the primitive kerygma of the Church, referring more to Christ than to God. Christ was ordained to announce that He is indeed the Judge of the living and the dead, as St. Peter informed Cornelius (cf. Ac 10:42). This phrase passed into the Apostles' Creed (cf. also Rm 14:8-9; 2 Tm 4:1).

3.) The expression implies that Jesus is the universal eschatological Judge: at His glorious return, He will judge those already dead as well as those still in life.

a.) The formula seems to have arisen in the context of pondering the "Parousia". Some of the early believers had already died, and there was no sign of Jesus' Second Coming. Hence, doubts began to appear in the hearts of some in the early community

b.) This particular formula seems to have come into being precisely to respond to these uncertainties, affirming that the "dead" are also in the Lord's hands, and there is no need to be concerned about what has happened to them. This seems to be what Paul wrote to the Romans: no one of us either lives or dies for oneself alone. Whether we live or die, it is all in the Lord's hands -believers are called always to pertain to the Lord. In their fidelity, they will (cf. Rm 14:7,f.).

c.) From 1 Th we know that this was precisely the problem that so disturbed that community. Paul hastened to calm their concerns by teaching that believers had indeed died in Christ, and that they will arise, and will be with those who are found still alive when the Lord returns (cfr. 1 Th 4:16,f.).

d.) Something similar has been proposed for the reading of our text, but with an inversion: believers have no concern regarding their beloved dead, but non-believers do ridicule Christians since -despite their hopes -some of their membership have already died, and nothing seems to have happened. There does not seem, then, any foundation for belief in Christ, or to yearn for another life, rejecting the many pleasures that this life offers -christians die just like everyone else! There is even an argument that might be formulated from the Book of Wisdom that

offers a kind of response: to the eyes of the fool it seems that the just die, and that their end is a real calamity, a ruin (cfr. Ws 3:1-3).

e.) It is precisely to respond to those who ridicule the faith that Peter wants to buoy up believers in the Gospel. It might still appear that their faith has not brought them much -but, they will be vindicated, as they will live forever with God, a just Judge. In this context, v. 6 might be understood: the Good News has also been announced to those already deceased. Even though they have already suffered the loss of the life of their bodies, they will live in God according to the spirit.

f.) Many in the English speaking world follow this exegesis of Fr. W. J. Dalton, SJ. Christians may be derided by those who do not believe: but they should continue to live good lives as a basic aspect of this faith is their hope in the Second Coming of Christ. This is the faith that is vindicated in 4:6.

Conclusion:

(1) A modern tendency among exegetes in the reading of 1 P is to exclude any understanding of the "Descent" from it: this dogma of the Church has other supports and applications. 1 P seems to be making use of language taken from mythology accepted in the Judaic tradition. St. Peter's scope here is to proclaim Christ's total victory.

(2) Making use of the language and imagery in vogue at the time of this writing, Peter translates an essential element of the early faith: Christ has risen in His integrality, and His victory knows no restriction of time or space. All believers will find in Him their salvation, if only they will accept His Gospel in fidelity.

(3) Christ indeed has tasted the extreme depths of the kenosis -He has indeed descended into the depths of the abyss. Thus, His victory is all the greater. Because of this, every tongue: on earth, above and below it, will confess His Lordship! (cfr Ph 2:10,f.).

(N. B.: this exegesis is from Settimo Cipriani, "Insegna la prima lettera di Pietro (3:19-20; 4:6) la 'discesa' di Cristo agli inferi?", in: *Communio: Strumento internazionale per un lavoro teologico*. numero 55, gennaio-febbraio 1981, pp. 7-19).

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B. RECENT MAGISTERIUM

"DEPTHS" OF THE SOUL:

I. VATICAN II

Sacrosanctum Concilium, Dec. 4, 1963

2. For the liturgy, "through which the work of our redemption is accomplished," [1] most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. It is of the essence of the Church THAT SHE BE BOTH human and divine, visible and yet invisibly equipped, eager to act and yet intent on contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it; and she is all these things in such wise that in her the human is DIRECTED AND SUBORDINATED to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, ACTION TO CONTEMPLATION, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek [2].

While the liturgy daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord, into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit [3], to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ [4]...

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Lumen Gentium - Nov. 21, 1964

CHAPTER V

THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS IN THE CHURCH

39. The Church, whose mystery is being set forth by this Sacred Synod, is believed to be indefectibly holy. Indeed Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is praised as "uniquely holy," (1*) loved the Church as His bride, delivering Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her.(214) He united her to Himself as His own body and brought it to perfection by the gift of the Holy Spirit for God's glory. Therefore in the Church, EVERYONE whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification". (215)

However, this holiness of the Church is unceasingly manifested, and must be manifested, in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful; it is expressed in many ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity, thus causing the edification of ...

40. The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: "Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect".(216)(2*) Indeed He sent the Holy Spirit upon all men that He might move them inwardly to love God with their whole heart and their whole soul, with all their mind and all their strength(217) and that they might love each other as

Christ loves them.(218)

The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received. They are warned by the Apostle to live "as becomes saints", (219) and to put on "as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience", (220) and to possess the fruit of the Spirit in holiness. (221) Since truly we all offend in many things (222) we all need God's mercies continually and we all must daily pray: "Forgive us our debts" (223) (3*)

Thus it is evident to everyone, that ALL THE FAITHFUL OF CHRIST of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; (4*) by this holiness as such A MORE HUMAN MANNER OF living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history.

41. The classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one—that sanctity which is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father and worship God the Father in spirit and in truth. These people follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ in order to be worthy of being sharers in His glory. EVERY PERSON must walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith, which arouses hope and works through charity.

In the first place, the shepherds of Christ's flock must holily and eagerly, humbly and courageously carry out their ministry, in imitation of the eternal high Priest, the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls ...

Priests, who resemble bishops to a certain degree in their participation of the sacrament of Orders, form the spiritual crown of the bishops. (6*) They participate in the grace of their office and they should grow daily in their love of God and their neighbor by the exercise of their office through Christ, the eternal and unique Mediator. They should preserve the bond of priestly communion, and they should abound in every spiritual good and thus present to all men a living witness to God. (7*) ... They should ever nourish and strengthen their action from an abundance of contemplation, doing all this for the comfort of the entire Church of God. All priests, and especially those who are called "diocesan priests," due to the special title of their ordination, should keep continually before their minds the fact that their faithful loyalty toward and their generous cooperation with their bishop is of the greatest value in their growth in holiness...

Ministers of lesser rank are also sharers in the mission and grace of the Supreme Priest. In the first place among these ministers are deacons...

who, in as much as they are dispensers of Christ's mysteries and servants of the

Church,(9*) should keep themselves free from every vice and stand before men as personifications of goodness and friends of God.(225) Clerics, who are called by the Lord and are set aside as His portion in order to prepare themselves for the various ministerial offices under the watchful eye of spiritual shepherds, are bound to bring their hearts and minds into accord with this special election (which is theirs). They will accomplish this by their constancy in prayer, by their burning love, and by their unremitting recollection of whatever is true, just and of good repute. They will accomplish all this for the glory and honor of God. Besides these already named, there are also laymen, chosen of God and called by the bishop. These laymen spend themselves completely in apostolic labors, working the Lord's field with much success.(10*).

Furthermore, married couples and Christian parents should follow their own proper path (to holiness) by faithful love. They should sustain one another in grace throughout the entire length of their lives. They should imbue their offspring, lovingly welcomed as God's gift, with Christian doctrine and the evangelical virtues. In this manner, they offer all men the example of unwearying and generous love; in this way they build up the brotherhood of charity; in so doing, they stand as the witnesses and cooperators in the fruitfulness of Holy Mother Church; by such lives, they are a sign and a participation in that very love, with which Christ loved His Bride and for which He delivered Himself up for her.(11*) ...

A like example, but one given in a different way, is that offered by widows and single people, who are able to make great contributions toward holiness and apostolic endeavor in the Church.

Finally, those who engage in labor—and frequently it is of a heavy nature—should better themselves by their human labors. They should be of aid to their fellow citizens. They should raise all of society, and even creation itself, to a better mode of existence. Indeed, they should imitate by their lively charity, in their joyous hope and by their voluntary sharing of each others' burdens, the very Christ who plied His hands with carpenter's tools and Who in union with His Father, is continually working for the salvation of all men. In this, then, their daily work they should climb to the heights of holiness and apostolic activity.

May all those who are weighed down with poverty, infirmity and sickness, as well as those who must bear various hardships or who suffer persecution for justice sake—may they all know they are united with the suffering Christ in a special way for the salvation of the world. The Lord called them blessed in His Gospel and they are those whom "the God of all graces, who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself, after we have suffered a little while, perfect, strengthen and establish".(226)

FINALLY ALL CHRIST'S FAITHFUL, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives—and indeed through all these, will daily increase in holiness, if they receive all things with faith from the hand of their heavenly Father and if they cooperate with the divine will. In this temporal service, they will manifest to all men the love with which God loved the world.

42. "God is love, and he who abides in love, abides in God and God in Him".(227) But, God pours out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to

us;(228) thus the first and most necessary gift is love, by which we love God above all things and our neighbor because of God. Indeed, in order that love, as good seed may grow and bring forth fruit in the soul, each one of the faithful must willingly hear the Word of God and accept His Will, and must complete what God has begun by their own actions with the help of God's grace.

These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and in a special way the Eucharist, frequent participation in the sacred action of the Liturgy, application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation, lively fraternal service and the constant exercise of all the virtues. For charity, as the bond of perfection and the fullness of the law,(229) rules over all the means of attaining holiness and gives life to these same means.(12*) It is charity which guides us to our final end. It is the love of God and the love of one's neighbor which points out the true disciple of Christ.

Since Jesus, the Son of God, manifested His charity by laying down His life for us, so too no one has greater love than he who lays down his life for Christ and His brothers.(230) From the earliest times, then, some Christians have been called upon—and some will always be called upon—to give the supreme testimony of this love to all men, but especially to persecutors. The Church, then, considers martyrdom as an exceptional gift and as the fullest proof of love. By martyrdom a disciple is transformed into an image of his Master by freely accepting death for the salvation of the world—as well as his conformity to Christ in the shedding of his blood. Though few are presented such an opportunity, nevertheless all must be prepared to confess Christ before men. They must be prepared to make this profession of faith even in the midst of persecutions, which will never be lacking to the Church, in following the way of the cross.

Likewise, the holiness of the Church is fostered in a special way by the observance of the counsels proposed in the Gospel by Our Lord to His disciples.(13*) An eminent position among these is held by virginity or the celibate state.(231) This is a precious gift of divine grace given by the Father to certain souls,(232) whereby they may devote themselves to God alone the more easily, due to an undivided heart. (14*)...

The Church continually keeps before it the warning of the Apostle which moved the faithful to charity, exhorting them to experience personally what Christ Jesus had known within Himself. This was the same Christ Jesus, who "emptied Himself, taking the nature of a slave . . . becoming obedient to death", (233) and because of us "being rich, he became poor".(234)

Because the disciples must always offer an imitation of and a testimony to the charity and humility of Christ, Mother Church rejoices at finding within her bosom men and women who very closely follow their Saviour who debased Himself to our comprehension. There are some who, in their freedom as sons of God, renounce their own wills and take upon themselves the state of poverty. Still further, some become subject of their own accord to another man, in the matter of perfection for love of God. This is beyond the measure of the commandments, but is done in order to become more fully like the obedient Christ.(15*)

Therefore, ALL THE FAITHFUL OF CHRIST are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed they have an obligation to so strive. ...

Dei Verbum - Nov. 18, 1965

8. And so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by an unending succession of preachers until the end of time. Therefore the Apostles, handing on what they themselves had received, warn the faithful to hold fast to the traditions which they have learned either by word of mouth or by letter (see 2 Thess. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith handed on once and for all (see Jude 1:3) (4) Now what was handed on by the Apostles includes everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the peoples of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.

This tradition which comes from the Apostles develop in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. (5) For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke, 2:19, 51) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.

The words of the holy fathers witness to the presence of this living tradition, whose wealth is poured into the practice and life of the believing and praying Church. Through the same tradition the Church's full canon of the sacred books is known, and the sacred writings themselves are more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in her; and thus God, who spoke of old, uninterruptedly converses with the bride of His beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel resounds in the Church, and through her, in the world, leads unto all truth those who believe and makes the word of Christ dwell abundantly in them (see Col. 3:16).

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II. DESCENT in the CCC

P. ONE: PROFESSION OF FAITH

SEC. TWO: PROFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

CH. 2: I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

ARTICLE 5 "HE DESCENDED INTO HELL. ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN"

631 Jesus "descended into the lower parts of the earth. He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens."476 The Apostles' Creed confesses in the same article Christ's descent into hell and his Resurrection from the dead on the third day, because in his Passover it was precisely out of the depths of death that he made life spring forth: Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all mankind, your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.477

632 The frequent New Testament affirmations that Jesus was "raised from the dead" presuppose that the crucified one sojourned in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection.⁴⁷⁸ This was the first meaning given in the apostolic preaching to Christ's descent into hell: that Jesus, like all men, experienced death and in his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Savior, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there.⁴⁷⁹

633 Scripture calls the abode of the dead, to which the dead Christ went down, "hell" - Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek - because those who are there are deprived of the vision of God.⁴⁸⁰ Such is the case for all the dead, whether evil or righteous, while they await the redeemer: which does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man Lazarus who was received into "Abraham's bosom":⁴⁸¹ "It is precisely these holy souls, who awaited their Savior in Abraham's bosom, whom Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell."⁴⁸² Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.⁴⁸³

634 "The gospel was preached even to the dead."⁴⁸⁴ The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfillment. This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission, a phase which is condensed in time but vast in its real significance: the spread of Christ's redemptive work to all men of all times and all places, for all who are saved have been made sharers in the redemption. 605

635 Christ went down into the depths of death so that "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."⁴⁸⁵ Jesus, "the Author of life," by dying destroyed "him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and [delivered] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage."⁴⁸⁶ Henceforth the risen Christ holds "the keys of Death and Hades," so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."⁴⁸⁷ Today a great silence reigns on earth, a great silence and a great stillness. A great silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. . . . He has gone to search for Adam, our first father, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow Adam in his bonds and Eve, captive with him - He who is both their God and the son of Eve. . . "I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. . . . I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead."⁴⁸⁸



C. ITALIAN AND SPANISH MYSTICS

One might note that the Mystics of the sacred Heart – as well as St. Francis de Sales, often speak of the ‘peak’ – the “high-Point” – the “center” of the human soul. The Carmelite Tradition seems to prefer more: the Depths of the Soul – which St. Gaspar seems to have followed. It might be of some interest to note the following schema from St. Thomas Aquinas:

I. St. Thomas Aquinas:

The Intimate DEPTHS of the Human Soul - The SUMMIT of the Spirit

De Veritate. Q. 10:

- I, q. 8, aa. 103
- q. 43, a. 8
- q. 77, aa. 1-2
- q. 89, a. 2
- q. 104, aa. 1-2
- q. 105, aa. 3-4
- I-II, q. 9, a. 4
- q. 10, aa. 1, 2, 4
- q. 110, aa. 3-4
- q. 113, a. 8

II. THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL – O.C.D.

St. John of The Cross & and his Caution regarding Visions

a. The ASCENT

II, cc. 10; 11;16;17;18; 20; 23;35; 30-32

A division of all apprehensions and ideas comprehensible to the intellect.

1. To discuss in particular both the advantage and the harm that intellectual concepts and apprehensions cause to the soul's faith, which is the means to divine union, we need to set up a division of all the natural and supernatural apprehensions of the intellect. Later, then, in a more logical order we shall be able to guide the intellect through them into the night and darkness of faith. Our division will be as concise as possible.

2. It is noteworthy that the intellect can get ideas and concepts in two ways, naturally and supernaturally. Natural knowledge includes everything the intellect can understand by way of the bodily senses or through reflection. Supernatural knowledge comprises everything imparted to the intellect in a way transcending the intellect's natural ability and capacity.

3. This supernatural knowledge is subdivided into corporeal and spiritual. The corporeal is made up of two kinds: knowledge received from the exterior bodily senses, and knowledge received from the interior bodily senses, including all that the imagination can apprehend, form, or fashion.

4. The spiritual is also made up of two kinds: One is distinct and particular knowledge; the other, vague, dark, and general knowledge. The particular knowledge includes four kinds of distinct apprehensions communicated to the spirit without the means of the bodily senses: visions, revelations, locutions, and spiritual feelings.

The dark and general knowledge (contemplation, which is imparted in faith) is of one kind only. We have to lead the soul to this contemplation by guiding it through all these other apprehensions and divesting it of them, beginning with the first.

Book Two

Chapter 11

1. The first kind of knowledge referred to in the preceding chapter is that which originates naturally. Since we already discussed this kind of knowledge in the first book where we guided the soul through the night of sense, we will have nothing to say of it here. There we presented appropriate doctrine about this knowledge.^[1]

Our discussion in this chapter will deal only with the supernatural knowledge that reaches the intellect by way of the exterior bodily senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch). Through these senses, spiritual persons can, and usually do, perceive supernatural representations and objects.

As for sight, they are wont to have visions of images and persons from the other life: of saints, of the good and bad angels, and of unusual lights and splendors.

Through hearing they apprehend certain extraordinary words, sometimes from the vision, and at other times without seeing the one who speaks.

With the sense of smell they sometimes notice sensibly the sweetest fragrances without knowledge of their origin.

Also it happens with regard to taste that they experience very exquisite savors. And concerning touch they feel extreme delight, at times so intense that all the bones and marrow rejoice, flourish, and bathe in it. This delight is usually termed spiritual unction because in pure souls it passes from the spirit to the senses. The experience is common with spiritual persons. It is an overflow from the affection and devotion of the sensible spirit, which individuals receive in their own way.

2. It must be known that even though these apprehensions can come to the bodily senses from God, one must never rely on them or accept them. A person should rather flee from them completely and have no desire to examine whether they be good or bad. The more exterior and corporeal these things are, the less certain is their divine origin. God's self-communication is more commonly and appropriately given to the spirit, in which there is greater security and profit for the soul, than to the senses, where ordinarily there is extreme danger and room for deception. Thinking that spiritual things are identical with what is felt, the bodily sense usually sets itself up as arbiter and judge over them. But spiritual things are as different from what is sensed as is the body from the soul and sensibility from reason. The bodily sense is as ignorant of spiritual matters as a beast is of rational matters, and even more.

3. Individuals who esteem these apprehensions are in serious error and extreme danger of being deceived. Or at least they will hinder their spiritual growth because, as we mentioned,[2] these corporeal perceptions bear no proportion to what is spiritual. Such manifestations ought always to be considered as more surely from the devil than from God, for the devil possesses greater leeway in influencing the exterior and corporeal part of human nature. He can deceive the soul more readily through this action than through a more interior and spiritual kind.

4. The more exterior these corporeal objects and forms, the less profitable they are to the interior and spiritual part of the soul. This is due to the extreme distance and the lack of proportion between the corporeal and the spiritual. Even though some spirituality results from these corporeal communications - which is always the case when they are from God - it is far less than when the communications are more spiritual and interior. As a result they are a ready occasion for the breeding of error, presumption, and vanity in the soul. Palpable, tangible, and material as they are, they strongly affect the senses so that in one's judgment they seem more worthwhile on account of their being more sensible. A person, then, forsaking faith, will follow after these communications, believing that their light is the guide and means to the goal, which is union with God. But the more importance one gives to these communications the further one strays from faith, the way and means.

5. Furthermore, persons receiving these apprehensions often develop secretly a special opinion of themselves - that now they are important in God's eyes. Such a view is contrary to humility.

The devil too is adept at suggesting to individuals a secret self-satisfaction that becomes truly obvious at times. He often purveys objects to the senses, presenting to the sense of sight images of saints and most beautiful lights, and to the hearing, dissembled words, and to the sense of smell, fragrant odors; in the mouth, sweetness, and in the sense of touch, delight. He does all of this so that by enticing persons through these sensory objects he may induce them into many evils.

Such representations and feelings, consequently, must always be rejected. Even though some may be from God, this rejection is no affront to him. Nor will one, by rejecting and not wanting them, fail to receive the effect and fruit God wishes to produce through them.

6. The reason is that if the corporeal vision or feeling in the senses has a divine origin it produces its effect in the spirit at the very moment of its perception, without allowing any deliberation about wanting or not wanting it. This is likewise so with the more interior communications. Since God grants these favors without the individual's own ability and effort, he causes the desired effect of these favors without this ability and effort since he produces the effect passively in the spirit. The good effect, accordingly, does not depend on one's wanting or not wanting the communication. Were fire to come into immediate contact with a person's flesh, that person's desire not to get burned would hardly be helpful, for the fire produces its effect necessarily. So too with good visions and sensible communications. Even if a person doesn't want them, they produce their effect, and first and foremost in the soul rather than in the body.

Also, those from the devil, even though the soul does not desire them, cause in the spirit agitation, or dryness, or vanity, or presumption. Yet diabolical communications are not as efficacious in doing harm as God's communications are in doing good. For the diabolical communications can only arouse the first movements without being able to move the will any further if it is unwilling to be moved. The unrest caused by them will not last long, unless the individual's lack of courage and caution becomes the occasion for the unrest to continue.

The communications from God, however, penetrate the soul, move the will to love, and leave their effect within. The soul, even if it wants to, can no more resist their effect than can a window withstand the sunlight shining on it.

7. A soul should never dare to want to accept these communications, even though, as I say, they are from God. If it does, six kinds of harm will result.

First, faith will gradually diminish, for sensible experiences greatly detract from it. Faith, as we said,^[3] transcends all sense. By not closing the eyes of the soul to all these sensory apprehensions, a person strays from the means to union with God.

Second, if left unrejected these sensory things are an impediment to the spirit because they detain the soul and prevent the spirit from soaring to the invisible. This is one of the reasons our Lord told the disciples that it was fitting for him to go so that the Holy Spirit might come [Jn. 16:7]. And so that Mary Magdalene would ground herself in faith, he refused to allow her to touch his feet after his resurrection [Jn. 20:17].

Third, the soul begins to develop a possessive attitude toward these communications and fails to continue on its journey to genuine renunciation and nakedness of spirit.

Fourth, individuals gradually lose the effect of these communications and the interior spirituality they produce because the individuals set their eyes on the sensible aspect, which is the least part of the communications. As a consequence these persons do not receive so copiously the spirituality caused by them. This spirituality is preserved and more deeply impressed in the soul if the sensible element, which is far different from pure spirituality, is denied.

Fifth, individuals gradually lose God's favors because they receive these favors as something belonging to themselves and do not profit well by them. Taking them as one's own and failing to profit by them is the same as desiring to receive them. God

does not bestow them so that the recipient may desire to receive them, for a person must never absolutely believe that they are from God.

Sixth, in desiring to accept them one opens the door to the devil. The devil can then deceive one by other communications expertly feigned and disguised as genuine. In the words of the Apostle, he can transform himself into an angel of light [2 Cor. 11:14]. We shall discuss this matter, with God's help, in the third book, in the chapter on spiritual gluttony.^[4]

8. Regardless of the cause of these apprehensions, it is always good for people to reject them with closed eyes. If they fail to do so, they will make room for diabolical representations. And when the devil is given such a free hand, his representations multiply while God's representations gradually cease, so that eventually all these apprehensions will come from the devil and none at all from God. This has happened with many incautious and uninstructed people who in their sureness concerning the reception of these communications met with real difficulty in returning to God through purity of faith. Many have been unable to return because of the deep roots the devil has taken in them. Consequently, it is expedient to be closed to these communications and to deny them all, for in this way diabolical errors coming from the bad apprehensions are eliminated, the hindrance to faith occasioned by the good communications is avoided, and the spirit gathers the fruit.

If these communications are allowed to enter, God will gradually withdraw them. By considering them one's own, one fails to receive the due profit. The devil then inserts and increases his communications, since he finds an opening for them. So too, on the other hand, when a humble and dispossessed soul renounces and opposes these representations, God will augment his favors and give better ones. He will set this soul over many things as in the case of the servant who was faithful in a few things [Mt. 25:21].

9. If individuals remain both faithful and retiring in the midst of these favors, the Lord will not cease raising them degree by degree until they reach divine union and transformation. Our Lord proves and elevates the soul by first bestowing graces that are exterior, lowly, and proportioned to the small capacity of sense. If the person reacts well by taking these first morsels with moderation for strength and nourishment, God will bestow a more abundant and higher quality of food. If individuals are victorious over the devil in the first degree, they will pass on to the second; and if so in the second, they will go to the third; and likewise through all the seven mansions (the seven degrees of love) until the Bridegroom puts them in the wine cellar of perfect charity [Sgs. 2:4].

10. Happy the person who knows how to carry on the fight against the beast of the Apocalypse and its seven heads that are in opposition to these seven degrees of love [Rv. 12:3; 13:1]. With each of its heads the beast wars against one of these degrees, and by doing so it wages battle with the soul in each of these mansions. And in every mansion the soul is exercising the love of God and winning another degree. Those who fight faithfully and conquer in each mansion will doubtless merit advancing from degree to degree and from mansion to mansion unto the ultimate where the seven heads of the beast against which the furious war is fought will have been cut off. This war is so violent that St. John says the beast was permitted to fight against the saints, and was

victorious in each of these degrees of love by using arms and abundant munitions [Rv. 13:7].

It is most regrettable that many, on entering this battle against the beast, are even incapable of severing the first head through denial of the sensible objects of the world. Some make the effort and cut it off, but then fail to sever the second, which consists of the sensory visions we are discussing. What is most lamentable is that after some have cut off not only the first and second but the third also (in regard to the interior senses, by passing out of the state of meditation and advancing further), at the moment of their entrance into purity of spirit they are conquered by this spiritual beast that revives and rises up against them even unto the first head. In their fall the last state becomes worse than the first since the beast takes with it seven other spirits worse than itself [Lk. 11:26].

11. Spiritual persons ought to deny all apprehensions and the temporal delights of the exterior senses if they desire to cut off the first and second heads of the beast and thereby enter the first room of love and the second of living faith. They should not want to grasp for sensory communications or weigh themselves down with these, since doing so is what most derogates from faith.

12. Manifestly, these sensory visions and apprehensions cannot serve as a means for union since they bear no proportion to God. This was one of the reasons for Christ's not wanting Mary Magdalene or St. Thomas to touch him [Jn. 20:17, 27-29]. The devil is most pleased when he sees that people desire to accept revelations and are inclined toward them. For then he has an excellent opportunity to inject errors and disparage faith as much as possible. As I have declared, [5] people desiring these apprehensions become coarse in their faith and even expose themselves to many temptations and follies.

13. I have treated of these exterior apprehensions somewhat at length to shed more light in preparation for our discussion of the other apprehensions. There is so much to say, however, on this subject that I doubt whether I would ever finish. And I think I was too brief in only explaining that a person should be careful never to accept them - unless in some rare case and with extremely competent advice, and then without any desire for them. But I think what I said is sufficient.

[1] In reality the doctrine developed there up to chapter 12 is general and valid for any kind of knowledge or appetite. The important point here is the distinction between natural and supernatural knowledge coming through the senses. For John the supernatural refers to what cannot be acquired through our natural abilities.

[2] In chaps. 8-9.

[3] See chap. 3.

[4] Here he is thinking of his work in terms of a threefold division: active night of the senses, active night of the spirit and passive night. He in fact deals with this material not in the third book of the *Ascent*, which treats of the purification of the memory and will, but in the *Night 1. 6*.

[5] See no. 7.

Book Two
Chapter 16

The imaginative apprehensions represented supernaturally to the phantasy are incapable of serving as a proximate means to union with God.

1. After our having discussed the natural apprehensions that the phantasy and imagination receive and work with through discursive meditation, it is appropriate that we discuss the supernatural apprehensions that are called imaginative visions. These visions pertain to the phantasy just as natural apprehensions do because they belong to the category of image, form, and figure.

2. You should know that by this term "imaginative vision" we are referring to everything supernaturally represented to the imagination under the category of image, form, figure, and species. All the apprehensions and species represented naturally to the soul through the five bodily senses and impressed upon it can be represented to it supernaturally without the intervention of the exterior senses.

This interior sense, the phantasy, together with the memory, is for the intellect the archives or receptacle in which all the intelligible forms and images are received. Like a mirror, this faculty contains them within itself, whether they come to it from the five bodily senses or supernaturally. It in turn presents them to the intellect, and there the intellect considers and makes a judgment about them. Not only is the phantasy capable of this, but it can even compose and imagine other objects resembling those known.

3. It is noteworthy that as the five exterior senses send the images and species of their objects to these interior senses, so God and the devil can supernaturally represent to these faculties - without the exterior senses - the same images and species; indeed, much more beautiful and perfect ones. God often represents many things to individuals through these images, and teaches them great wisdom, as is obvious throughout Scripture. For example: Isaiah beheld God in his glory under the form of smoke covering the temple and under the form of the seraphim covering their faces and feet with their wings [Is. 6:2-4]; Jeremiah saw the rod keeping watch [Jer. 1:11]; and Daniel, a multitude of visions [Dn. 7:10]; and so on.

The devil, too, attempts with his seemingly good visions to deceive a person. An example of this is found in the Book of Kings, where we read that he deceived all of Ahab's prophets by representing to their imaginations the horns with which, he claimed, Ahab was to destroy the Assyrians. This was a lie [1 Kgs. 22:11-12, 21-22]. And then there are the visions Pilate's wife had about not condemning Christ [Mt. 27:19]; and many others.

It is understandable, therefore, how in this mirror of the proficient's phantasy these imaginative visions are received more frequently than are the corporeal visions in the exterior senses. As far as image and species are concerned these visions do not differ from those coming through the exterior senses. But as for their perfection and the effect produced, there is a great difference, for since they are supernatural and more interior they are more subtle and effective in the soul. Yet this does not mean that some of the exterior corporeal visions may not be more effective, since after all God gives his communications as he pleases. But we are dealing with these visions insofar as they are in themselves more spiritual.

4. The devil ordinarily comes with his wiles, natural or supernatural, to this sense, the imagination and phantasy, for it is the gate and entry to the soul. Here the intellect comes as though to a seaport or market to buy and sell provisions. As a result, God - and the devil too - comes here with the jewels of images and supernatural forms to offer them to the intellect. Yet God does not depend on this means alone for instructing the soul. He dwells in it substantially and can impart knowledge to it by himself or by other means.

5. There is no reason to delay in giving signs for the discernment of good visions from bad ones, nor in enumerating the various kinds. My sole intention here is to instruct the intellect about them so that it may not be hindered and impeded from union with divine wisdom by the good ones, nor deceived by the false ones.

6. I say, then, that since these imaginative apprehensions, visions, and other forms or species are presented through some image or particular idea, individuals should neither feed upon nor encumber themselves with them. And this is true whether these visions be false and diabolical or if they be recognized as authentic and from God. Neither should people desire to accept them or keep them. Thus these persons can remain detached, divested, pure, simple, and without any mode or method as the union demands.

7. The reason is that in being apprehended these forms are always represented, as we said,^[1] in some limited mode or manner. But God's wisdom, to which the intellect must be united, has neither mode nor manner, neither does it have limits nor does it pertain to distinct and particular knowledge, because it is totally pure and simple. That the two extremes, the soul and divine Wisdom, may be united, they will have to come to accord by means of a certain likeness. As a result the soul must also be pure and simple, unlimited and unattached to any particular knowledge, and unmodified by the boundaries of form, species, and image. Since God cannot be encompassed by any image, form, or particular knowledge, in order to be united with him the soul should not be limited by any particular form or knowledge.

8. The Holy Spirit in Deuteronomy clearly manifests that God has no form or likeness: *Vocem verborum ejus audistis, et formam penitus non vidistis* (You heard the voice of his words, and you saw absolutely no form in God) [Dt. 4:12]. But he affirms that darkness, the cloud, and obscurity (that vague, dark knowledge, we mentioned,^[2] in which the soul is united to God) were present. Then further on he adds: *Non vidistis aliquam similitudinem in die qua locutus est vobis Dominus in Horeb de medio ignis* (You did not see God in any image that day on Mount Horeb when he spoke with you from the midst of the fire) [Dt. 4:15].

9. The Holy Spirit also asserts in the Book of Numbers that the soul cannot reach God's height, insofar as is possible in this life, by means of any forms or figures. For God reproves Aaron and Miriam for murmuring against their brother Moses and thus lets them know the high state of union and friendship in which he had placed Moses: *Sí quis inter vos fuerit propheta Domini, in visiones apparebo ei, vel per somnium loquar ad illum. At non talis servus meus Moyses, qui in omni domo mea fidelissimus est: ore enim ad os loquor ei, palam, et non per aenigmata, et figuras Dominum videt* (If there is any prophet of the Lord among you, I will appear to him in some vision or form, or speak with him in his dreams. But no one is like my servant Moses, the most faithful one in all

my house, and I speak with him mouth to mouth, and he does not see God through comparisons, likenesses, and figures) [Nm. 12:6-8].

Manifestly, in this high state of union God does not communicate himself to the soul - nor is this possible - through the disguise of any imaginative vision, likeness, or figure, but mouth to mouth: the pure and naked essence of God (the mouth of God in love) with the pure and naked essence of the soul (the mouth of the soul in the love of God).

10. To reach this essential union of love of God, a person must be careful not to lean upon imaginative visions, forms, figures, or particular ideas, since they cannot serve as a proportionate and proximate means for such an effect; they would be a hindrance instead. As a result a person should renounce them and endeavor to avoid them. The only reason to admit and value them would be the profit and good effect the genuine ones bring to the soul. But admitting them is unnecessary to obtain this good effect; for the sake of progress, rather, one should always deny them.

As with the exterior corporeal visions, the good these imaginative visions can communicate to the soul is either knowledge, or love, or sweetness. But in order for them to do this it is not necessary for a person to have the desire to accept them. As we pointed out,[3] at the very moment they are present in the imagination they are also in the soul and infuse knowledge and love, or sweetness, or whatever God wants them to cause...

11. Obviously, in the measure that individuals divest themselves of willful attachments to the apprehensions of those stain-like figures, forms, and images - the wrappings of spiritual communications - these persons will prepare themselves for the goods and communications that are caused by them. Leaving aside all those apprehensions, which are like curtains and veils covering the spiritual goods they contain, the individuals will receive these goods in greater abundance, clarity, freedom of spirit, and simplicity. If the soul desires to feed upon them, the spirit and senses will be so occupied that a free and simple communication of spirituality will be impossible. For, obviously, if it is occupied with the rind, the intellect will have no freedom to receive those spiritual communications.

Should individuals desire to admit and pay attention to these apprehensions, they would be setting up an encumbrance and remaining content with the least important - the form, image, and particular knowledge, which is the only kind of knowledge they can get from these visions. For people are unable to apprehend or understand the more important factor, the spirituality infused in the soul; neither do they know the way they receive this spirituality nor how they may speak about it, since it is purely spiritual. According to their own way of knowing, the only knowledge they can have about these visions concerns the less important element, the forms apprehended through the senses. I affirm, consequently, that the unintelligible or unimaginable element in these visions is communicated passively, exclusive of any effort of the soul to understand. A person would not even know how to go about making this effort.

12. The eyes of the soul, then, should be ever withdrawn from distinct, visible, and intelligible apprehensions. Such elements are pertinent to sense and provide no security or foundation for faith. Its eyes should be fixed on the invisible, on what belongs not to sense but to spirit, and on what, as it is not contained in a sensible figure, brings the soul

to union with God in faith, the proper means, as was said.[4] These visions will be substantially advantageous to the soul insofar as faith is concerned if it knows clearly how to reject their sensible and intelligible aspect and make good use of the purpose for which God gives them. As we pointed out,[5] God does not bestow corporeal visions so that a person will desire and become attached to them.

13. A question, though, may arise concerning this subject: If it is true that God in giving supernatural visions does not want one thereby to desire, lean upon, or pay attention to them, why does he give them at all? Through them a person can fall into numerous dangers and errors, or at least encounter the many impediments to further progress described here. Furthermore, why would God do this if he can communicate to the soul substantially and spiritually what he bestows upon it through the sensible communication of these visions and forms?

14. We will explain our answer to this question in the following chapter. There we will present for spiritual persons and their teachers doctrine that, in my opinion, is both important and necessary. We will expound God's method and purpose in bestowing these visions. As a result of their ignorance about visions, many are unenlightened on how to behave and how to guide themselves or others through them to union. They think that, because of their awareness of the genuineness and divine origin of these visions, it is good to admit and trust them. They do not reflect that, as with worldly goods, failure to deny them can be a hindrance, and cause attachment and possessiveness concerning them. They consider it beneficial to admit some visions as true and reject others as false. In this way they subject themselves and other souls to the considerable labor and danger of discerning the truth or falsity of these visions. God does not impose this task upon them, nor does he desire the exposure of simple and unlearned people to this dangerous endeavor, for these persons have faith, a sound and safe doctrine, the means by which they are to journey.

15. One cannot advance in faith without closing one's eyes to everything pertaining to the senses and to clear, particular knowledge. Though St. Peter was truly certain of his vision of Christ's glory in the transfiguration, yet after relating the fact in his second canonical epistle [2 Pt. 1:16-18] he did not want anyone to take this as the chief testimony for certitude. But leading them on to faith he declared: *Et habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem: cui benefacitis attendentes, quasi lucernae lucenti in caliginoso loco, donec dies elucescat* (We have a more certain testimony than this vision of Tabor: the sayings and words of the prophets bearing testimony to Christ which you must make good use of, as a candle shining in a dark place).[2 Pt. 1:19]

Reflecting on this comparison, we discover the doctrine we are teaching here. Telling us to behold the faith spoken of by the prophets as we would a candle shining in a dark place, he asserts that we should live in darkness, with our eyes closed to all other lights, and that in this darkness faith alone - which is dark also - should be the light we use. If we want to employ these other bright lights of distinct knowledge, we cease to make use of faith, the dark light, and we cease to be enlightened in the dark place mentioned by St. Peter. This place (the intellect - the holder on which the candle of faith is placed) must remain in darkness until the day, in the next life, when the clear vision of God dawns upon the soul; and in this life, until the daybreak of transformation in and union with God, the goal of a person's journey.

[1] In nos. 1-3.

[2] In chaps. 14-16. Union with God through this "vague, dark knowledge" is not the state of union the soul is aspiring to but a means that leads to that state.

[3] In chap. 11. 6.

[4] Especially in chaps. 2-4.

[5] In no. 3 and chaps. 11 and 12.

Book Two

Chapter 17

An answer to the proposed question. God's procedure and purpose in communicating spiritual goods by means of the senses.

1. A great deal may be said about God's intention (the elevation of a soul from its low state to divine union) and method of procedure in bestowing these goods. All spiritual books deal with these points, and in our explanation we will also consider them.[1] Accordingly, in this chapter I will do no more than offer a sufficient solution to our question, which is: Since there is so much danger and hindrance to progress in these supernatural visions, as we said[2], why does God, who is all wise and in favor of removing obstacles and snares, communicate them?

2. An answer to this requires the establishment of three fundamental principles. The first comes from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: *Quae autem sunt, a Deo ordinata sunt* (The works that are done are well-ordered by God) [Rom. 13:1].

The second comes from the Holy Spirit in the Book of Wisdom: *Disponit omnia suaviter*. This is similar to stating: The Wisdom of God, though she touches from one end to the other (from one extreme to the other), disposes all things gently [Wis. 8:1].

The third comes from the theologians who say: *Omnia movet secundum modum eorum* (God moves each thing according to its mode).

3. In order that God lift the soul from the extreme of its low state to the other extreme of the high state of divine union, he must obviously, in view of these fundamental principles, do so with order, gently, and according to the mode of the soul. Since the order followed in the process of knowing involves the forms and images of created things, and since knowledge is acquired through the senses, God, to achieve his work gently and to lift the soul to supreme knowledge, must begin by touching the low state and extreme of the senses. And from there he must gradually bring the soul after its own manner to the other end, spiritual wisdom, which is incomprehensible to the senses. Thus, naturally or supernaturally, he brings people to his supreme spirit by first instructing them through discursive meditation and through forms, images, and sensible means, according to their own manner of coming to understand.

4. This is the reason God gives a person visions, forms, images, and other sensitive and spiritual knowledge - not because he does not desire to give spiritual wisdom immediately, in the first act. He would do this if the two extremes (human and divine, sense and spirit) could through the ordinary process be united by only one act, and if he could exclude the many preparatory acts that are so connected in gentle and orderly fashion that, as is the case with natural agents, each is the foundation and preparation

for the next. The first preparative acts serve the second; the second serve the third, and so on. Therefore God perfects people gradually, according to their human nature, and proceeds from the lowest and most exterior to the highest and most interior.

He first perfects the corporeal senses, moving one to make use of natural exterior objects that are good, such as hearing sermons and Masses, seeing holy objects, mortifying the palate at meals, and disciplining the sense of touch through penance and holy rigor.

When these senses are somewhat disposed, he is wont to perfect them more by granting some supernatural favors and gifts to confirm them further in good. These supernatural communications are, for example, corporeal visions of saints or holy things, very sweet odors, locutions, and extreme delight in the sense of touch. The senses are greatly confirmed in virtue through these communications and the appetites withdrawn from evil objects.

Besides this, the interior bodily senses with which we are dealing, such as the imagination and phantasy, are gradually perfected and accustomed to good through considerations, meditations, and holy reasonings; and through all this the spirit is instructed.

When through this natural exercise these interior senses are prepared, God is wont to enlighten and spiritualize them further with some supernatural imaginative visions from which the spirit profits notably at the same time, as we affirmed. This natural and supernatural exercise of the interior sense gradually reforms and refines the spirit.

This is God's method to bring a soul step by step to the innermost good, although it may not always be necessary for him to keep so mathematically to this order, for sometimes God bestows one kind of communication without the other, or a less interior one by means of a more interior one, or both together. The process depends on what God judges expedient for the soul, or on how he wants to grant it favors. But his ordinary procedure conforms with our explanation.

5. By this method, then, God instructs people and makes them spiritual. He begins by communicating spirituality to them, in accord with their littleness or small capacity, through elements that are exterior, palpable, and accommodated to sense. He does this so that by means of the kind of those sensible things, in themselves good, the spirit, making progress in particular acts and receiving morsels of spiritual communication, may form a habit in spiritual things and reach the actual substance of spirit foreign to all sense. Individuals obtain this only little by little, after their own manner, and by means of the senses to which they have always been attached.

In the measure that souls approach spirit in their dealings with God, they divest and empty themselves of the ways of the senses, of discursive and imaginative meditation. When they have completely attained spiritual communion with God they will be void of all sensory apprehensions concerning God. The more an object approaches one extreme, the further it retreats from the other; on complete attainment of one extreme it will be wholly separated from the other. There is a frequently quoted spiritual axiom that runs: *Gustato spiritu, desipit omnis caro* (Once the taste and savor of the spirit is experienced, everything carnal is insipid). The ways of the flesh (which refer to the use of the senses in spiritual things) afford neither profit nor delight. This is obvious. If

something is spiritual it is incomprehensible to the senses; but if the senses can grasp it, it is no longer purely spiritual. The more knowledge the senses and natural apprehensions have about it, the less spiritual and supernatural it will be, as we explained above. [3]

6. As a result the perfect spirit pays no attention to the senses. It neither receives anything through them, nor uses them principally, nor judges them to be requisite in its relationship with God, as it did before its spiritual growth.

A passage from St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians bears this meaning: *Cum essem parvulus, loquebar ut parvulus, sapiebam ut parvulus, cogitabam ut parvulus. Quando autem factus sum vir, evacuavi quae erant parvuli* (When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I knew as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things) [1 Cor. 13:11].

We have already explained how sensible things and the knowledge the spirit can abstract from them are the work of a child. Those who are always attached to them, and never become detached, will never stop being like a little child, or speaking of God as a child, or knowing and thinking of God as a child. In their attachment to the rind of sense (the child), they will never reach the substance of spirit (the perfect person). For the sake of their own spiritual growth, therefore, persons should not admit these revelations, even though God is the author of them, just as a child must be weaned in order to accustom its palate to a hardier and more substantial diet.

7. Is it necessary, you ask, for the soul while it is a child to accept these sensible things and then set them aside when grown, just as an infant must be nourished at the breast until, when it has grown older, it can be weaned?

I reply in regard to discursive meditation, in which individuals begin their quest for God, that it is true that they must not turn away from the breast of the senses for their nourishment until they arrive at the time and season suitable for so doing - that is, when God brings the soul to a more spiritual converse, to contemplation, of which we spoke in chapter 13 of this book.

But when there is a question of imaginative visions or other supernatural communications apprehensible by the senses and independent of one's free will, I affirm that at whatever time or season they occur (in the state of perfection or one less perfect) individuals must have no desire to admit them even though they come from God. And this for two reasons:

First, because God, as we said, [4] produces his effect in the soul without its being able to hinder this, although it can impede the vision - which often happens. Consequently, the effect to be communicated becomes more substantial even though it is given differently. As we said, people cannot hinder the goods God desires to impart, nor in fact do they do so except by some imperfection or possessiveness. And there is no imperfection or possessiveness if they renounce these apprehensions with humility and misgivings.

Second, by so doing individuals free themselves from the task and danger of discerning the true visions from the false ones and deciding whether their visions come from an angel of light or of darkness. Such an effort is profitless, a waste of time, a hindrance to

the soul, an occasion of many imperfections as well as of spiritual stagnancy since a person is not then employed with the more important things and disencumbered of the trifles of particular apprehensions and knowledge. This was mentioned regarding the corporeal visions, and it will be asserted further on in respect to imaginative visions.

8. One can be sure that if our Lord did not have to lead a soul according to its own manner of being, he would never communicate the abundance of his Spirit through these aqueducts of forms, figures, and particular knowledge by which he sustains the soul with crumbs. This is why David said: *Mittit crystallum suam sicut bucellas*, which is as much as to say, he sent his wisdom to souls in morsels [Ps. 147:17]. It is regrettable that a soul, having as it were an infinite capacity, should be fed, because of its limited spirituality and sensory incapacity, with morsels for the senses.

St. Paul, too, when writing to the Corinthians grieved over this littleness and limited preparation for the reception of spirituality: "When I came to you, brethren, I could not speak as to spiritual persons, but only as to carnal, because you were unable to receive it, nor can you now." *Tamquam parvulis in Christo lac potum vobis dedi, non escam* (As to infants in Christ I gave you milk to drink and not solid food to eat) [1 Cor. 3:1-2].

9. In conclusion, individuals must not fix the eyes of their souls on that rind of the figure and object supernaturally accorded to the exterior senses, such as locutions and words to the sense of hearing; visions of saints and beautifully resplendent lights to the sense of sight; fragrance to the sense of smell; delicious and sweet tastes to the palate; and other delights, usually derived from the spirit, to the sense of touch, as is more commonly the case with spiritual persons. Neither must they place their eyes on interior imaginative visions. They must instead renounce all these things.

They must fix the eyes of their souls only on the valuable spirituality these experiences cause, and endeavor to preserve it by putting into practice and properly carrying out whatever is for the service of God, and pay no attention to those representations, nor desire any sensible gratification.

With this attitude, individuals take from these apprehensions only what God wants them to take, that is, the spirit of devotion, since God gives these sense experiences for no other principal reason. And they reject the sensory element, which would not have been imparted had they possessed the capacity to receive spirituality without the apprehensions and exercises of the senses.

[1] This key chapter that can serve as a guide in the interpretation of John's whole work. He gives the rationale behind his teaching on knowledge received both through the senses (chaps. 11-16) and directly by the intellect (chaps. 23-32). He explains the principles by which God leads individuals, with their collaboration, and shows how the passive element is present right from the beginning of the spiritual life.

[2] In chap. 16. 13.

[3] In nos. 3 and 5.

[4] In chap. 16. 11-14.

Book Two

Chapter 18

The harm caused by some spiritual masters in not giving souls adequate guidance with regard to the visions mentioned. An explanation of how both can be misled even by visions that have a divine origin.

1. We are unable to be as brief on this subject of visions as we would like because of the amount of material to be covered. Although we have presented the substance of a suitable explanation of what spiritual persons should do about these visions and how their masters should guide and deal with them, yet it will not be superfluous to particularize a little more on this doctrine and shed some light on the harm that can arise. Even if the visions are from God, spiritual persons and their masters can suffer harm if they are very credulous about them.

2. The reason motivating me to enlarge somewhat on this subject is the want of discretion that I have noticed - from what I can understand - in some spiritual masters. Trusting these supernatural apprehensions, counting them to be authentic and of divine origin, these directors together with their penitents have gone astray and become bewildered, realizing in themselves the words of our Savior: *Si caecus caeco ducatum praestet, ambo in foveam cadunt* (If one blind person leads another, both fall into the pit) [Mt. 15:14]. He does not say they will fall, but that they do fall. It is not necessary to wait until they fall into error in order for them to fall. The mere fact that the one blind person dares to be guided by the other is already an error; and thus the first, though less serious, fall is taken.

The method of some directors is sufficient to encumber souls receiving these visions, or even to lead them astray. They do not guide them along the paths of humility, and they give them a free hand in this matter, which causes a want of the true spirit of faith. Neither do these directors ground their disciples in faith, for they frequently make these visions a topic of conversation. Consequently, the individuals get the idea that their directors are setting store by their visions, and as a result they do the same and stay attached to them, instead of being built up in faith, detached, emptied, and divested of apprehensions so as to soar to the heights of dark faith.

All this arises from the attitude and language the individuals observe in their directors in these matters. This is so true that - I know not how - these persons with immeasurable ease, and an inability to do otherwise, beget a high esteem for these visions - even to the point of withdrawing their eyes from the abyss of faith.

3. The reason souls become so readily engrossed in visions must be the sensible aspect toward which humans have a natural bent. And since individuals are already attracted and disposed through their apprehensions of those distinct and sensible things, it is enough for them to see in their director, or any other person, some esteem for these visions, and they will acquire the same. Not only this but their desire for these visions is also stimulated, and they feed upon them and become more inclined and attached to them without being aware of it.

Numerous imperfections consequently arise, because these individuals lose humility, at least. They think their visions are significant, that they possess something profitable,

and that God is giving them prominence. They go about feeling pleased and somewhat satisfied with themselves, which is against humility. Although these persons are unaware of it, the devil then secretly augments this feeling and begins to suggest thoughts about others: whether others receive these visions or not, or if their visions are authentic or not. Such thoughts are contrary to holy simplicity and spiritual solitude.

4. Let us bring to a close for now our discussion of these kinds of harm and of how there is no growth in faith unless souls turn from these visions. There are other, more subtle kinds of harm, more hateful in God's eyes, that may not be as noticeable as these, but that do result from this attitude. The source of these other kinds of harm lies in a failure to walk wholly on the road of nakedness. We will discuss all this when we treat of spiritual gluttony and the other six vices. Then, God willing, we will expound many points about these subtle and delicate stains that, because the director does not guide souls along the way of denudation, adhere to the spirit. [1]

5. Let us now say something about the attitude of some confessors who give their penitents poor instructions. Assuredly, I wish I knew how to speak of this because I think it is difficult to explain how the spirit of the disciple is secretly fashioned after that of the spiritual father. This subject involves such prolixity that it is wearisome to me, for it seems one factor cannot be explained without explaining another, since in these spiritual matters things are interrelated.

6. But to cover the matter sufficiently here, I might point out that it seems to me - and indeed it is so - that if the spiritual father has such a bent toward revelations that they produce in his soul some effect, pleasure, or complete satisfaction, he cannot avoid - even though unaware - affecting his disciples with this attitude and pleasure if they are not more advanced than he. And even if they are more advanced, the director can do serious harm by continuing to give direction. From the inclination the spiritual father has toward these visions and the gratification he finds in them there rises a certain esteem for them, and unless he is on his guard he will manifest indications of this to the persons he is directing. And if those persons have the same inclination, there cannot be between them, as far as I can see, anything but a communication of esteem for these matters.

7. To be less demanding, let us speak of the confessor who, inclined or not toward these visions, does not use the necessary care to disencumber and divest his disciple of desire for them, but rather makes the vision the topic of conversation and the main theme of his spiritual colloquies giving instruction on the signs for the discernment of good visions from bad ones.

Although knowledge of these signs is worthwhile, there is no reason to burden the soul with this labor, solicitude, and danger; by refusing to pay attention to these visions, one escapes all this effort of discernment and does what one ought. But these confessors do not stop here. Observing that their disciples receive these manifestations from God, they ask them to request of him a revelation about some matter pertaining to themselves or to others, and the foolish souls do so in the belief that this method of gaining knowledge is lawful. Merely because God, in the way or for the motive he wishes, grants a supernatural revelation, they think it is licit to desire that he grant it and they even petition him to do so.

8. If in response to their request God reveals the matter to them, they become more self-confident, thinking that God is pleased with their petition and desires it, whereas in reality he is displeased with such an entreaty and does not desire it. They often act or believe in accordance with the answer or revelation, for since they are attached to this manner of dealing with God, their will becomes adapted to these revelations and firmly rooted in them. They find natural satisfaction in them and fit them naturally into their own way of thinking. They often err exceedingly, and are then taken aback when something turns out differently than they had expected. Then doubts come to the fore concerning the divine origin of these revelations since events do not come to pass as they were led to believe.

They presupposed two things: First, that the revelations were from God since from the beginning they firmly adhered to them. Yet that adherence was probably due to their natural inclination toward them, as we asserted. Second, that since the revelations were from God, events would occur according to what they themselves understood or thought about these revelations.

9. This belief was a gross delusion, for God's revelations or locutions do not always turn out according to people's understanding of them or according to what seems to be the meaning of the words. One should neither find assurance in them nor believe them blindly, even though one knows they are God's revelations, responses, or words. Though they may in themselves be certain and true, they are not always so in their causes or in our way of understanding them. We will prove this in the next chapter. We will also prove that, even though God answers questions supernaturally, he is not pleased to do so, but is even sometimes angered.[2]

[1] In John's plan there was to be a section in this work that would deal with the capital vices (cf. A. 2. 11. 7). In fact, he never got to treat of them in the *Ascent* but does so in the *Night*; see N. 1. 1-7.

[2] He proves the first in chaps. 19-20, and the second in chap. 21.

Book Two Chapter 20

Proofs from Sacred Scripture of how God's words, although always true, are not always certain. The certainty of them depends on the causes of the pronouncements.

1. We must prove now the second reason[1] God's visions and locutions, although always true in themselves, are not always certain for us. This uncertainty is due to the causes on which they are founded.

God's affirmations are frequently founded upon creatures and their effects, which are liable to change and failure; consequently, words based on these creatures can also change and fail. If one factor upon which another is dependent fails, the other fails too. For example, if God were to say that in a year he would send a plague upon a kingdom because of an offense committed against him there, and if the offense were to cease or change, the punishment could be withheld. Yet the warning would have been true since it was based on the actual fault, and if the fault were to have continued the threatened punishment would have been executed.

2. This happened in the city of Nineveh when God proclaimed: *Adhuc quadraginta diebus et Ninive subvertetur* (Forty days from now Nineveh will be razed) [Jon. 3:4]. This did not happen because the cause of the threat, their sins, ceased because of the penance that was done [Jon. 3:5-10]. But if they had not done penance the warning would have been carried out. We also read in the Third Book of Kings that when King Ahab had committed a very serious sin, God, through our holy father Elijah, sent him a message threatening severe punishment on his person, his house, and his kingdom [1 Kgs. 21:17-22]. And because Ahab rent his garments with grief, put on a hair shirt, fasted, slept in sackcloth, and went about sad and humbled, God once more sent this prophet to him with these words: *Quia igitur humiliatus est mei causa, non inducam malum in diebus ejus, sed in diebus filii sui* (Insofar as Ahab has humbled himself for love of me I will not in his days send the evil I spoke of, but in those of his son) [1 Kgs. 21:27-29]. Evidently, then, because Ahab changed his conduct and disposition, God also altered his sentence.

3. We can thus deduce for our purpose here that, although God may have revealed or affirmed something to a person (whether it be good or bad, concern this person or another), it can change, becoming greater or less, vary, or be taken away entirely according to a change or variation in this person's tendencies or in the cause on which it is based. Thus the event may not turn out as expected, and frequently no one but God knows why. God usually affirms, teaches, and promises many things, not so there will be an immediate understanding of them, but so that afterward at the proper time, or when the effect is produced, one may receive light about them.

Christ acted this way with his disciples. He told them many parables and maxims the wisdom of which they did not understand until the time for preaching had come, when the Holy Spirit descended on them. The Holy Spirit was to explain to them, as Christ affirmed, all that he had taught them during his life [Jn. 14:26]. St. John, speaking of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, states: *Haec non cognoverunt discipuli ejus primum: sed quando glorificatus est Jesus, tunc recordati sunt quia haec erant scripta de eo* [2] [Jn. 12:16]. As a result many particular works of God can come to pass in a soul that neither the soul nor its director can understand until the opportune time.

4. In the First Book of Kings we also read that God, angered because Eli the priest of Israel failed to punish his sons for their sins, sent Samuel to him with, among other messages, the following one: *Loquens locutus sum, ut domus tua, et domus patris tui, ministraret in conspectu meo, usque in sempiternum. Verumtamen absit hoc a me* (Certainly I have said before that your house and the house of your father will continually minister to me in the priesthood and in my presence forever. Yet this proposal is very far from me; I shall not bring it about) [1 Sm. 2:30]. Since the ministry of the priesthood is based on rendering honor and glory to God, God promised it to Eli's father forever. When Eli lacked zeal for the honor of God because, as God himself complained, he gave more honor to his sons than to God, dissimulating their sins so as not to reprove them, the promise also failed [1 Sm. 3:13]. It would have been kept forever if their good service and zeal had been enduring.

We should not think, therefore, that because revelations and locutions come from God - especially if they are dependent on human, changeable causes - they will infallibly and literally come to pass.

5. Although God knows when these locutions and revelations are dependent on human causes, he does not always manifest it, but in his communication of the locution or revelation he will remain silent about the condition. Such was the case when he told the Ninevites definitely that they would be destroyed after 40 days [Jon. 3:4]. At other times he declares, as he did to Rehoboam: *If you keep my commandments as my servant David did, I will also be with you as I was with him, and I will build you a house as I did my servant David* [1 Kgs. 11:38].

Whether God discloses the conditional element or not, individuals cannot find assurance in their own interpretation, because they are incapable of comprehending the secret truths and the diverse meanings contained in God's sayings. God is above the heavens and speaks from the depths of eternity; we on this earth are blind and understand only the ways of the flesh and of time. This, I believe, is why the Wise Man said: *God is above the heavens and you upon the earth; therefore do not be prolix or careless in speech* [Eccl. 5:1].

6. You will perchance ask: If we are not to understand or get involved with these locutions and revelations, why does God communicate them?

I have already mentioned that by order of him who spoke, everything will be understood at the opportune time; and he whom God wills shall understand clearly, so it was fitting, since God does nothing without cause and truth. But, believe me, people cannot completely grasp the meaning of God's locutions and deeds; nor, without much error and confusion, can they determine this meaning by what appears to be so.

The prophets, entrusted with the word of God, were well aware of this. Prophecy for them was a severe trial because, as we affirmed, the people observed that a good portion of the prophecy did not come about in accord with the letter of what was said to them. As a result the people laughed at the prophets and made much fun of them. It reached such a point that Jeremiah exclaimed: *They mock me all day long, everyone scoffs at and despises me because for a long time now I have cried out against iniquity and promised them destruction, and the Lord's word has become a reproach to me and a mockery all the time. And I said: I do not have to remember him or speak any more in his name* [Jer. 20:7-9].

Although the holy prophet spoke with resignation and in the semblance of a weak man unable to suffer the changing ways of God, he herein teaches us the difference between the fulfillment of the divine locutions and the common meaning given the words. The prophets were considered seducers, and they endured such suffering because of their prophecies that Jeremiah also proclaims in another place: *Formido et laqueus facta est nobis vaticinatio et contritio* (Prophecy has become for us fear, snares, and contradiction of spirit) [Lam. 3:47].

7. When sent by God as the preacher of the destruction of Nineveh, Jonah fled because of his knowledge of the diverse meanings and causes behind God's locutions [Jon. 1:1-3]. Lest the people should make fun of him when his prophecy was unfulfilled, he fled from prophesying and waited outside the city for the entire 40 days to see if his prophecy would be fulfilled [Jon. 4:5]. Since it was not, he became extremely afflicted - to such an extent that he said to God: *Obsecro, Domine, numquid non hoc est verbum meum, cum adhuc essem in terra mea? Propter hoc praeoccupavi, ut fugerem in Tharsis*

(I beseech You, Lord, was not this perhaps what I said when in my country? On this account I was contradictory and fled into Tharsis) [Jon. 4:2]. And the saint became angry and petitioned God to take away his life [Jon. 4:1, 3].

8. Why, then, should we be surprised if God's locutions and revelations do not materialize as expected? Suppose God affirms or represents to an individual some promise (good or bad, pertaining to that person or to another). If this promise is based on certain causes (devotion or service rendered to God, or offense committed against him at that time, by that person or another) and these causes remain, the promise will be accomplished. But since it is uncertain how long these causes will continue, the fulfillment of the promise is uncertain too. One should seek assurance, therefore, not in one's understanding but in faith.

[1] Cf. chap. 18. 9; 19. 1.

[2] "These things his disciples did not at first understand. But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him."

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Book Two

Chapter 25

The nature and kinds of revelation.

1. Logically, our next discussion should deal with the second kind of spiritual apprehensions, which are termed revelations and, properly speaking, belong to the spirit of prophecy.

First it should be understood that a revelation is nothing else than the disclosure of some hidden truth, or the manifestation of some secret or mystery, as when God imparts understanding of some truth to the intellect, or discloses to the soul something that he did, is doing, or is thinking of doing.[1]

2. We can affirm, therefore, the existence of two kinds of revelation: first, the disclosure of truths to the intellect (these are properly called intellectual notions or concepts); second, the manifestation of secrets. The term revelation is more properly applied to these latter than to the former. The first kind cannot strictly speaking be called revelations, since in them God bestows clear and manifest understanding of naked truths, not only of temporal but of spiritual objects as well. I desire to discuss these under the heading of revelations because of their close alliance and affinity with them, and to avoid a multiplication of divisions.

3. As a result we can divide revelations into two classes of apprehensions: One we shall call intellectual knowledge, and the other, manifestation of God's secrets and hidden mysteries. Beginning with intellectual knowledge, we will deal with these as briefly as possible in the following two chapters.

[1] Cf. C. 14. 15. Linking revelations with the spirit of prophecy corresponds to the Thomist outline; cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2-2. 171-174.

Book Two
Chapter 30

Interior words formally and supernaturally produced in the spirit. A warning about their danger and a necessary precaution against delusion.

1. The second kind of interior locution is called formal and is produced supernaturally in the spirit without the use of the senses. It comes independently of whether the spirit is recollected or not. I give it the name "formal locution" because another person formally utters it to the spirit without intervention of the soul. It is consequently far different from the successive locution. It differs not only by the fact that the spirit itself is not involved in the cause but also, as I say, in that it occurs sometimes when there is no recollection and the soul is far from any thought of what is spoken. In successive locutions such is not the case, for they always have to do with the subject of one's reflection.

2. Sometimes these words are very explicit and at other times not. They are often like ideas spoken to the spirit, either as a reply to something or in another manner. At times only one word is spoken, and then again more than one; sometimes the locutions are successive, like the others, for they may endure while the soul is being taught or while something is being discussed. All these words come without any intervention of the spirit because they are received as though one person were speaking to another. Daniel experienced this when, as he says, the angel spoke to him. The angel reasoned formally and successively in his spirit and also declared that he had come to teach him [Dn. 9:22].

3. When these words are no more than formal they bear little effect. Ordinarily they are given merely for the purpose of teaching or shedding light upon some truth. Accordingly the efficacy of their effect need be no more than required to attain their purpose. When God is the cause of the locution this effect is always produced in the soul, for it gives the soul both readiness to accomplish the command and clarity in understanding it. Yet these locutions do not always remove repugnance and difficulty, rather they sometimes augment it. God does this for the further instruction, humility, and good of the soul. God more frequently allows this repugnance when he orders something pertinent to a prelacy or to some other factor that will bring honor to the soul. And in matters of humility and lowliness he imparts more facility and readiness. We read in Exodus that when God ordered Moses to go to Pharaoh and obtain liberation for the people, Moses felt such repugnance that God had to command him three times and show him signs. Yet none of this was of any avail until God gave him Aaron to share in the honor [Ex. 3:10-22; 4:1-18].

4. On the other hand, when the locutions and communications are from the devil, it will happen that both ease and readiness will be given in matters involving prestige, whereas only repugnance will be felt for lowly tasks. God surely abhors the sight of souls inclined toward prelacies. Even when he gives a command in this regard and puts souls in office, he does not want them to be eager to govern. Formal locutions differ from the successive ones with respect to this readiness that God usually bestows. Successive locutions do not move the spirit as much as formal ones do, because the latter are more formal and the intellect does less on its own. Yet this does not prevent the successive locutions from sometimes producing a greater effect because of a greater communication between the divine Spirit and the human spirit. However, there is

considerable difference in the manner in which the effect is produced. The soul has no reason for doubting that these locutions come from another, since it is clearly aware that it does not form them itself, especially because it is not thinking on what is said to it. Even if it does happen to be pondering over this, it still experiences very clearly and distinctly that the locution is from another source.

5. A person should pay no more attention to all these formal locutions than to the other kind, for besides occupying the spirit with matters irrelevant to faith, the legitimate and proximate means to union with God, they will make one an easy victim for the devil's deceits. At times one can hardly discern the locutions spoken by a good spirit or those coming from a bad one. Since these locutions do not produce much effect, they can hardly be discerned by the effect. Sometimes those of the devil will be more effective in imperfect souls than the others will be in spiritual ones. Individuals should not do what these words tell them, nor should they pay attention to them - whether they be from a good or bad spirit. Nevertheless, these locutions should be manifested to a mature confessor or to a discreet and wise person who will give instructions and counsel and consider the appropriate thing to do. But a person's attitude toward them ought to be one of resignation and negation. If such an expert person cannot be found, it is better not to speak of these locutions to anyone, but simply pay no attention to them, for a soul can easily fall into the hands of some persons who will tear it down rather than build it up. Souls should not discuss these locutions with just anyone, since in so serious a matter being right or wrong is of such importance.

6. It should be kept in mind that individuals must never follow their own opinion about these locutions or do or admit anything told through them without ample advice and counsel from another. For in this matter of locutions strange and subtle deceits will occur - so much so that I believe a person who is not opposed to experiencing such things cannot help but be deceived in many of them.

[1] The material is actually found in chap. 15-18.

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b. DARK NIGHT

Book One

Chapter 14

[An explanation of the last verse of the first stanza.]

1. When this house of the senses was stilled (that is, mortified), its passions quenched, and its appetites calmed and put to sleep through this happy night of the purgation of the senses, the soul went out in order to begin its journey along the road of the spirit, which is that of proficients and which by another terminology is referred to as the illuminative way or the way of infused contemplation. On this road God himself pastures and refreshes the soul without any of its own discursive meditation or active help. ..

Such is the sensory night and purgation of the soul. For those who must afterward enter into the other more oppressive night of the spirit in order to reach the divine union of love - because not everyone but only a few usually reach this union - this night is ordinarily accompanied by burdensome trials and sensory temptations that last a long time, and with some longer than with others.[1]

An angel of Satan [2 Cor. 12:7], which is the spirit of fornication, is given to some to buffet their senses with strong and abominable temptations, and afflict their spirit with foul thoughts and very vivid images, which sometimes is a pain worse than death for them...

3. Sometimes another loathsome spirit, which Isaiah calls *spiritus vertiginis* [Is. 19:14], is sent to these souls, not for their downfall but to try them.[2] This spirit so darkens the senses that such souls are filled with a thousand scruples and perplexities, so intricate that such persons can never be content with anything, nor can their judgment receive the support of any counsel or idea...

4. God generally sends these storms and trials in this sensory night and purgation to those whom he will afterward put in the other night - although not all pass on to it - so that thus chastised and buffeted, the senses and faculties may gradually be exercised, prepared, and inured for the union with wisdom that will be granted there. For if a soul is not tempted, tried, and proved through temptations and trials, its senses will not be strengthened in preparation for wisdom. It is said therefore in Ecclesiasticus: *He who is*

not tempted, what does he know? And he who is not tried, what are the things he knows? [Ecclus. 34:9-10]. Jeremiah gives good testimony of this truth: You have chastised me, Lord, and I was instructed [Jer. 31:18].

And the most fitting kind of chastisement for entering into wisdom consists of the interior trials we mentioned, since they most efficaciously purge the senses of all the satisfaction and consolation the soul was attached to through natural weakness. By these trials it is truly humbled in preparation for its coming exaltation.

5... Those who have more considerable capacity and strength for suffering, God purges more intensely and quickly. But those who are very weak he keeps in this night for a long time. Their purgation is less intense and their temptations abated, and he frequently refreshes their senses to keep them from backsliding. They arrive at the purity of perfection late in life. And some of them never reach it entirely, for they are never wholly in the night or wholly out of it. Although they do not advance, God exercises them for short periods and on certain days in those temptations and acridities to preserve them in humility and self-knowledge; and at other times and seasons he comes to their aid with consolation, lest through loss of courage they return to their search for worldly consolation. God acts with other weaker souls as though he were showing himself and then hiding; he does this to exercise them in his love, for without these withdrawals they would not learn to reach him.

6. Yet, as is evident through experience, souls who will pass on to so happy and lofty a state as is the union of love must usually remain in these acridities and temptations for a long while no matter how quickly God leads them. It is time to begin our treatise on the second night.

[1] The general principles previously explained allow for a wide variety in the ways they are actually realized. Here John mentions three kinds of temptations, but there can be many others, and the degree of intensity will also differ.

[2] This is a spirit of confusion; cf. A. 2. 21. 11.

C. LIVING FLAME

St 1.1. – v. 3

Stanzas the Soul Recites in Intimate Union With God.

Walking in solitude, / Weeping my lot, / I take the roads that come, / Telling my urgent longings / to my only one, / through whom the blessings of my soul increase.

St 2, 5

1. In this stanza the soul proclaims how the three Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are the ones who effect this divine work of union in it. Thus the hand, the cautery, and the touch are in substance the same. The soul applies these terms to the Persons of the Trinity because of the effect each of the Persons produces. The cautery is the Holy Spirit, the hand is the Father, and the touch is the Son. The soul here magnifies the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, stressing the three admirable favors and blessings they produce in it, having changed its death to life, transforming it in the Trinity.

The first is the delightful wound. This it attributes to the Holy Spirit, and hence calls him a sweet cautery.

The second is the taste of eternal life. This it attributes to the Son, and thus calls him a delicate touch.

The third is transformation, a gift by which all debts are fully paid. This it attributes to the Father and hence calls him a gentle hand.

Although it names the three according to the properties of their effects, it speaks only to one, saying "You changed death to life," because all of them work together; and accordingly it attributes everything to one, and everything to all. The verse is:

O sweet cautery,

2. This cautery, as we mentioned, is the Holy Spirit. For as Moses declares in Deuteronomy, *Our Lord God is a consuming fire* [Dt. 4:24], that is, a fire of love that, being of infinite power, can inestimably consume and transform into itself the soul it touches. Yet he burns each soul according to its preparation. He will burn one more, another less, and this he does insofar as he desires, and how and when he desires.[1] ... As a result, in this union the soul calls the Holy Spirit a cautery. Since in a cautery the fire is more intense and fierce and produces a more singular effect than it does in other combustibles, the soul calls the act of this union a cautery in comparison with other acts of union, for it is the outcome of a fire so much more aflame than all other fires. Because the soul in this case is entirely transformed by the divine flame, it not only feels a cautery, but has become a cautery of blazing fire.

3. It is a wonderful thing and worth relating that, since this fire of God is so mighty it would consume a thousand worlds more easily than the fire of this earth would burn up a straw, it does not consume and destroy the soul in which it so burns. And it does not afflict it; rather, commensurate with the strength of the love, it divinizes and delights it, burning gently within it.

And this is so on account of the purity and perfection with which the spirit burns in the Holy Spirit. Similarly, as told in the Acts of the Apostles, this fire came mightily and enkindled the disciples [Acts 2:2-3], who, as St. Gregory affirms, burned interiorly and gently with love.[2] This is the Church's meaning when, as regards the same subject, she says: *Fire came from heaven, not burning but shining bright; not devouring but illumining*. [3] Since God's purpose in granting these communications is to exalt the soul, he does not weary and restrict it but enlarges and delights it; he does not blacken it and convert it to ashes as fire does to coal, but he brightens and enriches it. Hence it calls him a sweet cautery.

4. The happy soul that by great fortune reaches this cautery knows all things, tastes all things, does all it wishes, and prospers; no one prevails before it and nothing touches it. This is the soul of which the Apostle speaks: *The spiritual person judges all things and is judged by no one* [1 Cor. 2:15]. And again: *The spirit searches out all things, even the deep things of God* [1 Cor. 2:10]. This is love's trait: to scrutinize all the good things of the Beloved.

5. Oh, the great glory of you who have merited this supreme fire! It is certain that, although it does not consume you - for it has infinite force to consume and annihilate you - it does overwhelmingly consume you in glory. Do not wonder that God brings some souls to this high peak. The sun is distinguished by some of its marvelous effects; as the Holy Spirit says, it burns the mountains (that is, the saints) in three ways [Ecclus. 43:4].

Since this cautery is sweet, then, how delighted will be the soul touched by it! The soul desiring to speak of it does not do so, but keeps the esteem in its heart and only expresses exclamation vocally through the use of "O," saying: "O sweet cautery!"

O delightful wound!

d. SPIRITUAL CANTICLE

I, St 1, v. 1

Introduction

1. The soul at the beginning of this song has grown aware of her obligations and observed that life is short [Jb. 14:5], the path leading to eternal life constricted [Mt. 7:14], the just one scarcely saved [1 Pt. 4:18], the things of the world vain and deceitful [Eccl. 1:2], that all comes to an end and fails like falling water [2 Sm. 14:14], and that the time is uncertain, the accounting strict, perdition very easy, and salvation very difficult. She knows on the other hand of her immense indebtedness to God for having created her solely for himself, and that for this she owes him the service of her whole life; and because he redeemed her solely for himself she owes him every response of love. She knows, too, of the thousand other benefits by which she has been obligated to God from before the time of her birth, and that a good part of her life has vanished, that she must render an account of everything - of the beginning of her life as well as the later part - unto the last penny [Mt. 5:26], when God will search Jerusalem with lighted candles [Zeph. 1:12], and that it is already late - and the day far spent [Lk. 24:29] - to remedy so much evil and harm. She feels on the other hand that God is angry and hidden because she desired to forget him so in the midst of creatures. Touched with dread and interior sorrow of heart over so much loss and danger, renouncing all things, leaving aside all business, and not delaying a day or an hour, with desires and sighs pouring from her heart, wounded now with love for God, she begins to call her Beloved and say:

I went out calling you, but you were gone.

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2. St. Teresa of Avila

a. WAY OF PERFECTION

Chapter 28

Explains the nature of the prayer of recollection and sets down some ways of getting accustomed to this form of prayer.

1. Now consider what your Master says: Who art in heaven.[1] Do you think it's of little importance to know what heaven is and where you must seek your most sacred Father? Well, I tell you that for wandering minds it is very important not only to believe these truths but to strive to understand them by experience. Doing this is one of the ways of greatly slowing down the mind and recollecting the soul.

2. You already know that God is everywhere. It's obvious, then, that where the king is there is his court; in sum, wherever God is, there is heaven. Without a doubt you can believe that where His Majesty is present, all glory is present. Consider what St. Augustine says, that he sought Him in many places but found Him ultimately within himself.[2] Do you think it matters little for a soul with a wandering mind to understand this truth and see that there is no need to go to heaven in order to speak with one's Eternal Father or find delight in Him? Nor is there any need to shout. However softly we speak, He is near enough to hear us. Neither is there any need for wings to go to find Him.[3] All one need do is go into solitude and look at Him within oneself, and not turn away from so good a Guest but with great humility speak to Him as to a father. Beseech Him as you would a father; tell Him about your trials; ask Him for a remedy against them, realizing that you are not worthy to be His daughters.

3. Leave aside any of that faintheartedness that some persons have and think is humility. You see, humility doesn't consist in refusing a favor ...

Have nothing to do with this kind of humility, daughters, but speak with Him as with a father, or a brother, or a lord, or as with a spouse; sometimes in one way, at other times in another; He will teach you what you must do in order to please Him. Don't be foolish; take Him at His word. Since He is your Spouse, He will treat you accordingly. [Consider that it is well worthwhile for you to have understood this truth: that the Lord is within us, and that there we must be with Him.]

4. The intellect is recollected much more quickly with this kind of prayer even though it may be vocal; it is a prayer that brings with it many blessings. This prayer is called "recollection," because the soul collects its faculties together and enters within itself to be with its God. And its divine Master comes more quickly to teach it and give it the prayer of quiet than He would through any other method it might use. For centered there within itself, it can think about the Passion and represent the Son and offer Him to the Father and not tire the intellect by going to look for Him on Mount Calvary or in the garden or at the pillar.

5. Those who by such a method can enclose themselves within this little heaven of our soul, where the Maker of heaven and earth is present, and grow accustomed to refusing to be where the exterior senses in their distraction have gone or look in that direction should believe they are following an excellent path and that they will not fail to drink

water from the fount; for they will journey far in a short time. Their situation is like that of a person who travels by ship; with a little wind he reaches the end of his journey in a few days. But those who go by land take longer. [It's the path of heaven. I say "of heaven," because they are there in the palace of the King; they are not on earth and are more secure against many occasions.]

6. Those who know how to recollect themselves are already out to sea, as they say. For even though they may not have got completely away from land, they do what they can during that time to get free from it by recollecting their senses within. If the recollection is true, it is felt very clearly; for it produces some effect in the soul. I don't know how to explain it. Whoever has experienced it will understand; the soul is like one who gets up from the table after winning a game, for it already sees what the things of the world are. It rises up at the best time, as one who enters a fortified castle to be safe from enemies. There is a withdrawing of the senses from exterior things and a renunciation of them in such a way that, without one's realizing it, the eyes close so as to avoid seeing them and so that the sight might be more awake to things of the soul.

So, anyone who walks by this path keeps his eyes closed almost as often as he prays. This is a praiseworthy custom for many reasons. It is a striving so as not to look at things here below. This striving comes at the beginning; afterward, there's no need to strive; a greater effort is needed to open the eyes while praying. It seems the soul is aware of being strengthened and fortified at the expense of the body, that it leaves the body alone and weakened, and that it receives in this recollection a supply of provisions to strengthen it against the body.

7. And even though it isn't aware of this at the beginning, since the recollection is not so deep -- for there are greater and lesser degrees of recollection -- the soul should get used to this recollection; although in the beginning the body causes difficulty because it claims its rights without realizing that it is cutting off its own head by not surrendering. If we make the effort, practice this recollection for some days, and get used to it, the gain will be clearly seen; we will understand, when beginning to pray, that the bees are approaching and entering the beehive to make honey. And this recollection will be effected without our effort because the Lord has desired that, during the time the faculties are drawn inward, the soul and its will may merit to have this dominion. When the soul does no more than give a sign that it wishes to be recollected, the senses obey it and become recollected. Even though they go out again afterward, their having already surrendered is a great thing; for they go out as captives and subjects and do not cause the harm they did previously. And when the will calls them back again, they come more quickly, until after many of these entries the Lord wills that they rest entirely in perfect contemplation.

8. May what has been said be well understood; even though it seems obscure, it will be understood by anyone who desires to practice it.

Therefore, those who know how to recollect themselves are like those who travel by sea; and since it is important for us not to proceed so slowly, let us speak a little about how we should get accustomed to a method that's so good. These souls are safer from many occasions. The fire of divine love is more quickly enkindled when they blow a little with their intellects. Since they are close to the fire, a little spark will ignite and set everything ablaze. Because there is no impediment from outside, the soul is alone with

its God; it is well prepared for this enkindling. [I would like you to understand clearly this manner of prayer, which, as I have said, is called recollection.]

9. Well, let us imagine that within us is an extremely rich palace, built entirely of gold and precious stones; in sum, built for a lord such as this. Imagine, too, as is indeed so, that you have a part to play in order for the palace to be so beautiful; for there is no edifice as beautiful as is a soul pure and full of virtues. The greater the virtues the more resplendent the jewels. Imagine, also, that in this palace dwells this mighty King who has been gracious enough to become your Father; and that He is seated upon an extremely valuable throne, which is your heart.

10. This may seem trifling at the beginning; I mean, this image I've used in order to explain recollection. But the image may be very helpful -- to you especially -- I consider it impossible for us to pay so much attention to worldly things if we take the care to remember we have a Guest such as this within us, for we then see how lowly these things are next to what we possess within ourselves...

11... But what this soul deserved and who dwelt within it I did not understand because I had covered my eyes with the vanities of the world. For, in my opinion, if I had understood as I do now that in this little palace of my soul dwelt so great a King, I would not have left Him alone so often. I would have remained with Him at times and striven more so as not to be so unclean. But what a marvelous thing, that He who would fill a thousand worlds and many more with His grandeur would enclose Himself in something so small! [And so He wanted to enclose Himself in the womb of His most Blessed Mother.] In fact, since He is Lord He is free to do what He wants, and since He loves us He adapts Himself to our size.

12. So that the soul won't be disturbed in the beginning by seeing that it is too small to have something so great within itself, the Lord doesn't give it this knowledge until He enlarges it little by little and it has the capacity to receive what He will place within it. For this reason I say He is free to do what He wants since He has the power to make this palace a large one. The whole point is that we should give ourselves to Him with complete determination, and we should empty the soul in such a way that He can store things there or take them away as though it were His own property. And since His Majesty has the rights of ownership, let us not oppose Him. [Even here below guests in the house are a bother when we cannot tell them to leave.] And since He doesn't force our will, He takes what we give Him; but He doesn't give Himself completely until we give ourselves completely.

This fact is certain; and because it is so important, I bring it to your minds so often. He never works in the soul as He does when it is totally His without any obstacle, nor do I see how He could. He is the friend of all good order. Now, then, if we fill the palace with lowly people and trifles, how will there be room for the Lord with His court? He does enough by remaining just a little while in the midst of so much confusion.

13. Do you think, daughters, that He comes alone? Don't you see that His Son says, "who art in heaven"? Well, since He is such a King, certainly His court attendants would never leave Him alone, but they will always be with Him; and they beseech Him on our behalf since they are full of charity. Don't think that things in heaven are like they are here below; for if here below a lord or prelate, because of certain of his own aims or

because he wants to, favors someone, the envy of others is immediately stirred, and that poor person is hated without having done anything against them.

[1] Mt. 6:9.

[2] A reference either to pseudo-Augustinian *Soliloquies*, ch. 31; or to the *Confessions*, X, ch. 27. See *Life*, ch. 40, no. 6.

[3] Allusion to Ps. 55:7 {Ps. 54:7}.

b. INTERIOR CASTLE

4th Mansion, cc. 2; 3

Chapter 2

Continues on the same subject and explains through a comparison the nature of spiritual delight and how this is attained by not seeking it.

... 2. The experiences that I call spiritual delight in God, that I termed elsewhere the prayer of quiet,[3] are of a very different kind, as those of you who by the mercy of God have experience them will know. Let's consider, for a better understanding, that we see two founts with two water troughs. ...

3. These two troughs are filled with water in different ways; with one the water comes from far away through many aqueducts and the use of much ingenuity; with the other the source of the water is right there, and the trough fills without any noise. If the spring is abundant, as is this one we are speaking about, the water overflows once the trough is filled, forming a large stream. There is no need of any skill, nor does the building of aqueducts have to continue; but water is always flowing from the spring.

The water coming from the aqueducts is comparable, in my opinion, to the consolations I mentioned[4] that are drawn from meditation. For we obtain them through thoughts, assisting ourselves, using creatures to help our meditation, and tiring the intellect. Since, in the end, the consolation comes through our own efforts, noise is made when there has to be some replenishing of the benefits the consolation causes in the soul, as has been said.[5]

4. With this other fount, the water comes from its own source which is God. And since His Majesty desires to do so -- when He is pleased to grant some supernatural favor -- He produces this delight with the greatest peace and quiet and sweetness in the very interior part of ourselves. I don't know from where or how, nor is that happiness and delight experienced, as are earthly consolations, in the heart. I mean there is no similarity at the beginning, for afterward the delight fills everything; this water overflows through all the dwelling places and faculties until reaching the body. This is why I said[6] that it begins in God and ends in ourselves. For, certainly, as anyone who may have experienced it will see, the whole exterior man enjoys this spiritual delight and sweetness.

5. I was now thinking, while writing this, that the verse mentioned above, *Dilatasti cor meum*, [7] says the heart was expanded. I don't think the experience is something, as I say, that rises from the heart, but from another part still more interior, as from something deep. I think this must be the center of the soul, as I later came to

understand and will mention at the end.[8] For certainly I see secrets within ourselves that have often caused me to marvel. And how many more there must be! Oh, my Lord and my God, how great are Your grandeurs! We go about here below like foolish little shepherds, for while it seems that we are getting some knowledge of You it must amount to no more than nothing; for even in our own selves there are great secrets that we don't understand. I say "no more than nothing" because I'm comparing it to the many, many secrets that are in You, not because the grandeurs we see in You are not extraordinary; and that includes those we can attain knowledge of through Your works.

6. To return to the verse, what I think is helpful in it for explaining this matter is the idea of expansion. It seems that since that heavenly water begins to rise from this spring I'm mentioning that is deep within us, it swells and expands our whole interior being, producing ineffable blessings; nor does the soul even understand what is given to it there. It perceives a fragrance, let us say for now, as though there were in that interior depth a brazier giving off sweet-smelling perfumes. No light is seen, nor is the place seen where the brazier is; but the warmth and the fragrant fumes spread through the entire soul and even often enough, as I have said,[9] the body shares in them. See now that you understand me; no heat is felt, nor is there the scent of any perfume, for the experience is more delicate than an experience of these things; but I use the examples only so as to explain it to you. And let persons who have not experienced these things understand that truthfully they do happen and are felt in this way, and the soul understands them in a manner clearer than is my explanation right now. This spiritual delight is not something that can be imagined, because however diligent our efforts we cannot acquire it. The very experience of it makes us realize that it is not of the same metal as we ourselves but fashioned from the purest gold of the divine wisdom...

... 8. It seems clear to me the will must in some way be united with God's will. But it is in the effects and deeds following afterward that one discerns the true value of prayer; there is no better crucible for testing prayer. It is quite a great favor from our Lord if the person receiving the favor recognizes it, and a very great one if he doesn't turn back. .

You will at once desire, my daughters, to obtain this prayer; and you are right, for, as I have said,[11] the soul will never understand the favors the Lord is granting there or the love with which He is drawing it nearer to Himself. It is good to try to understand how we can obtain such a favor; so I am going to tell you what I have understood about this.

9. Let's leave aside the times when our Lord is pleased to grant it because He wants to and for no other reason. He knows why; we don't have to meddle in this. After you have done what should be done by those in the previous dwelling places; humility! humility! By this means the Lord allows Himself to be conquered with regard to anything we want from Him. The first sign for seeing whether or not you have humility is that you do not think you deserve these favors and spiritual delights from the Lord or that you will receive them in your lifetime.

You will ask me how then one can obtain them without seeking them. I answer that for the following reasons there is no better way than the one I mentioned, of not striving for them. First, because the initial thing necessary for such favors is to love God without self-interest. Second, because there is a slight lack of humility in thinking that for our miserable services something so great can be obtained. Third, because the authentic preparation for these favors on the part of those of us who, after all, have offended Him

is the desire to suffer and imitate the Lord rather than to have spiritual delights. Fourth, because His Majesty is not obliged to give them to us as He is to give us glory if we keep His commandments. (Without these favors we can be saved, and He knows better than we ourselves what is fitting for us and who of us truly loves Him. This is certain, I know. And I know persons who walk by the path of love as they ought to walk, that is, only so as to serve their Christ crucified; not only do these persons refuse to seek spiritual delights from Him or to desire them but they beseech Him not to give them these favors during their lifetime. This is true.)

...10. We belong to Him, daughters. Let Him do whatever He likes with us, bring us wherever He pleases. I really believe that whoever humbles himself and is detached (I mean in fact because the detachment and humility must not be just in our thoughts -- for they often deceive us -- but complete) will receive the favor of this water from the Lord and many other favors that we don't know how to desire. May He be forever praised and blessed, amen.

[1] In ch. 1, nos. 4-6.

[2] See ch. 1, no. 5.

[3] See *Life*, chs. 14-15.

[4] In III, ch. 2, nos. 9-10; IV, ch. 1, nos. 4-6.

[5] In ch. 1, nos. 5, 6, 10.

[6] In ch. 1, no. 4.

[7] Ps. 119:32 {Ps. 118:32}. See ch. 1, no. 5.

[8] In VII, ch. 1, nos. 3, 7, 10; ch. 2, nos. 3, 9.

[9] In no. 4.

[10] In ch. 1, no. 1, she says fourteen years. She finished the first redaction of her *Life* in 1562 and is writing these pages in the latter part of 1577.

[11] In no. 5.

Interior Castle:

IV Mansion

Chapter 3

Deals with the prayer of recollection which for the most part the Lord gives before the prayer just mentioned. Tells about its effects and about those that come from that spiritual delight, given by the Lord, that was discussed in the previous chapter.

...2. They say that the soul enters within itself and, at other times, that it rises above itself. [2] ... Once the great King, who is in the center dwelling place of this castle, sees their good will, He desires in His wonderful mercy to bring them back to Him. Like a good shepherd, with a whistle so gentle that even they themselves almost fail to hear it, He makes them recognize His voice and stops them from going so far astray so that they will return to their dwelling place. And this shepherd's whistle has such power that they abandon the exterior things in which they were estranged from Him and enter the castle.

3. I don't think I've ever explained it as clearly as I have now. When God grants the favor it is a great help to seek Him within where He is found more easily and in a way more beneficial to us than when sought in creatures, as St. Augustine says after having looked

for Him in many places.[4] Don't think this recollection is acquired by the intellect striving to think about God within itself, or by the imagination imagining Him within itself. Such efforts are good and an excellent kind of meditation because they are founded on a truth, which is that God is within us. But this isn't the prayer of recollection because it is something each one can do -- with the help of God, as should be understood of everything.

But what I'm speaking of comes in a different way. Sometimes before one begins to think of God, these people are already inside the castle. I don't know in what way or how they heard their shepherd's whistle. It wasn't through the ears, because nothing is heard. But one noticeably senses a gentle drawing inward, as anyone who goes through this will observe, for I don't know how to make it clearer. It seems to me I have read where it was compared to a hedgehog curling up or a turtle drawing into a shell.[5] (The one who wrote this example must have understood the experience well.) But these creatures draw inward whenever they want. In the case of this recollection, it doesn't come when we want it but when God wants to grant us the favor. I for myself hold that when His Majesty grants it, He does so to persons who are already beginning to despise the things of the world. I don't say that those in the married state do so in deed, for they cannot, but in desire; for He calls such persons especially so that they might be attentive to interior matters. So I believe that if we desire to make room for His Majesty, He will give not only this but more, and give it to those whom He begins to call to advance further.

4. May whoever experiences this within himself praise God greatly because it is indeed right to recognize the favor and give thanks, for doing so will dispose one for other greater favors. And this recollection is a preparation for being able to listen, as is counseled in some books,[6] so that the soul instead of striving to engage in discourse strives to remain attentive and aware of what the Lord is working in it. If His Majesty has not begun to absorb us, I cannot understand how the mind can be stopped. There's no way of doing so without bringing about more harm than good, although there has been a lengthy controversy on this matter among some spiritual persons. For my part I must confess my lack of humility, but those in favor of stopping the mind have never given me a reason for submitting to what they say. One of them tried to convince me with a certain book by the saintly Friar Peter of Alcántara [7] -- for I believe he is a saint - - to whom I would submit because I know that he knew. And we read it together, and he says the same thing I do; although not in my words. But it is clear in what he says that love must be already awakened. It could be that I'm mistaken, but I have the following reasons.

5. First, in this work of the spirit the one who thinks less and has less desire to act does more. What we must do is beg like the needy poor before a rich and great emperor, and then lower our eyes and wait with humility. When through His secret paths it seems we understand that He hears us, then it is good to be silent since He has allowed us to remain near Him; and it will not be wrong to avoid working with the intellect -- if we can work with it, I mean. But if we don't yet know whether this King has heard or seen us, we mustn't become fools. The soul does become quite a fool when it tries to induce this prayer, and it is left much drier; and the imagination perhaps becomes more restless through the effort made not to think of anything. But the Lord desires that we beseech Him and call to mind that we are in His presence; He knows what is suitable for us. I cannot persuade myself to use human diligence in a matter in which it seems His

Majesty has placed a limit, and I want to leave the diligence to Him. What He did not reserve to Himself are many other efforts we can make with His help, such as: penance, good deeds, and prayer -- insofar as our wretchedness can do these things.

6. The second reason is that these interior works are all gentle and peaceful; doing something arduous would cause more harm than good. I call any force that we might want to use "something arduous;" for example, it would be arduous to hold one's breath. Leave the soul in God's hands, let Him do whatever He wants with it, with the greatest resignation to the will of God.

The third reason is that the very care used not to think of anything will perhaps rouse the mind to think very much.

The fourth reason is that what is most essential and pleasing to God is that we be mindful of His honor and glory and forget ourselves and our own profit and comfort and delight. How is a person forgetful of self if he is so careful not to stir or even to allow his intellect or desires to be stirred to a longing for the greater glory of God, or if he rests in what he already has? When His Majesty desires the intellect to stop, He occupies it in another way and gives it a light so far above what we can attain that it remains absorbed. Then, without knowing how, the intellect is much better instructed than it was through all the soul's efforts not to make use of it. Since God gave us our faculties that we might work with them and in this work they find their reward, there is no reason to charm them; we should let them perform their task until God appoints them to another greater one.

7. What I understand to be most fitting for the soul the Lord has desired to put in this dwelling place is that which has been said.^[8] And without any effort or noise the soul should strive to cut down the rambling of the intellect -- but not suspend either it or the mind; it is good to be aware that one is in God's presence and of who God is. If what it feels within itself absorbs it, well and good. But let it not strive to understand the nature of this recollection, for it is given to the will. Let the soul enjoy it without any endeavors other than some loving words, for even though we may not try in this prayer to go without thinking of anything, I know that often the intellect will be suspended, even though for only a very brief moment.

8. But as I said elsewhere^[9] the reason why in this kind of prayer -- that is, the kind that is like the flowing spring in which the water does not come through aqueducts -- the soul restrains itself or is restrained is its realization that it doesn't understand what it desires; and so the mind wanders from one extreme to the other, like a fool unable to rest in anything. (I am referring to the kind of prayer this dwelling place began with, for I have joined the prayer of recollection, which I should have mentioned first, with this one. The prayer of recollection is much less intense than the prayer of spiritual delight from God that I mentioned. But it is the beginning through which one goes to the other; for in the prayer of recollection, meditation, or the work of the intellect, must not be set aside.) The will has such deep rest in its God that the clamor of the intellect is a terrible bother to it. There is no need to pay any attention to this clamor, for doing so would make the will lose much of what it enjoys. But one should leave the intellect go and surrender oneself into the arms of love, for His Majesty will teach the soul what it must do at that point. Almost everything lies in finding oneself unworthy of so great a good and in being occupied with giving thanks.

9. In order to deal with the prayer of recollection I postponed mention of the effects or signs in souls to whom God, our Lord, gives this prayer of quiet. What an expansion or dilation of the soul is may be clearly understood from the example of a fount whose water doesn't overflow into a stream because the fount itself is constructed of such material that the more water there is flowing into it the larger the trough becomes. So it seems is the case with this prayer and many other marvels that God grants to the soul, for He enables and prepares it so that it can keep everything within itself. Hence this interior sweetness and expansion can be verified in the fact that the soul is not as tied down as it was before in things pertaining to the service of God, but has much more freedom. Thus, in not being constrained by the fear of hell (because although there is even greater fear of offending God it loses servile fear here), this soul is left with great confidence that it will enjoy Him. The fear it used to have of doing penance and losing its health has disappeared, and it now thinks it will be able to do all things in God^[10] and has greater desire for penance than previously. The fear it used to have of trials it now seems to be tempered. Its faith is more alive; it knows that if it suffers trials for God, His Majesty will give it the grace to suffer them with patience. Sometimes it even desires them because there also remains a strong will to do something for God. Since its knowledge of God's grandeur grows, it considers itself to be more miserable. Because it has already experienced spiritual delight from God, it sees that worldly delights are like filth. It finds itself withdrawing from them little by little, and it is more master of itself for so doing. In sum, there is an improvement in all the virtues. It will continue to grow if it doesn't turn back now to offending God; because if it does, then everything will be lost however high on the summit the soul may be. Nor should it be understood that if God grants this favor once or twice to a soul all these good effects will be caused. It must persevere in receiving them, for in this perseverance lies all our good.

[1] She spoke of the prayer of recollection in various places: *Life*, chs. 14-15; *Way of Perfection*, chs. 28-29; *Spiritual Testimonies*, 59, no. 3. But Teresa is not consistent in her terminology. Sometimes she speaks of a recollection that is not infused (in the *Way of Perfection*); at other times of a recollection that is infused: in the *Life*, using the term indiscriminately with "quiet" to designate the first degree of infused prayer, and in the *Spiritual Testimonies* to designate the first faint experience of mystical prayer that prepares the way for the prayer of quiet. See no. 8 of this chapter.

[2] She is alluding to works such as Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, IX, ch. 7; and Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion*, III, ch. 41. See *Life*, ch. 12, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7; ch. 22, nos. 13, 18.

[3] In I, ch. 2, nos. 4, 12, 15.

[4] In *Confessions*, X, ch. 27; or in the pseudo-Augustine's *Soliloquies*, ch. 31. See *Life*, ch. 40, no. 6; *Way of Perfection*, ch. 28, no. 2.

[5] In Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, VI, ch. 4.

[6] See Laredo's *Ascent of Mount Sion*, III, ch. 27.

[7] Treatise on *Prayer and Meditation* by Granada and at that time attributed to St. Peter of Alcántara.

[8] In nos. 4-6; see ch. 2, no. 9.

[9] Perhaps she is referring to a parallel passage in the *Way of Perfection* ch. 31, nos. 3, 7.

[10] Allusion to Ph. 4:13.

[11] In the book of *Foundations*, ch. 6. She will insist on this again in VI, ch. 7, no. 13.

[12] See *Life*, chs. 16-17, where Teresa dwells at greater length on this *sleep of the faculties* as though dealing with a special stage in the degrees of mystical prayer.

[13] Teresa makes a pun here with the Spanish words *arrobamiento* (rapture) and *abobamiento* (foolishness).

[14] In nos. 11-12.

7th Mansion,
The Interior Castle: VII: 2
Chapter 2

Continues on the same subject. Explains the difference between spiritual union and spiritual marriage. Describes this difference through some delicate comparisons.

1. Now then Let us deal with the divine and spiritual marriage, although this great favor does not come to its perfect fullness as long as we live; for if we were to withdraw from God, this remarkable blessing would be lost.

The first time the favor is granted, His Majesty desires to show Himself to the soul through an imaginative vision of His most sacred humanity so that the soul will understand and not be ignorant of receiving this sovereign gift. With other persons the favor will be received in another form. With regard to the one of whom we are speaking, the Lord represented Himself to her, just after she had received Communion, in the form of shining splendor, beauty, and majesty, as He was after His resurrection, and told her that now it was time that she consider as her own what belonged to Him and that He would take care of what was hers, and He spoke other words destined more to be heard than to be mentioned.[1]

2. It may seem that this experience was nothing new since at other times the Lord had represented Himself to the soul in such a way. The experience was so different that it left her indeed stupefied and frightened: first, because this vision came with great force; second, because of the words the Lord spoke to her; and also because in the interior of her soul, where He represented Himself to her, she had not seen other visions except the former one.[2] You must understand that there is the greatest difference between all the previous visions and those of this dwelling place. Between the spiritual betrothal and the spiritual marriage the difference is as great as that which exists between two who are betrothed and two who can no longer be separated.[3]

3. I have already said[4] that even though these comparisons are used, because there are no others better suited to our purpose, it should be understood that in this state there is no more thought of the body than if the soul were not in it, but one's thought is only of the spirit. In the spiritual marriage, there is still much less remembrance of the body because this secret union takes place in the very interior center of the soul, which must be where God Himself is, and in my opinion there is no need of any door for Him to enter. I say there is no need of any door because everything that has been said up until now seems to take place by means of the senses and faculties, and this appearance of the humanity of the Lord must also.[5] But that which comes to pass in the union of the spiritual marriage is very different. The Lord appears in this center of the soul, not in an imaginative vision but in an intellectual one, although more delicate than those mentioned,[6] as He appeared to the apostles without entering through the door when He said to them *pax vobis*.[7] What God communicates here to the soul in an instant is a secret so great and a favor so sublime -- and the delight the soul experiences so extreme -- that I don't know what to compare it to. I can say only that the Lord wishes to reveal for that moment, in a more sublime manner than through any spiritual vision or taste, the glory of heaven. One can say no more -- insofar as can be understood -- than that the soul, I mean the spirit, is made one with God. For since His Majesty is also spirit, He has wished to show His love for us by giving some persons understanding of the point to

which this love reaches so that we might praise His grandeur. For He has desired to be so joined with the creature that, just as those who are married cannot be separated,[8] He doesn't want to be separated from the soul.

4. The spiritual betrothal is different, for the two often separate. And the union is also different because, even though it is the joining of two things into one, in the end the two can be separated and each remains by itself. We observe this ordinarily, for the favor of union with the Lord passes quickly, and afterward the soul remains without that company; I mean, without awareness of it. In this other favor from the Lord, no. The soul always remains with its God in that center. Let us say that the union is like the joining of two wax candles to such an extent that the flame coming from them is but one, or that the wick, the flame, and the wax are all one. But afterward one candle can be easily separated from the other and there are two candles; the same holds for the wick. In the spiritual marriage the union is like what we have when rain falls from the sky into a river or fount; all is water, for the rain that fell from heaven cannot be divided or separated from the water of the river. Or it is like what we have when a little stream enters the sea, there is no means of separating the two. Or, like the bright light entering a room through two different windows; although the streams of light are separate when entering the room, they become one.

5. Perhaps this is what St. Paul means in saying He that is joined or united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him,[9] and is referring to this sovereign marriage, presupposing that His Majesty has brought the soul to it through union. And he also says: *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*.^[10] The soul as well, I think, can say these words now because this state is the place where the little butterfly we mentioned^[11] dies, and with the greatest joy because its life is now Christ.

6. And that its life is Christ is understood better, with the passing of time, by the effects this life has. Through some secret aspirations the soul understands clearly that it is God who gives life to our soul. These aspirations come very, very often in such a living way that they can in no way be doubted. The soul feels them very clearly even though they are indescribable. But the feeling is so powerful that sometimes the soul cannot avoid the loving expressions they cause, such as: O Life of my life! Sustenance that sustains me! and things of this sort. For from those divine breasts where it seems God is always sustaining the soul there flow streams of milk bringing comfort to all the people of the castle. It seems the Lord desires that in some manner these others in the castle may enjoy the great deal the soul is enjoying and that from that full-flowing river, where this tiny fount is swallowed up, a spurt of that water will sometimes be directed toward the sustenance of those who in corporeal things must serve these two who are wed. Just as a distracted person would feel this water if he were suddenly bathed in it, and would be unable to avoid feeling it, so are these operations recognized, and even with greater certitude. For just as a great gush of water could not reach us if it didn't have a source, as I have said, so it is understood clearly that there is Someone in the interior depths who shoots these arrows and gives life to this life, and that there is a Sun in the interior of the soul from which a brilliant light proceeds and is sent to the faculties. The soul, as I have said,^[12] does not move from that center nor is its peace lost; for the very One who gave peace to the apostles when they were together^[13] can give it to the soul.

7. It has occurred to me that this greeting of the Lord must have amounted to much more than is apparent from its sound. So, too, with the Lord's words to the glorious

Magdalene that she go in peace.[14] Since His words are effected in us as deeds, they must have worked in such a manner in those souls already disposed that everything corporeal in the soul was taken away and it was left in pure spirit. Thus the soul could be joined in this heavenly union with the uncreated Spirit. For it is very certain that in emptying ourselves of all that is creature and detaching ourselves from it for the love of God, the same Lord will fill us with Himself. And thus, while Jesus our Lord was once praying for His apostles -- I don't remember where -- He said that they were one with the Father and with Him, just as Jesus Christ our Lord is in the Father and the Father is in Him.[15] I don't know what greater love there can be than this. And all of us are included here, for His Majesty said: *I ask not only for them but for all those who also will believe in me;* and He says: *I am in them.*[16]

8. Oh, God help me, how true these words are! And how well they are understood by the soul who is in this prayer and sees for itself. How well we would all understand them if it were not for our own fault, since the words of Jesus Christ, our King and Lord, cannot fail.[17] But since we fail by not disposing ourselves and turning away from all that can hinder this light, we do not see ourselves in this mirror that we contemplate, where our image is engraved.

9. Well, to return to what we were saying.[18] The Lord puts the soul in this dwelling of His, which is the center of the soul itself. They say that the empyreal heaven where the Lord is does not move as do the other heavens; similarly, it seems, in the soul that enters here there are none of those movements that usually take place in the faculties and the imagination and do harm to the soul, nor do these stirrings take away its peace.

It seems I'm saying that when the soul reaches this state in which God grants it this favor, it is sure of its salvation and safe from falling again. I do not say such a thing, and wherever I so speak that it seems the soul is secure, this should be taken to mean as long as the divine Majesty keeps it in His hand and it does not offend Him. At least I know certainly that the soul doesn't consider itself safe even though it sees itself in this state and the state has lasted for some years. But it goes about with much greater fear than before, guarding itself from any small offense against God and with the strongest desires to serve Him, as will be said further on,[19] and with habitual pain and confusion at seeing the little it can do and the great deal to which it is obliged.

This pain is no small cross but a very great penance. For when this soul does penance, the delight will be greater in the measure that the penance is greater... Even though I have mentioned elsewhere[20] the great pain this lack causes, the pain is much more intense here. All these things must come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted. The tree that is beside the running water is fresher and gives more fruit. What is there, then, to marvel at in the desires this soul has since its true spirit has become one with the heavenly water we mentioned?[21]

10. Now then, to return to what I was saying,[22] it should not be thought that the faculties, senses, and passions are always in this peace; the soul is, yes. But in those other dwelling places, times of war, trial, and fatigue are never lacking; however, they are such that they do not take the soul from its place and its peace; that is, as a rule.

This center of our soul, or this spirit, is something so difficult to explain, and even believe in, that I think, Sisters, I'll not give you the temptation to disbelieve what I say,

for I do not know how to explain this center. That there are trials and sufferings and that at the same time the soul is in peace is a difficult thing to explain. I want to make one or more comparisons for you. Please God, I may be saying something through them; but if not, I know that I'm speaking the truth in what I say.

11. The King is in His palace and there are many wars in his kingdom and many painful things going on, but not on that account does he fail to be at his post. So here, even though in those other dwelling places there is much tumult and there are many poisonous creatures and the noise is heard, no one enters that center dwelling place and makes the soul leave. Nor do the things the soul hears make it leave; even though they cause it some pain, the suffering is not such as to disturb it and take away its peace. The passions are now conquered and have a fear of entering the center because they would go away from there more subdued.

Our entire body may ache; but if the head is sound, the head will not ache just because the body aches.

I am laughing to myself over these comparisons for they do not satisfy me, but I don't know any others. You may think what you want; what I have said is true.

[1] See her corresponding account in *Spir. Test.*, 31.

[2] The one referred to in ch. 1, nos. 6-7.

[3] Teresa first wrote: "between two who have consummated marriage." She then changed it to the present reading.

[4] In V, ch. 4, no. 3.

[5] See no. 1; *Spir. Test.*, 31.

[6] See VI, ch. 8.

[7] Jn. 20:19-21. See V, ch. 1, no. 12.

[8] Again she changed what she had previously written, "those who have consummated marriage," to the present reading.

[9] 1 Co. 6:17. This text from St. Paul and the application were written between the lines. Teresa first wrote and then crossed out: "... we are made one spirit with God if we love Him; he doesn't say that we are joined with Him ... but are made one spirit with Him."

[10] Ph. 1:21. Teresa cited the passage in her own form of Latin: *Mi bivere Cristus es mori lucrum*.

[11] See V, ch. 3, note 1.

[12] In no. 4.

[13] Jn. 20:19-21.

[14] Lk. 7:50.

[15] Jn. 17:21.

[16] Jn. 17:20, 23.

[17] Allusion to Lk. 21:33.

[18] In no. 3.

[19] In ch. 3, nos. 3 and 6; ch. 4, no. 2.

[20] Probably in V, ch. 2, nos. 7-11.

[21] In no. 4; see also IV, ch. 2.

[22] In no. 9.

3. Insights of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange OP

DIVINE 'TOUCHES' ³

St. John of the Cross has described these favors at greater length in his *Dark Night of the Soul* [II, c. 23] and in *The Living Flame of Love* [st. 2, v. 3]. In his opinion, they are obtained only by the practice of the despoilment and detachment from all creatures. By one of these touches of love, the soul is rewarded for all its works and sufferings. The substance of God which is identified with His creative, preserving and sanctifying action, touches with the substance of the soul and makes itself felt as divine and sovereign. This teaching clarifies the doctrine that the mystical state is the normal completion of Christian perfection, provided it is distinguished from certain accessory facts which sometimes accompany it. But, to establish the truth of this doctrine we must guard against several confusions which contemporary writers in their desire to return to traditional teaching.

The so-called “substantial words” are, therefore, a powerful means of union with God ... Happy the soul to which God addresses them. God’s words are living flames in purified souls [*Living Flame*, st. 1, 1].

There is also a 4th kind of favor which frequently accompanies infused contemplation, that is, DIVINE TOUCHES, which are imprinted in the will and which ‘react in the intellect’... they give us a very lofty and sweet intellectual penetration of God. These “touches” are thereby attached to ‘particular and distinct contemplation’ [cf. ASCENT II, c. 32]. They do not depend on the activity of the soul or on its meditations, although these prepare the soul for them.

These Divine touches are occasionally so profound and intense that they seem imprinted in the very substance of the soul. God, in fact, who preserves the very substance of the soul in existence by virtual contact, which is creation continued [I, q. 8, aa. 1-3I q. 43m a. 3; q. 104 a. 1. 2; q. 105, a. 3, 4], produces, preserves and increases sanctifying grace therein, whence the virtues infused into the faculties [i-II, q. 110, aa. 3, 4] spring.

... He also moves these faculties either by proposing an object to them, or by applying them to the exercise of their acts, and that from within:

... God Himself, Who justifies the impious, touches the soul causing grace in it . The human mind, then, in some way touches God by knowing and loving... At the moment of justification, there is a divine action causing the very essence of the soul to pass from spiritual death to life producing in it sanctifying grace, which is eternal life begun. The mystical favor of which we are speaking makes us, in a way, take cognizance of this divine influx into the very depths of the spirit, which notably deepens the work done in us by God at the moment of our conversion...I-II, q. 113, 8; De Ver., q. 28, a. 3]. It is as if the Author of Grace deepened anew, but much more profoundly, the furrow in which the divine side is to grow....

³ Fr. R. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, OP, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*. St. Louis /London 1945, pp. 454-460, *passim*

The divine touch of which we are speaking is a supernatural motion of this type, but one of the most profound type. It is exercised in the very depths of the will and the intellect, where these faculties take root in the substance of the soul where they arise.

In truth, our will is, in a way, infinite in its profundity; for this reason created things cannot exercise an invincible attraction on it. It is free to love them or not only God, seen face to face infallibly attracts it and captivates it, even to the very well-spring of its energies [cf. I-II, 10, 2].

These so-called DIVINE TOUCHES affect this basis of the will and of the intellect. The very substance of the soul experiences things only through these faculties. But God, Who is closer to the soul than it is to itself, inasmuch as He preserves it in existence, can from within touch and move the very foundation of the faculty by a spiritual contact which reveals itself as divine.

This DEPTH is also called the SUMMIT in relation to sensible things, according as they are considered either as exterior or as inferior to it. With this in mind, we understand what St. John of the Cross says on this subject:

... Nothing is more calculated to dissipate this delicate knowledge than the intervention of the natural spirit. Since it is a question of sweet supernatural communication, it is useless to try to comprehend it accurately, that that is impossible; the understanding has only to accept it. If, on the contrary the soul seeks to provoke it or desires it, it may happen that what it conceives comes from itself, and thereby gives the devil the opportunity of presenting counterfeit knowledge ... Passive acceptance in humility, is, therefore incumbent on the soul. God grants these favors according to His good pleasure, and it is the humble and thoroughly detached soul that receives God's preference. By acting in this way, the progress of the soul suffers no interruption, and such knowledge serves efficaciously to advance it. These are TOUCHES OF UNION serving to unite the soul passively to God... [Ascent II, c. 32].

St. John of the Cross has described these favors at greater length in *The Dark Night of the Soul* [II, c. 23] and in the *Living Flame of Love* [St. 2, v. 3]. In his opinion, they are obtained only by the practice of despoilment and detachment from all creatures. By one of these TOUCHES OF LOVE the soul is rewarded for all its work and sufferings. The substance of God, which is identical with His creative, preserving and sanctifying action, TOUCHES THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SOUL AND MAKES ITSELF FELT AS DIVINE AND SOVEREIGN. This teaching clarifies the doctrine that the mystical state is the normal completion of Christian perfection, provided it is distinguished from accessory facts which sometimes accompany it...

The accessory phenomena that some times are evident in the mystics, chiefly accompany that influence of the Holy Spirit ON THE FACULTIES – rather than what TOUCHES THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SOUL. This wholly intimate action of God on the DEPTHS OF THE SOUL is found principally in the transforming union, a state in which, as a rule, ecstasies have disappeared.

It is IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL that everything ends, and in a sense, it is there that everything began, without our having been aware of it. This influence of the Holy Spirit ON THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL in fact, precedes, without our knowing it, the influence which the Holy Spirit exercises more manifestly on the FACULTIES. The completely

purified soul experiences this action IN THE VERY DEPTHS when it has at length entered the sanctuary where God dwells and operates from the very moment of justification and conversion.

In the opinion of Tauler, Louis de Blois, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa Interior Castle, 7th Mansion, c. 2], who have spoken frequently of this DEPTH OF THE SOUL, at the end of the passive purification of the spirit, the soul experiences without seeing it this SUBSTANTIAL ACTION OF GOD in which everything has its beginning, at which everything terminates and beyond which it seems that there is nothing.

This is why it is called THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL - in relation to sensible things considered as exterior – is called THE SUMMIT OF THE SPIRIT in relation to these same things considered inferior.

[Louis de Blois– *Institutio spiritualis*, c. 12, 2 - puts it this way:]

...The soul becomes fit to contemplate with calm, simplicity, and delights, without any gross images, and without any intellectual illusions THE ABYSS OF THE DIVINITY! It is then turned entirely toward God by pure love, and an incomprehensible light illuminating to speak, THE DEPTHS OF ITS ESSENCE, the EYE OF THE REASON and the INTELLECT is, as it were dazzled by it... The soul then by experience knows that God is infinitely superior to every image ... and to all that the intellect can comprehend... It loses itself in the solitary and obscure immensity of the divinity – BUT TO LOSE ITSELF IN THIS WAY IS TO FIND ITSELF AGAIN (this whole chapter is a summary of Tauler).

[St. John of the Cross puts it this way:]

- Flame, st. 1, v. 3: THE MOST PROFOUND CENTER OF THE SOUL – it is in the substance of the soul, inaccessible to the senses, and the devil, that this JOY of the Holy Spirit develops. He alone is capable, IN THE CENTER OF THE SOUL AND ITS INTIMATE DEPTHS of making it act and operate without the intervention of the sense.' (The activity of the soul tends toward this CENTER as a stone toward the center of the earth; and it MORE CLOSELY APPROACHES IT IN PROPORTION AS ITS CHARITY IS MORE INTENSE – cf. *Motus*).

The Canticle, [P. I, st. 1, v. 1]: THE WORD, THE SON OF GOD, TOGETHER WITH THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, IS ESSENTIALLY HIDDEN IN THE INTIMATE BEING OF THE SOUL. whence it must be concluded that if the soul wishes to find the Spouse, it must live detached by affection and will from all creatures, enter into profound recollection and act toward the world as if it did not exist.]

The three traditional Ways [Purgative, Illuminative, Unitive] - should not be confused with what is only an imperfect form of them. These 3 ways are often lessened because writers describe them merely from the outside. St John of the Cross gazed upon them from above, and this is why he penetrated to their very depths. He must have received the Gift of Wisdom in a very high degree in order to have discussed with so great mastery such deep supernatural things, for THE LIGHT OF LIFE illumines all the pages of his work.

DIVINE TOUCHES must not be likened to revelations and visions, which are, properly speaking, extraordinary and as it were, exterior facts.... It would also be a gross

error to confound these divine TOUCHES, this contact which has been called substantial, with the emotions of the sensitive part; and likewise it would be a mistake to confuse the TASTES which St. Teresa mentions with the consolations acquired by meditation. ...The desire to be too precise in this matter leads to division.

... It is all the mysticism of the ever-lasting sacrifice of the Lamb on the Cross and on our altars, and of the whole sacred liturgy around it ... We do not believe that this assertion would be contradicted by true mystics who experience the higher life to which every Christian should aspire...

4. St. PAUL of the CROSS

THE [PASSIONIST] "DEPTHS" OF ONE'S SOUL

[CP]⁴

Introduction:

In the personal writings of so many mystics [e.g. St. Paul of the Cross; St. John of the Cross; Tauler, OP; St. Gaspar Bertoni; Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, OP] - there is brought up the rather strange sounding phenomenon, of "mystical touches". In order to understand St. Gaspar Bertoni's mystical expression: In the depths of one's soul, one finds God! This may be further enlightened by reflecting on the traditional teaching in this regard:

a. MYSTICAL "TOUCHES":

These phenomena accompany elevated infused contemplation. They are supernatural 'motions', movements, that are most profound within the mystic. These are impressed on the human will, with repercussions on the intellect. These provide a most elevated and real intellectual penetration of God [Ascent, II, 32, n. 3]. These do not depend on any activity exercised by the soul, nor in its meditations, even though these render it available to receive them.

1.] Mystical Touches

Mystical Touches can have a varied intensity. Most sublime experiences are noted by John of the Cross and the German mystics before him. They are sometimes called 'substantial touches'. However, this does not mean that they occur between 'substance' and 'substance': or, between the divine substance and the substance of the human soul – they occur rather, between God and the faculties of the soul. St. Thomas teaches repeatedly that no created substance can ever operate, experience, perceive, or love of itself, but only by means of one's faculties which have been given

⁴ Antonio CALABRESE, CP, *La Via Mistica di S. Paolo della Croce*. VATICANA 2001, pp.148-161: [*'Il Fondo dell'Anima'*]

precisely for this [I, 54, 1; q. 77, aa. 1-2]. These mystical touches, known as 'substantial' are exercised, therefore in the very DEPTHS of the intellect and will [Ascent II, c. 31] It is there in which the faculties are rooted, i.e., in the very substance of the soul, from which they emanate. However, God is more intimate to the human soul than it is to itself – by the very fact that He conserves these in existence by His continued creation. St. Thomas enters into these deep theological reflections:

On the contrary, A reality is wherever it operates. But God operates in all things, according to Is. 26:12, "Lord . . . Thou hast wrought all our works in [Vulg.: 'for'] us." Therefore God is in all things.

I answer that, God is in all things; not, indeed, as part of their essence, nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it works. For an agent must be joined to that wherein it acts immediately and touch it by its power; hence it is proved in Phys. vii that the thing moved and the mover must be joined together. Now since God is very being by His own essence, created being must be His proper effect; as to ignite is the proper effect of fire. Now God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being; as light is caused in the air by the sun as long as the air remains illuminated.

Therefore as long as a thing has being, God must be present to it, according to its mode of being. But being is innermost in each thing and most fundamentally inherent in all things since it is formal in respect of everything found in a thing, as was shown above (Question [7], Article [1]). Hence it must be that God is in all things, and innermost. [cf. I, 8, 1]

And again:

I answer that, Augustine says (De Trin. ix, 3), "our mind acquires the knowledge of incorporeal things by itself"—i.e. by knowing itself (Question [88], Article [1], ad 1). Therefore from the knowledge which the separated soul has of itself, we can judge how it knows other separate things.

Now it was said above (Article [1]), that as long as it is united to the body the soul understands by turning to phantasms, and therefore it does not understand itself save through becoming actually intelligent by means of ideas abstracted from phantasms; for thus it understands itself through its own act, as shown above (Question [87], Article [1]). When, however, it is separated from the body, it understands no longer by turning to phantasms, but by turning to simply intelligible objects; hence in that state it understands itself through itself.

Now, every separate substance "understands" what is above itself and what is below itself, according to the mode of its substance" (*De Causis* viii): for a thing is understood according as it is in the one who understands; while one thing is in another according to the nature of that in which it is. And the mode of existence of a separated soul is inferior to that of an angel, but is the same as that of other separated souls.

Therefore the soul apart from the body has perfect knowledge of other separated souls, but it has an imperfect and defective knowledge of the angels so far as its natural knowledge is concerned. But the knowledge of glory is otherwise. [I, 89, 2]

God is able to act, to touch and to move from within the DEPTHS of the faculties by means of a contact that is not spatial, but spiritual, in a manner that is so delicate and subtle that to the soul it seems it seems like an occurrence from substance to substance, as something divine. Thus, God moves intimately the soul to its most profound acts, those to which the human person could not arrive independently.

2.] However, there is the influence, impact of God in the DEPTHS OF THE SOUL which precedes that on the faculties this action most intimate of God, on the DEPTHS OF THE SOUL is that to which all converges and, in a sense, it is from this that all has been begun, without us having any cognizance of this. This influence of the Holy Spirit on the DEPTHS OF THE SOUL where He produces, conserves and increases sanctifying grace on the faculties. Indeed it precedes without our noticing it. Ultimately, the soul purified of all else comes to experience this in the most intimate depths of itself, when it has ended up by entering into this sanctuary, where the Most High indwells and is operative from the first instant of justification. This is the ultimate reason why the great mystical authors have spoken so much of these DEPTHS OF THE SOUL, of this SUBSTANTIAL ACTION of God, from which all then sets off, and toward which all converges, when the soul returns to its Principle. It is something like a SIRMUAL KISS from Christ, Spouse of the soul, impressed on the will, which then responds to Him with more ardent love, My Delight is mine, and I am His!

3.] THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL, therefore, is nothing other than its very essence. On these DEPTHS are rooted all its faculties intellect and will. The action of God upon it, therefore, is two-fold:

- it produces, conserves and increases sanctifying grace, preceding in fact, the action on the faculties;
- it moves from within the faculties toward the most profound acts, to which unaided the soul alone could not reach. But it is always these same and unique DEPTHS.

The authors used various terms to designate the DEPTHS, and they intend in general, the very essence of the soul, prescinding from its faculties – or, it means the essence of the soul in so far as this is the root of its faculties moved by God.

4.] St. Thomas does not speak of the DEPTHS of the soul: he repeatedly notes that the essence of the soul is not identified with its powers [cf. I, 77, aa 1-2] But he also notes the SUPERIOR REASON – which is ordained to contemplation and to

consult the eternal truths – and he speaks of the INFERIOR REASON which he applies to handling earthly realities⁵. It is clearly noted from Augustine as quoted in St. Thomas that the SUPERIOR REASON and that INFERIOR, LOWER reason, are one and the same potency.

However, they are distinguished by St. AUGUSTINE [cf. *De Trin.* cc. 4, 14] through the functions of their acts and in the basis of their diverse habits: in fact, to the SUPERIOR REASON there is attributed WISDOM – and to the INFERIOR, LOWER reason that is attributed KNOWLEDGE. The SUPERIOR and the INFERIOR reason correspond to what other great teachers of the mystics as well as TAULER himself – among whom the expressions might appear not only the DEPTHS OF THE SOUL, but also its UPPER POINT OF THE SPIRIT, THE APEX OF THE MIND, or even other equivalent terms. In all these expressions, there is intended precisely the DEPTHS of the soul where the faculties are rooted.

St. JOHN OF THE CROSS uses terms such as: THE MOST PROFOUND CENTER – INTIMATE SUBSTANCE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL - [cf. *Flame*, I, nn. 8014; II, n. 13; III, n. 68]⁶.

... God shows his graces there, manifests his riches and the glory of his grandeur that in this soul might be fulfilled what he asserted in Proverbs: *I was delighted every day, playing before him all the time, playing in the world. And my delights were to be with the children of the earth* [Prv. 8:30-31], that is, by bestowing delights on them. Hence these wounds (his games) are flames of tender touches; arising from the fire of love, which is not idle, they suddenly touch the soul. These, it says, occur inwardly and wound the soul.

in its deepest center!

⁶ John of the Cross makes much use of this terminology:

9. This feast takes place in the substance of the soul where neither the center of the senses nor the devil can reach. Therefore, the more interior it is, the more secure, substantial, and delightful, because the more interior it is, the purer it is. And the greater the purity, the more abundantly, frequently, and generously God communicates himself. Thus the delight and joy of the soul is so much more intense because God is the doer of all without the soul's doing anything. Since the soul cannot do any work of its own save through the means and aid of the corporeal senses, from which in this event it is very free and far removed, its sole occupation now is to receive from God, who alone can move the soul and do his work in its depths. Thus all the movements of this soul are divine. Although they belong to it, they belong to it because God works them in it and with it, for it wills and consents to them.[2] Since by saying that the flame wounds in its deepest center the soul indicates that it has other, less profound centers, we ought to explain what is meant by these words.

10. First it should be known that the soul, insofar as it is a spirit, does not possess in its being high and low, deeper or less deep, as do quantitative bodies. Since it has no parts, there is no difference as to inward and outward; it is all one kind and does not have degrees of quantitative depth. It cannot receive greater illumination in one part than in another like physical bodies, but all of it is illumined equally in a degree of greater or lesser intensity, like air that is illumined or not illumined according to degrees.

11. The deepest center of an object we take to signify the farthest point attainable by that object's being and power and force of operation and movement. So fire or a rock have the natural power and motion

In his Commentary on the first two verses of his *Spiritual Cantic*. St. I, he writes; *where have You hidden Yourself, leaving me in groans, o my Beloved?* – he unveils the ‘Beloved’ as God who hides Himself, and explains also the manner on how to find Him: the Word the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit essentially and ‘presentially’ remains all the while ‘hidden’ within the soul, or within THE VERY DEPTHS OF THE SOUL. Therefore, God is ‘hidden’ in the soul where the insistent contemplative needs to seek Him out lovingly, saying: O Lord, where have You hidden Yourself? [*Cantic*, St. I, n. 6]

b. St. Teresa of Avila

As for St. TERESA OF AVILA, while such mystical terminology is not frequent in her writings, a number of German authorities such as St. Albert the Great, Master Theodoric and Meister Eckhart are familiar with its usage. The German Dominican TAULER⁷, of course, may be the head of the list – he seems to be the preferred source of St. Paul of the Cross. Tauler did not compile a formal treatise of mystical theology or anything like that – he was primarily a Preacher. His influential teachings need to be garnered from a careful reading of his sermons. It is not known whether these compositions are from his own hand, or whether they were outlines, notes, taken from/ for his delivered preaching, then developed later by himself. These notes might also, as a theory on such writings often notes, these might have been notes taken by his listeners. Whatever is the case,, the end result in so many of Tauler’s works there is in his texts a kind of foggy composition often difficult to interpret.

St. Paul of the Cross ‘prepared’ himself for the study of Tauler, OP through his careful contemplation of other classical authors, principally the two great Spanish Carmelites noted above, and then St. Francis de Sales – as the renowned authors often make use of terminology familiar to those who may know of Tauler.

necessary to reach their center, but they cannot pass beyond it. They can fail to reach and rest in this center if a powerful contrary movement impedes them.

Accordingly, we assert that when a rock is in the ground it is, after a fashion, in its center, even though it is not in its deepest center, for it is within the sphere of its center, activity, and movement; yet we do not assert that it has reached its deepest center, which is the middle of the earth. Thus the rock always possesses the power, strength, and inclination to go deeper and reach the ultimate and deepest center; and this it would do if the hindrance were removed. When once it arrives and no longer has any power or inclination toward further movement, we declare that it is in its deepest center.

12. The soul's center is God. When it has reached God with all the capacity of its being and the strength of its operation and inclination, it will have attained its final and deepest center in God, it will know, love, and enjoy God with all its might. When it has not reached this point (as happens in this mortal life, in which the soul cannot reach God with all its strength, even though in its center - which is God through grace and his self-communication to it), it still has movement and strength for advancing further and is not satisfied. Although it is in its center, it is not yet in its deepest center, for it can go deeper in God.

⁷ cf. M. VANNINI, *Il fondo dell'anima*, ed. Piemme 1997.

c. Tauler

According to Tauler, in the DEPTHS OF THE SOUL there unfolds the entire MYSTERY OF GRACE. There is an easy variety in the terminology used in these circles. Sometimes these are referred to in the following expressions: - the PEAK OF THE SOUL; ITS HIGH-POINT; THE VERY CENTER OF THE SOUL; THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL; THIS SUBLIME AND JOYFUL ABYSS; THAT HIDDEN REALM OF THE SOUL; THAT ARCAN [HIDDEN] ABYSS; THAT INNER VAST SOLITUDE; THAT PLACE DEEP WITHIN WHERE GOD HIMSELF DWELLS, WHERE THE FATHER GOD GENERATES HIS SON; THAT PRIVILEGED PLACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO POURS OUT THERE THE BESTOWAL OF HIS GIFTS IN AN ALMOST DIVINE MANNER; THAT SPECIAL SANCTUARY WHERE THERE IS CELEBRATED THE MYSTICAL NUPTIALS OF THE WORD – the Sanctuary of the Spiritual Temple of the Trinity within. Since no one term fully covers the descriptions that have come to us down through the ages, there is a most mysterious real of the Lord God Himself, ineffable even after divine revelation.

[The Biblical concordances might help us here –

cf. INNER/ INERMOST/INTERIOR

My inner self agrees with the law of God [cf. Rm 7:22] – Our inner being is renewed each day... May He enlighten your innermost vision... [Ep 1:18]

cf. SPIRITUAL/ SPIRITUALLY

...acknowledged to be deeply spiritual and prudent ... [Ac 6:3] - ... Apollos was a man full of spiritual fervor... [Ac 18:25] - ... with you, some spiritual gift to strengthen you... [Rm 1:11] –we know that the law is spiritual ... [Rm 7:14] - ... lack no spiritual gift as you wait for revelation ... [1 Co 2:13] - ... It must be appraised in a spiritual way... [1 Co 2: 13 -15] - ... you are spiritual ... [1 Co 2:14] - ...set your heart on spiritual gifts ... [1 Co14:1 – etc. etc. here]...

From all these sources, these various expressions mean fundamentally: the DEPTHS of the soul – are its deepest essence – this is where the mystics maintain the mystical phenomena of the SPIRITUAL ESPOUSALS take place. For St. Paul of the Cross the obscure phrases of Tauler for him meant a NEW MANIFESTATION OF GOD IN THE HUMAN SOUL THROUGH A NEW AND DEEPER KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

d. St. Paul of the Cross

In his own time, St. Paul OF THE CROSS developed his own terminology: THE MOST SECRET DEPTHS OF THE SOUL – IN THE INTERIOR DEPTHS OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN THE PEAK OF THE HUMAN MIND – THE TEMPLE, SANCTUARY OF ONE'S SOUL - this is the temple, sanctuary of the human soul where God exercises full sway, unless He is impeded in his work: this was one of St. Gaspar's fears – a lesson he learned from St. Ignatius:

This is a threefold principle that aims at its being able to be reproduced in one's life. But who is this personality about whom Fr. Bertoni writes? We believe it is a person of the caliber of St Teresa of Avila. The traits are very probably hers. Here are some texts from her *Life* :

... I happened sometimes to feel tormented by most serious tribulations, having become the object of detraction on the part of this city and of my own Order. Many more afflictions of a different nature gave me further cause for anxiety. In those circumstances I could hear the Lord telling me: "What do you fear? Don't you know that I can do anything? What I have promised, I'll accomplish? (it had always been so, in fact!)" I then would muster up courage and become ready to embark upon any new work whatsoever. I would face, for the service of God, even greater torments and suffering, though it was very heavy for me. This experience happened so many times that I cannot remember." ⁸

"Oh, what a joy to have to suffer in doing God's will!" ⁹

"The only ambition we can have (and God does not allow any other), must be that we serve His Divine Majesty at any cost. In my Foundations I never did anything, as little as it could be, which would have seemed to disagree with God's will." ¹⁰

Whatever we do for Him, is always too little." ¹¹

"Blessed be God, because if we do not fail Him he will never fail us first." ¹²

"Oh, what a misfortune to live in this life! It is like having always our enemies at the door. We cannot leave our arms even for eating and sleeping. We are continuously fearing that somebody, somewhere should attack and storm our stronghold!... Pray, my dear daughters, that his Majesty should always live in me. Otherwise, after having spent my life in such a miserable way, I would not know how to give myself comfort." ¹³

"It is clear that a person must never rely on oneself. One should never

expose oneself to temptation. Even if one had received many graces of Prayer. We can always fall. Be very careful! I beseech you for God's sake." ¹⁴

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⁸ St. Teresa of Avila, *Life...* o.c., Ed. Rome 1949, c. 26, n. 2.

⁹ Id. *Interior Castle*, Fifth Mansions, c. 2, n. 14.

¹⁰ Id., *Foundations*, c. 27, nn. 14, 15.

¹¹ Id., *Path of Perfection*, c. 12, n. 1.

¹² Id., *Letters*, Venice 1739. Letter 38, to Alfonzo Ramirez.

¹³ Id., *Interior Castle*, Third Mansions, nn. 2-3.

¹⁴ Id., *Life...* , o.c., c. 19, n. 13.

In his turn, St. Gaspar notes early in his own Spiritual Diary:

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[144.] God does not turn down any of those who want to militate under the banners of His Son, and who avail themselves of the means He has prescribed: namely prayer and mortification. Indeed, this person will have a glorious triumph.

In the Commentary of Fr. Stofella, it is noted that this passage is a point from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Meditations of *The Kingdom of Christ* and *The Two Standards* have the same conclusion, i.e. the voluntary enrollment in the army of the Lord. However it is necessary to accept the conditions, i.e. to follow Christ in poverty, in self - abnegation, in humility and to take up His weapons which are prayer and mortification. Victory and triumph will follow. We take some passages from the Meditations which Fr Gaspar gave the Seminarians in 1811:

... We do know where God called us from, but we do not know where will He lead us to. We cannot imagine what would God do of us, who are the apple of His eye, if we did not raise obstacles to His grace, but would instead surrender ourselves always and totally to His hands! ... When we abandon ourselves to Him and follow Him faithfully and steadily and, in all humility, do not take the lead before Him...the Lord adds His share... ¹⁵

†

18th MAY 1811

[168.] Undertake the spiritual journey by the narrow way and by Penance.

The text is inspired by the verse in Matthew 7:14: *Narrow is the road that leads to life*. It could have been an inner voice, or taken for such by Fr. Bertoni who wanted to register it on paper and make it into a personal resolution. It could otherwise have been a generous resolution developed by himself which became a decision of his conscience in imitation of the Saints. What we are sure of is that he took it very seriously; so seriously that his biographers gave the blame to the severe *miliary* fever, which flattened him in 1812 and put his life in jeopardy, due also to his excessive work. He had not spared himself in the ministry and in the acts of penance: fasting and mortification to gain self control. Furthermore, he was convinced that in order to correspond to the graces God gave him and to follow the mission he felt he was invested with, he could do nothing less than that.

†

15 St. Gaspar Bertoni's Conferences on St. Gregory Exposition on *Primum Regum* - Meditation 16 a [## 5457-5508] - 1 Reg3:9-14; Meditation 16 b [## 5509-5554] - 1 Reg 3:15-21.

[169.] I shall forget your sins, and I shall show you how many things you have to bear for my name.

It sounds like part of a dialogue between the Lord and his Servant. God calls Fr. Bertoni to the undertakings of His glory. Fr Bertoni, (we suppose), objected like St. Peter after the first miraculous catch of fish: *Depart from me, Lord, because I am a sinner* (Luke 5:8). The Lord replied: *I shall forget your sins... (Is 43:25) or I shall never again recall their transgressions* (Heb 10:17). He repeats what he had said to St Paul: *I shall show him how many things it is necessary that he should bear for my name.* (Ac 10:16). Similar words have been directed to several Founders of Religious Orders. Fr Bertoni will address these - and in Latin! - to Leopoldina Naudet on 14 Dec 1812. He will even add, jokingly as Saints can do: Take courage! This is the best share which God keeps in store for His beloved ones: ...it is not a mouth-full for all!

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[170.] Very few are the people who have the perception of what God would do of them if He was not hindered by them in His plans.

It is the great Ignatian principle which became one of the corner-stones of Fr. Bertoni's spirituality. Here it is presented in the form in which Fr. Mariani, S.J. reported it. It is worthwhile to quote here the original form as we have it in Bartoli's book:

... Very few are those who have the perception of what would God do with them, if they would put themselves totally into His hands and let His grace work in them. One would never believe that a rough and shapeless trunk of a tree could become a statue which will be admired as a miracle of wood-carving. That trunk, if it depended on itself, would never let itself be cut by the chisels of a wood cutter. Only the wood cutter, as St. Augustine said, can foresee with his artistic eye what could come out of the trunk. Similarly there are many people who think they can just live as ordinary Christians. They have no perception that they could become saints if they just let themselves be fashioned by the grace of God and, by making resistance to God's work, would not spoil the design that God should like to realize in them... ¹⁶

It is clear that the principle written by Fr. Bertoni is a summary of all this. In a Meditation in *Primum Regum* to the Seminarians he used it several times and made a moving application of it. We have noticed it already on 29 July 1809 but did not explain it:

... We cannot imagine what would God do of us, who are the apple of His eye, if we could not raise obstacles to His Grace, but would instead surrender ourselves always and totally to His hands...

¹⁶ Bartoli, o.c., Book 4, n. 36 margin.

For that expression: apple of His eye Fr. Bertoni quoted Zc 2:8: *For he that touches you (i.e. my priests) touches the apple of My eye ...*

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e. St. Thomas Aquinas

Therefore, the DEPTHS of the human soul – as understood by St. Thomas Aquinas and by the heart and core of the mystical tradition in the Church is theologically correct and can be intelligently comprehended in accord with our various states in life. The ‘melancholic Dane’, Soren Kierkegaard, yearned for authenticity in the living of the doctrine of Christ – M. Ghandi in India, is quoted as having said: Christians often appear to be like a rock in the Ganges River, over whom the doctrine of Christ has flowed without ever really penetrating. The Church Document, *GAUDIUM ET SPES*, Vatican II bemoaned the fact that among the causes of modern atheism would be those Christians who conceal, rather than reveal the face of Jesus Christ! We are all convinced that the habit does not make the monk!

The Mystics are sent by God with some regularity to inspire the Church in her on-going need for formation, renewal, conversion – repent and believe in the Gospel! On his part, St. Paul of the Cross tried to preach how a believer might re-enter into the DEPTHS of his/ her own soul. Only God can truly act there, but in the Universal Call to holiness, all of the Faithful are challenged to become saints. The wisdom of God does not force its way into crafty souls! This invitation St. Gaspar understood what God’s will is to invite each of his followers to withdraw into one’s own heart and soul, to pray for an open mind and heart, and in the depths of our own nothingness, we will indeed find God.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity:

260 The ultimate end of the whole divine economy is the entry of God's creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity.¹⁰⁰ But even now we are called to be a dwelling for the Most Holy Trinity: "If a man loves me", says the Lord, "he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him".¹⁰¹

O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me forget myself entirely so to establish myself in you, unmovable and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing be able to trouble my peace or make me leave you, O my unchanging God, but may each minute bring me more deeply into your mystery! Grant my soul peace. Make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, whole and entire, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring, and wholly given over to your creative action.¹⁰²

St. Paul of the Cross speaks of RE-CENTERING ONESELF ON GOD – in the Saint's view this is to look TOWARD, to seek to 'lose' oneself in INTERIOR SOLITUDE.

In the end, this ideal would lead us into this profound truth and sublime Christian goal: *But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him...* [1 Co 6:17]

The baptized are assisted by Christ Himself in the carrying of their crosses – described in modern times of such violence and division as: Inner homelessness, meaninglessness; non-senselessness; Godlessness of our world; the Cross of this present moment. Without God's grace and the infusion of theological hope and their Gifts of the Holy Spirit – many might turn to despair!

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CONCLUSION:**ST. GASPAR BERTONI**

At St Joseph's. At the bottom of one's own nothingness God is found. On hearing very sublime things about God: a profound awareness of myself. [MP. AUGUST 24, 1808]

St Joseph's was the Convent of Saints Joseph and Fidentius, which was also called "The Canossa Retreat". Fr Bertoni used to visit this "Retreat" as Spiritual Director of the women and girls who lived there, under the leadership of the Foundress Magdalene di Canossa.

The first sentence seems to be the leading thought of a mystical experience which followed: unless it is itself the content of that experience. In the original manuscript there is no separation. As a principle it sounds Carmelite. It makes one thing of the *nothingness* [nada] of St John of the Cross. Here one would say that it is the result of the Ignatian *detachment from all creatures* (cf. above 2 July) and the *seek God alone and see God in all creatures* (cf. 30 July) which is also suggested by Ignatius. With regard to the sources of *humility* Fr Gaspar saw here a confirmation of Da Ponte's doctrine: *Humility springs from the knowledge of one's own nothingness... and from the knowledge of the infinite majesty of God and of our dependence on Him.*¹⁷

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[32.] In the evening, while looking at the image of the Blessed Trinity: much reverence and love for the three Persons. The Eternal Father who had his arms open was displaying to me His mercy and communicating with easiness his gifts etc...

This is another mystical experience. The etc. which ends the note implies that what is said of the Father may also be said of the other two Persons. Fr Dalle Vedove accompanies this text with a quotation from the *Summa* of St Thomas: *To render worship to God as Father is still more excellent than to render worship to God as Creator and Master.* Then he states that it would be *a distortion of the character of Fr Bertoni if he were to be judged only as a respectful keeper of the Lord's precepts*¹⁸.

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¹⁷ DaPonte, *Meditations*. Index: Third point, *Humility*.

¹⁸ Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove, *Un modello di santo abbandono*. Part I, c. 5, [English translation may be found on the Web-site]. . St. Thomas teaches that the supernatural virtue of *Religion* reaches its perfection in the Gift of *Piety*, by which the Holy Spirit reveals the *Father* in God. In his *Journal*, Fr. Bertoni shows that together with the deep reverence and adoration towards God as infinite Majesty he was given the gift of experiencing tender affection and confidence in God the Father. [This is the foundation of his spirituality of Total Abandonment.

APPENDIX

"TOTALITY" IN THE MODERN MAGISTERIUM

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[A] The Total Self-Giving of the Consecrated Life in the Modern**Magisterium: "The Absolute Infinite" [EvangTest. 34]**

From the opening document of his Pontificate, Pope John Paul II considered the last forty years of this 20th century, as a kind of "New Advent" for the Third Millennium of the Church, the setting for the "New Evangelization":

"... We are in a certain way in a season of a New Advent, a season of expectation ... through the Incarnation God gave human life the dimension that He intended man to have from his first beginning: he has granted that dimension definitively - in the way that is peculiar to him alone, in keeping with his eternal love and mercy, with the full freedom of God... [O happy fault... which gained us so great a Redeemer..! (16).

"... In fact, preparing for the year 2000 has become, as it were, a hermeneutical key of my Pontificate. It is certainly not a matter of indulging in a New Millenarianism, as occurred in some quarters at the end of the first millennium. Rather: it is aimed at an increased sensitivity to all that the Spirit is saying to the Church and to the churches [cf. Rv 2: 7, ff.]; as well as to individuals, through charisms meant to serve the whole community. The purpose is to emphasize what the Spirit is suggesting to different communities - from the smallest ones, such as the family - to the largest ones, such as nations and international organizations, taking into account cultures, societies and sound traditions..." (17).

With so much else, this period has been very rich in official documents that have developed the theology of the Consecrated Life throughout this "New Advent":

LUMEN GENTIUM, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,

November 21, 1965, ## 39 - 42:

"... Likewise, the Church's holiness is fostered in a special way by the manifold counsels which the Lord proposes to his disciples in the Gospel for them to observe. Towering among the counsels is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the Father [cf. Mt 19:11; 1 Co 7:7] to devote themselves to God alone more easily with an undivided heart [cf. I Co 7:32-34] in virginity, or celibacy...The Church bears in mind also the apostle's admonition when calling the faithful to charity and exhorting them to have the same mind which Christ Jesus showed who 'emptied himself, taking the form of a servant... and became obedient unto death' [Ph 2:7, f.] and for our sakes 'became poor though he was rich' [2 Co 8:9]. Since the disciples must always imitate this love and humility of Christ and bear witness of it, Mother Church rejoices that she has within herself many men and women who pursue more closely the Savior's self-emptying and show it forth more clearly, by

undertaking poverty with the freedom of God's sons, and renouncing their own will: they subject themselves to man for the love of God, thus going beyond what is of precept in the matter of perfection, so as to conform themselves more fully to the obedient Christ..." [cf. LG 42 c, d].

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PERFECTAE CARITATIS, Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, October 28, 1965:

"...From the very beginning of the Church there were men and women who set out to follow Christ with greater liberty, and to imitate him more closely, by practicing the evangelical counsels. They led lives dedicated to God, each in his own way. Many of them, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, became hermits, or founded religious families. These the Church, by virtue of her authority, gladly accepted and approved. Thus, in keeping with the divine purpose, a wonderful variety of religious communities came into existence. This has considerably contributed towards enabling the Church not merely to be equipped for every good work [cf. 2 Tm 3:17] and to be prepared for the good work of the ministry unto the building-up of the Body of Christ [cf. Ep 4:12], but also to appear adorned with the manifold gifts of her children, like a bride adorned to her husband [cf. Apoc 21:2] and to manifest in herself the multiform wisdom of God..." [# 1].

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EVANGELICA TESTIFICATIO, Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life, June 29, 1971 (18):

"...And yet, it is well known that the Council recognized 'this special gift' as having a place in the life of the Church, because it enables those who have received it to be more closely conformed to 'that manner of virginal and humble life which Christ the Lord elected for himself and which the Virgin Mother also chose...' [# 2] ...From the first centuries, the Holy Spirit has stirred up, side by side with the heroic confession of the martyrs, the wonderful strength of disciples and virgins, of hermits and anchorites... [# 3 b]...Dear sons and daughters, by a free response to the call of the Holy Spirit, you have decided to follow Christ, consecrating yourselves totally to him... [# 7 a]...In reality, the charism of religious life, far from being an impulse born of flesh and blood, or one derived from a mentality which conforms itself to the modern world, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, who is always at work in the Church... [# 11]...through obedience, you offer to God a total dedication of your own wills as a sacrifice of yourselves [# 27]...This grace will be given to you by Christ Jesus in proportion to the fundamental gift which you have made of yourselves and which you do not retract [# 31]..."

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MUTUAE RELATIONES, Directives for the Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church. The Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, April 23, 1978 (Some Doctrinal Elements) (19) :

"... From the day of Pentecost onwards (LG 4))there exists in the world a 'new' people which, vivified by the Holy Spirit, is united with Christ and has access to the Father (Ep 2:18). The members of this People are gathered from all nations and are

bound together in such an intimate unity (LG 9) that it cannot be explained solely by axioms of the sociological order: there exists between them a kind of ‘newness’ which transcends the human condition. It is only in this transcendent perspective that mutual relations between the various members of the Church can be correctly understood. The reality upon which this unique nature is based is the very presence of the Holy Spirit... The spiritual and pastoral re-awakening of recent years ... is due to the presence of the Holy Spirit and is clear evidence of a specially privileged moment (EN 75) for the renewal of the youth of the Church as she looks forward to the Day of her Lord (Rv 22:17)..” [# 1]

“...Vocation to the Apostolate: the whole Church is driven by the Holy Spirit to do her part for the full realization of the plan of God (LG 17; AA 21 AG 1-5)... This vocation demands of every man, as a sign of his ecclesial communion, that he recognize the primacy of the life in the Spirit upon which depends docility to the word, interior prayer, awareness of life as a member of the whole body, desire for unity, dutiful accomplishment of one’s official mission, the gift of self in service and the humility of repentance... From this common baptismal vocation to *life in the Spirit* there come to light clearer demands and effective means in what concerns relations between Bishops and Religious...” [# 4].

“...Religious institutes are numerous in the Church and they differ one from the other according to their own proper character (PC 7-10). Each in fact, contributes its own vocation as a gift raised by the Holy Spirit, through the work of ‘outstanding men and women’ (LG 45; PC 12) and authentically approved by the sacred hierarchy. The ‘charism of the Founders’ (ET 11) appears as ‘an experience of the Spirit’ transmitted to their followers to be lived by them, to be preserved deepened and constantly developed in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in a process of growth. It is for this reason that the distinctive character of the various religious institutes is preserved and fostered by the Church (LG 44; CD 33, 35, § 1 and 2, etc.). [# 11].

“... The historical fact between charism and cross, apart from other factors which may give rise to understanding, is an extremely helpful sign in discerning a call from the Spirit. Individual religious also possess personal gifts coming from the Spirit to enrich, develop and rejuvenate the life of the Institute, to further unite the community and to show forth its renewal. But the discernment of these gifts and their correct use can be recognized to the extent to which they harmonize with the community commitment in the Institute and with the needs of the Church, as determined by legitimate authority...”[# 12]

“... Religious and their communities are called upon in the Church to give a visible testimony of their total consecration to God. This is the fundamental option of their Christian existence and the first objective to be attained in their distinctive way of life, whatever the specific character of their Institute, religious are, in fact, consecrated in order to proclaim publicly in the Church-sacrament that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes (LG 31)...” [# 14].

THE CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE, by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, March 1980 (20):

“...The contemplative dimension is basically a reality of grace, experienced by the believer as God’s gift. It enables persons to know the Father (cf. Jn 14:8) in the mystery of Trinitarian communion (cf. 1 Jn 1:3], so that they can enter *into the depths of God* (1 Co 2:10). It is not the intention here to discuss the many and delicate aspects of different methods of contemplation, nor to analyze contemplation in so far as it is an infused gift of the Holy Spirit. We describe the contemplative dimension fundamentally as the theological response of faith, hope and charity, by which the believer opens up to the revelation and communication of the living God through Christ in the Holy Spirit, ‘The concentration of the regard of one’s heart on God, which we define as contemplation, becomes the highest and fullest activity of the spirit, the activity of which today, also, can and must order the immense pyramid of all human activities’ [Paul VI, Dec. 7, 1965].

“As the unifying act of all human movement towards God, the contemplative dimension is expressed by listening to and meditating on the Word of God; by participating in the divine life transmitted to us in the sacraments, particularly, the Eucharist; by liturgical and personal prayer; by the constant desire for God and the search for His Will in events and people; by the conscious participation in His salvific mission; by self-giving to others for the coming of the Kingdom. There results, in the religious, an attitude of continuous and humble adoration of God’s mysterious presence in people, events and things: an attitude which manifests the virtue of piety, an interior fount of peace and a person who brings peace to every sphere of life ad apostolate.

“All this is achieved in continual purification of heart, under the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we can find God in all things and people and become ‘the praise of his glory’ [Ep 1:6].. The very nature of the consecrated life stands out in this way as the profound source which nourishes and unifies every aspect of the lives of religious...” [# 1].

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THE CODE OF CANON LAW, promulgated by Pope John Paul II, by the Apostolic Constitution, *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*, January 25, 1983, [## 573-730] - this is its own study, with references to the Consecrated Life as a Gift of the Spirit, inspiring the total self-gift of those who enter it.

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LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II TO UNITED STATES BISHOPS, ON PROBLEMS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, April 3, 1983 (21):

“... Consecration is the basis of religious life. By insisting on this, the Church places the first emphasis on the initiative of God and on the transforming relation to him which religious life involves. Consecration is a divine action. God calls a person whom he sets apart for a particular dedication to himself. At the same time, he offers the grace to respond to that consecration is expressed on the human side by a profound and free self surrender. The resulting relationship is a pure gift. It is a covenant of mutual love and fidelity, of communion and mission, established for

God's glory, the joy of the person consecrated and the salvation of the word..." [# 5].

"... Jesus lived his own consecration precisely as Son of God: dependent on the Father, loving him above all and completely given to his will. These aspects of his life as Son are shared by all Christians. To some, however, for the sake of all, God gives the gift of a closer following of Christ in his poverty, chastity and obedience, through a public profession of these counsels mediated by the Church. This profession in imitation of Christ, manifests a particular consecration which is 'rooted in that of baptism and is a fuller expression of it' (PC 5). The fuller expression recalls the hold of the divine person of the Word over the human nature which he assumed and it invites a response like that of Jesus: a dedication of oneself to God in a way which he alone makes possible and which witnesses to his holiness and absoluteness. Such a consecration is a gift of God, a grace freely given..." [# 7].

"... The identity (in religious consecration) derives from that action of the Holy Spirit which is the institute's founding gift and which creates a particular type of spirituality, of life, of apostolate and of tradition [cf. MR 11]. Looking at the numerous families one is struck by the wide variety of founding gifts. The Council laid stress on the need to foster these as so many gifts of God (cf. PC 2 b). They determine the nature, spirit and purpose and character which form each institute's spiritual patrimony, and they are basic to that sense of identity which is a key element in the fidelity of every religious (cf. ET 51)... [# 11].

"...It is proper, though not exclusive to religious life to profess the evangelical counsels by vows which the Church receives. These are a response to the prior gift of God which, being a gift of love, cannot be rationalized. It is something God himself works in the person chosen..." [# 13].

"... The vows themselves are specific: three ways of pledging oneself to live as Christ lived in areas which cover the whole of life: possessions, affections, autonomy. Each emphasizes a relation to Jesus, consecrated and sent. He was rich but he became poor for our sakes, emptying himself, and having nowhere to lay his head. He loved with an undivided heart, universally and to the end. He came to do the will of the Father who sent him, and he did it steadily, learning obedience through suffering and becoming a cause of salvation for all who obey..." [# 15].

"... When God consecrates a person, he gives a special gift to achieve his own kind purposes: the reconciliation and salvation of the human race. He not only chooses, sets apart and dedicates the person to himself, but engages him or her in his own divine work. Consecration inevitably implies mission. These are two facets of one reality. The choice of a person by God is for the sake of others: the consecrated person is one who is sent to do the work of God in the power of God. Jesus Himself was clearly aware of this. Consecrated and sent to bring the salvation of God, he was wholly dedicated to the Father in adoration, love and surrender, and totally given to the work of the Father which is the salvation of the world..." [# 23].

"... (The consecration of religious) calls for the self-giving without which it is not possible to live either a good community life, or a fruitful mission. Jesus' statement

that the grain of wheat needs to fall to the ground and die if it is to bear fruit, has a particular application to religious because of the public nature of the profession. It is true that much of today's penance is to be found in the circumstances of life, and should be accepted there..." [# 31].

"... For each religious, formation is the process of becoming more and more a disciple of Christ, growing in union with, and in configuration to him. It is a matter of taking on increasingly the mind of Christ, of sharing more deeply his gift of himself to the Father, and his brotherly service of the human family, and of doing this according to the founding gift which mediates the Gospel to the members of a given religious institute. Such a process requires a genuine conversion. The 'putting on Jesus Christ' (cf. Rm 13:14; Ga 3:27; Ep 4:24) implies the stripping off of selfishness and egoism (cf. Ep 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10). The very fact of 'waiting henceforth according to the Spirit' means giving up 'the desires of the flesh' (Ga 5:15). The religious professes to make this putting on of Christ, in his poverty, his love and his obedience, the essential pursuit of his life. It is a pursuit that never ends. There is a constant maturing in it, and this reaches not only to spiritual values but also to the fullness of the human personality. .. the religious grows toward the fullness of Christ according to his or her state of life..." [# 45].

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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE CHURCH'S TEACHING AS APPLIED TO INSTITUTES DEDICATED TO WORKS OF THE APOSTOLATE May 31, 1983.(22).

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REDEMPTIONIS DONUM, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, to Men and Women Religious on their Consecration in the Light of the Mystery of Redemption. March 25, 1984 (23):

'...When Christ looked upon you and loved you', calling each one of you... that redeeming love of his was directed towards a particular person, and, at the same time, it took on a spousal character: it became a love of choice. This love embraces the whole person, soul and body, in that person's unique unrepeatable personal 'I.' The One who, given eternally to the Father, 'gives' himself in the mystery of Redemption, has now called man in order that he in his turn should give himself entirely to the work of Redemption through membership in a Community, of brothers and sisters, recognized and approved by the Church. Surely, it is precisely this call that St. Paul's words can be applied: 'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit..? You are not your own: you were bought with a price [I Co 6:19, f.]... Christ says: 'If you wish ...'. And the response to this call is, therefore, a free choice. You have chosen Jesus of Nazareth, the Redeemer of the world by choosing the way that he has shown you..." [# 3].

"...In this perspective the fundamental treasure of one's own humanity is connected to the fact of 'being', by giving oneself. The direct point of reference in such a vocation is the living person of Jesus Christ. The call to the way of perfection takes shape from him, and through him, in the Holy Spirit, who continually recalls to new people, men and women, at different times of their lives, but especially in their youth, all that Christ has said...The vocation in which a person discovers in depth *the evangelical law of giving*, a law inscribed in human nature, is itself a gift!

It is a gift overwhelming with the deepest content of the Gospel, a gift which reflects the divine and human image of the mystery of the Redemption of the world..." [# 6].

"... Religious profession creates a new bond ...In this way, religious profession is deeply rooted in baptismal consecration and is a fuller expression of it [PC 5]. In this way, religious profession in its constitutive content, becomes a new consecration; the consecration and giving of the human person to God, loved above all else. The commitment undertaken by means of the vows to practice the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, according to the determinations proper to each religious family as laid down in the Constitutions is the expression of a total consecration to God, and, at the same time, the means that leads to its achievement. This is also the source of bearing witness and of exercising the apostolate..." [# 7].

"...In this form is contained your answer to the call of redeeming love, and it is also an answer of love; a love of self-giving which is the heart of consecration, of the consecration of the person. The words of Isaiah: 'I have redeemed you ... you are mine...' seem to seal precisely this love which is the love of a total and exclusive consecration to God. This is how the special covenant of spousal love is made, in which we seem to hear an unceasing oath of the words concerning Israel, whom the Lord 'has chosen as his own possession.' For in every consecrated person the Israel of the new and eternal Covenant is chosen. The whole messianic people, the entire Church, is chosen in every person whom the Lord selects from the midst of this people, in every person who is consecrated for everyone to God as his exclusive possession..." [# 8].

"...In this particular context of the Jubilee Year of the Redemption, let us then go back again to the mystery of the body and soul of Christ as the complete subject of spousal and redemptive love: spousal *because* redemptive. For love he offered himself, for love he gave his body for the sin of the world. By immersing yourselves in the Paschal Mystery of the Redeemer through the consecration of the religious vows, you desire, through the love of total self-giving, to fill your souls and your bodies with the spirit of sacrifice, even as St. Paul invites you to do in the words of the Letter to the Romans just quoted: 'to offer your bodies as a sacrifice' [Rm 12:1]. In this way, the likeness of that love which in the Heart of Christ is both spousal and redemptive, is imprinted on the religious profession.... this love is the beginning of new life in Christ and the Church; it is the beginning of a new creation..." [# 8].

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LETTER TO UNITED STATES BISHOPS, John Paul II, February 22, 1989 (24):

"... They are at the heart of the mystery of the Church; they belong inseparably to her life and holiness. They are called to a radical living of the baptismal commitment common to all [#2186].

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DIRECTIVES ON FORMATION IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES, February 2, 1990 (25).

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PRELIMINARY STUDY FOR THE 1994 SYNOD OF BISHOPS, LINEAMENTA .

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FRATERNAL LIFE IN COMMUNITY - CONGREGAVIT NOS IN UNUM . February 2, 1994 (26).

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[B] The Principle of Totality:**“The Thirst for the Divine Absolute’ of the Consecrated Life**

[cf. EN 69; VC 39] - John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, March 25, 1996: in this document, the challenge to live the “Principle of Totality” is multiplied:

“... In every age there have been men and women who, obedient to the Father’s call, and to the prompting of the Spirit, have chosen this special way of following Christ in order to devote themselves to him with undivided heart [cf. I Co 7:34]. Like the Apostles, they, too, have left everything in order to be with Christ and to put themselves as he did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters...” [# 1].

“... the choice of total self-giving to God in Christ is in no way incompatible with any human culture or historical situation...” [# 2].

The consecrated life may experience further changes in its historical forms, but there will be no change in the substance of a choice which finds expression in a radical gift of self for the love of the Lord Jesus and, in him, of every member of the human family...” [# 3].

“... These new forms of consecrated life now taking their place along-side the older ones bear witness to the constant attraction which the total gift of self to the Lord, the ideal of the apostolic community and the founding charisms continue to exert, even on the present generation. They also show how the firsts of the Holy Spirit complement one another...” [# 12].

“... Many of the baptized throughout history have been invited to live such a life ‘in the image of Christ.’ But, this is possible only on the basis of a special vocation and in virtue of a particular gift of the Spirit. For, in such a life baptismal consecration develops into a radical response in the following of Christ through acceptance of the evangelical counsels, the first and essential of which is the sacred bond of chastity for the sake of the kingdom. This special way of following Christ, at the origin of which is always the initiative of the Father, has an essential Christological and Pneumatological meaning: it expresses in a vivid way the Trinitarian nature of the Christian life, and it anticipates in a certain way, that eschatological fulfillment toward which the whole church is tending..” [# 14].

“... ‘Lord, it is well that we are here!’ [Mt 17:14] ... These words bespeak the Christocentric orientation of the whole Christian life. But, they also eloquently express the radical nature of the vocation to the consecrated life: How good it is for us to be with You, to devote ourselves to You, to make You the one focus of our lives! Truly those who have been given the grace of this special communion of love with Christ feel as it were, caught up in His splendor: He is the fairest of the sons of men’[Ps 45:2], the one beyond compare...” [# 15].

“... ‘This is My Beloved Son!... The words from on high give new depth to the invitation by which Jesus himself at the beginning of his public life called them to follow him, to leave their ordinary lives behind and enter into a close relationship to him. It is precisely this special grace of intimacy which in the consecrated life makes possible and even demands the total gift of self in the profession of the evangelical counsels... In the consecrated life, then it is not only a matter of following Christ with one’s whole heart, of loving him more than father or mother, more than son or daughter’ [cf. Mt 10:37] - for this is the required of every disciple - but of living and expressing this by conforming one’s whole existence to Christ in an all-encompassing commitment which foreshadows the eschatological perfection to the extent that this is possible in time and in accordance with the different charisms...” [# 16].

“... Contemplation of the glory of the Lord Jesus in the icon of the Transfiguration reveals to consecrated persons first of all the Father, the Creator and Giver of every good thing who draws his creatures to himself [cf. Jn 6:44] with a special love and for a special mission. ‘This is my beloved Son: listen to him!’ [cf. Mt 17:5]. In response to this call and interior attraction which accompanies it, those who are called entrust themselves to the love of God who wishes them to be exclusively at his service and they consecrate themselves totally to him and to his plan of salvation [cf. I Co 7:32-34].

“This is the meaning of the call to the consecrated life: it is an initiative coming wholly from the Father [cf. Jn 15:16], who asks those whom he has chosen to respond with complete and exclusive devotion. The experience of this gracious love of God is so deep and so powerful that the person called senses the need to respond by unconditionally dedicating his or her life to God, consecrating to him all things present and future, and placing them in his hands. This is why, with Saint Thomas, we come to understand the identity of the consecrated person, beginning with his or her complete self-offering, as being comparable to a genuine holocaust [2-22, q. 186, a. 1]. [# 17;].

“...the practice of the evangelical counsels is also a particularly profound and fruitful way of sharing in Christ’s mission, in imitation of the example of Mary of Nazareth, the first disciple, who willingly put herself at the service of God’s plan by the total gift of self. ..” [cf. # 18; cf. all of ## 28 & 34 for the example of Mary’s totality].

“... The eyes of the Apostles are therefore fixed upon Jesus, who is thinking of the Cross [cf. Lk 9:43-45]. There his virginal love for the Father and for all mankind will attain its highest expression. His poverty will reach complete self-emptying, his obedience, the giving of his life... It is the contemplation of the

Crucified Christ that all vocations find their inspiration. From that contemplation, together with the primordial gift of the Spirit, all gifts, in particular, the gift of the consecrated life, take their origin. After Mary, the Mother of Jesus, it is John who receives this gift. John is the disciple whom Jesus loved, the witness who together with Mary, stood at the foot of the Cross [cf. Jn 19:26,f.]. His decision to consecrate himself totally is the fruit of the divine love which envelops him and fills his heart..." [# 23].

"...the sense of mission is at the very heart of every form of consecrated life... To the extent that consecrated persons live a life completely dedicated to the Father [cf. Lk 2:49; Jn 4:34], held fast by Christ [cf. Jn 15:16; Ga 1:15-16] and animated by the Spirit [cf. Lk 24:49; Ac 1:8; 2:4], they cooperate effectively in the Mission of the Lord Jesus [cf. Jn 20:21]... Consecrated persons will be missionaries of having been called and chosen by God, to whom they must therefore direct and offer everything that they are and have, freeing themselves from the obstacles that could hinder the totality of their response..." [# 25].

"... Fundamental to every charism is a three-fold orientation: ... charisms lead to the Father in the filial desire to seek his will, through a process of unceasing conversion...the attitude [mind] of consecrated persons... is progressively conformed to Christ...Finally, every charism leads to the Holy Spirit, insofar as it prepares individuals to let them be guided and sustained by him, both in their personal spiritual journeys, and in the lives of communion and apostolic work, in order to embody that attitude of service which should inspire the true Christian's every choice..." [# 36].

"... All consecrated persons by practicing the evangelical discipleship, commit themselves to fulfilling the Lord's 'new commandment' to love one another as he has loved us [cf. Jn 13:34]. Love led Christ to the Gift of Self, even to the supreme sacrifice of the Cross, So, too, among his disciples, there can be no true unity without that unconditional mutual love which demands a readiness to serve others generously, a willingness to welcome them as they are without judging them [cf. Mt 17:1-2] and an ability to forgive seventy times seven..." [Mt 18:22] [# 42].

"... Consecrated men and women are sent forth to proclaim by the witness of their lives the value of Christian fraternity and the transforming power of the Good News, which makes it possible to see all people as sons and daughters of God and inspires a self-giving love toward everyone, especially the least of our brothers and sisters. Such communities are places of hope and of discovering of the beatitudes..." [# 51].

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CONCLUSION

With a rich and varied vocabulary, the Universal Magisterium of this “New Advent” has emphasized repeatedly that the Consecrated Life is truly a Gift of the Spirit. The witness that the Church needs most of all is that of the challenge to answer as totally as Jesus Christ did to His Father’s Mission in the Holy Spirit:

1. The Consecrated Life is based on God’s own salvific Self-communication, His divine self-giving. The Life is a gift through grace, from One eternally given to His Father in the Holy Spirit.

2. The Consecrated life is presented as “this special gift” - a call of the Holy Spirit, that places Church members side by side with her martyrs. This gift has been raised up in the Church - this experience of the Holy Spirit is meant to be the fundamental option for all who embrace it. It is a unique gift of God’s love, offering a special relationship with the Jesus Christ, consecrated and sent.

3. The following are some of the many expressions to challenge the full living of the gospel life - through a ‘Principle of Totality’ - asked of all the baptized. The Consecrated Life is presented as a way imitating Christ’s own life with His Apostles, a truly radical discipleship, living all through life the evangelical law of self-giving; a truly radical living of Baptism; a living of evangelical discipleship:

- a progressively fuller configuration to Jesus Christ;
- an expression of devotion to God alone, through the mind of Jesus Christ;
- a total dedication to God and the Church;
- the living of the transcendental perspective;
- a gift of one’s entire self to God;
- complete self sacrifice, of one’s whole existence;
- giving oneself up for God and His plan;
- the sacrifice of one’s whole existence to God and His people;
- the surrender of one’s total existence;
- an entire commitment to God;
- a spousal gift of self in service;
- exclusive belonging to God;
- the giving of oneself exclusively to God;
- wholly dedicated, totally given;

- the essential pursuit of one's whole life;
- total and exclusive self-giving
- a whole, specific and exclusive gift of self;
- self- immolation lived as the soul of sacrifice;
- the giving of oneself entirely to the One Who gives of Himself eternally;
- a love of choice by the whole person;
- a gift overwhelming with the deepest content of the Gospel;
- a gift reflecting the divine and human image of the mystery of Redemption;
- a new bond, a total consecration, giving the human person to God as His possession;
- the answer to the call of redeeming love;
- the heart of consecration: an answer to the love of Christ's self-giving;
- the love of a total and exclusive consecration to God;
- a special covenant of spousal love;
- consecrated for everyone to God as his exclusive possession;
- complete subject of spousal and redemptive love of total self-giving;
- new life in Christ, in the Church, the beginning of a new Creation;
- unconditional dedication, consecrating all, present and future;
- complete self-offering, a genuine holocaust;
- the oblation of all that one is and has.

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4. On March 22, 1995, Pope John Paul II dedicated his Catechetical Instruction through his Wednesday audience to "The Influence of the Holy Spirit in the Consecrated Life" (27). In the course of this instruction, the Holy Father presented many insights that offer a good conclusion to these reflections.

a. Pope John Paul II stated that the spirituality of the commitment of the religious life is to be understood in the strongest sense of that word, meaning that it is meant to be an orientation bestowed by the Holy Spirit Himself. The Holy Spirit is the author of every interior progress, and the Giver of every grace in the Church [cf. LG 44; PC 1]. The living of the consecrated life flows from the sovereign and decisive action of the Holy Spirit, that the consecrated persons might experience in ineffable manner a certain created co-naturality of divine charity - quoting St. Thomas Aquinas [2-2, q.45, a.2].

b. It is the Holy Spirit who develops in the secret of each soul the grace of vocation - He is the principal Educator of vocations it is He Who guides the consecrated souls to perfection - He is the author of magnanimity, of patience, of the fidelity of each one. If allowed, the Holy Spirit exercises His influence in the formation of candidates to the consecrated life.

c. It is the Holy Spirit who arouses within human beings the inspiration of a radical donation to Jesus Christ - it is He Who is at the origin of a more immediate relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit as the effect of the evangelical counsel of chastity [cf. PI 13] It is the Spirit who exercises His permanent influence in order to bring about perseverance of those consecrated in prayer and in the life of intimate union with Jesus Christ. It is the breath of the Holy Spirit Who animates the Apostolic Mission of the Consecrated Life of community. Those living the consecrated life are called up to live a Holy Abandonment to His initiative.

d. This is the challenge of the Holy Spirit for the consecrated life, for those living it, and who are engaged in its apostolic mission as the dawn of the Third Millennium rapidly approaches. The consecrated life is a very special path to realize the ideal of the Second Vatican Council: "... The 'obedience of faith' [Rm. 16:26; cf. Rm 1:5; 2 Co 10:5-6] must be given to God as he reveals himself. By faith man freely commits his entire self to God, making 'the full submission of his intellect and will to God who reveals', and willing assenting to the Revelation given by him." [DV 5].

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END NOTES

- [1] Pope Pius XII, Allocution, in: AAS XLV [1953], pp. 674, f. - cited in *Humanae Vitae* note 21.
- [2] Pope Pius XII, Allocution, in: AAS XLVIII [1956], pp. 461, ff. - cited in HV, note 21.
- [3] cf. Jordan F. Hite, TOR, in: *The Code of Canon Law and Commentary. Commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America*, Study Edition. Title Two: Religious Institutes. Canons & Commentary. Edited by James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, Donald E. Heintschel. NY/Mahwah. Paulist 1985, p. 470.
- [4] Amadeo Cenci, *Spirito Santo e vita consecrata*, in: *Osservatore Romano*. Sabato 21 gennaio 1998, p. 1.
- [5] Pope John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation - March 25, 1996.
- [6] St. Augustine, *The Trinity. The Works of St. Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. Introduction, Translation and Notes*. Edmund Hill, OP. ed. John E. Rotelle, OSA, Brooklyn NY 1991.
- [7] Book IV, c. 5, n. 29, p. 174.
- [8] cf. Note 94, p. 184.
- [9] *The Trinity*. o.c., Book V, c. 3, n. 12, p. 197.
- [10] ib., n. 16, pp. 199, ff.
- [11] ib. Fr. Hill's Note 52, p. 204.
- [12] ib., Book V, c. 3, nn. 17, ff., pp. 416, passim.
- [13] *I Sentences*, d. 18; *Summa* I, q. 38, aa. 1-2.
- [14] cf. *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 10, ## 448-631. cf. Fabio Giardini, OP, *Il Dio che ci dà la vita*. Milano: Ed. Ancora 1989.
- [15] *Your Spirit, Lord, fills the Earth*. Prepared by the Theological-Historical Commission for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, chapter I: "The Mediation of the Spirit in the Trinity and in salvation", n. 3.
- [16] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptor Hominis*, 1st Sunday of Lent, March 4, 1979, n. 1.
- [17] Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*. November 10, 1994, n. 23.
- [18] *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*. Volume 2. General Editor Austin Flannery, OP, Document 53, pp. 680-706.

- [19] cf. *Mutuae Relationes*, in: *Vatican Council II. More Post-Conciliar Documents*. General Editor Austin Flannery, OP, Vol. II, Document 92 pp. 209-243.
- [20] *More Post-Conciliar Documents*, Vol. 2, Document 93, pp. 244-289.
- [21] cf. *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, Vol. 9, ## 184-296.
- [22] cf. *EV* 9, ## 193-293.
- [23] cf. *EV* 9, pp. 694-759 [## 721-758].
- [24] cf. *EV* 11, ## 2160-2190.
- [25] cf. *EV* 12, pp. 2-139 - especially ## 6-18, "Religious Consecration."
- [26] cf. *EV* 14, ## 345 - 357.
- [27] cf. *La vita consecrata. La Catechesi di Giovanni Paolo II, dal 28 settembre 1994 al 22*
[29] *marzo 1995. Introduzione di S. Em. il Cardinale Eduardo Martinez Somalo*, in: *Quaderni de l'Osservatore Romano*, n. 27. Citta' del Vaticano: Libreria Vaticana 1995, pp. 98-101, passim.

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