Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus; et qui amat filius aut filiam super me, non est me dignus. Et qui non accipit crucem suam, et sequitur me, non est me dignus. Qui invenit animam suam, perdet illam: et qui perdiderit animam suam propter me, inveniet eam.

– Matt. 10:37-39.

Bonum creatum non est minus quam bonum cuius homo est capax ut rei intrinsecae et inhaerentis: est tamen minus quam bonum cuius est capax ut objecti, quod est infinitum.

- St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, q.2, a.8, ad3.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deep gratitude to my religious community, to my family, and to the Angelicum. Without their support and prayers this thesis would not have been possible. I am particularly grateful to my abbot, Rt. Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem., for being very encouraging and especially for giving me this precious opportunity to deepen my understanding through study, research, and prayer as I prepared this thesis. Special gratitude is due to my prior, Fr. Hugh Barbour, O.Praem. He has been a trustworthy guide for me in matters both intellectual and spiritual over many years, and especially as I was writing the thesis. I would also like to thank my moderator Fr. Alfred Wilder, O.P., for his objective and meticulous yet prompt review of the thesis. Thanks also to Fr. Bruce Williams, O.P. and Fr. Charles Morerod, O.P., who were both instrumental in the preparation and revisions to the thesis. Finally, I would like to thank the confreres of Orange living in the generalate house this year, and in particular two confreres, frater Juan Diego Emerson, O.Praem., and frater Matthew Keiser, O.Praem., for their help in proofreading the thesis and for making helpful suggestions and posing good objections which helped me to understand and express a number of important arguments more clearly.

Table of Abbreviations for References to Works of St. Thomas

Comp. Theol.	*Compendium Theologiae*
Contra Err. Graec.	*Contra Errores Graecorum*
De Malo	*Quaestio Disputata de Malo*
De Nat. Gen.	*De Natura Generis*
De Potentia	*Quaestio Disputata de Potentia*
De Prin. Nat.	*De Principiis Naturae*
De Rat. Fid.	*De Rationibus Fidei*
De Reg. Prin.	*De Regimine Principum*
De Spir. Creat.	*Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*
De Sub. Sep.	*De Substantiis Separatis*
De Unione Verbi	*Quaestio Disputata de Unione Verbi*
De Unit. Int.	*De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas Parisienses*
De Veritate	*Quaestio Disputata de Veritate*
De Virtutibus	*Quaestio Disputata de Virtutibus*
In Boetii de Hebdom.	*Expositio super Boetii de Hebdomadibus*
In De Anima	*In Libros De Anima Aristotelis*
In Div. Nom.	*In Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus*
In Ethic.	*Sententia Libri Ethicorum Aristotelis*
In Metaph.	*In Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*
In Meter.	*In Libros Metereologicorum Aristotelis*
In Phys.	*In Libros Physicorum Aristotelis*
In Politic.	*Sententia Libri Politicorum Aristotelis*
In Post. Anal.	*In Libros Posteriorum Analyticorum Aristotelis*
In Psalm.	*In Psalmos Davidis Expositio*
In Sent.	*Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*
Q.D. De Anima	*Quaestio Disputata de Anima*
Quodl.	*Quaestiones Quolibetales*
S.T.	*Summa Theologiae*
S.C.G.	*Summa Contra Gentiles*
Super Boet. De Trin.	*Expositio super Boetii de Trinitate*
Super Ep. ad Eph.	*Super Epistolam S. Pauli ad Ephesios Expositio*
Super Ep. ad Hebr.	*Super Epistolam S. Pauli ad Hebraeos Expositio*
Super Ep. ad Rom.	*Super Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos Expositio*
Super Prim. Ep. ad Cor.	*Super Primam Epistolam S. Pauli ad Corinthios Expositio*
Super Prim. Ep. ad Tim.	*Super Primam Epistolam S. Pauli ad Timotheum Expositio*

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Chapter I: Introduction

Human dignity has been for centuries the rallying cry used to justify diverse and even contradictory philosophical, ethical, and political doctrines. Karl Marx was not reserved in his estimation of human dignity when he said: "The profession of Promethius: 'in a word, I hate all gods,' is the profession of philosophy itself, the discourse which it holds and which it will always hold against every god of heaven and earth which does not recognize human consciousness as the highest divinity. This divinity suffers no rival."[1] On the other hand, the decidedly anti-marxist John Paul II has this to say:

> It is by responding to the call of God contained in the being of things that man becomes aware of his transcendental dignity. Every individual must give this response, which constitutes the apex of his humanity, and no social mechanism or collective subject can substitute for it. The denial of God deprives the person of this foundation, and consequently leads to a reorganization of the social order without reference to the person's dignity and responsibility.[2]

Moreover, this conflict over the source, meaning, and implications of human dignity extends today to every branch of science that treats in some way of man, as the debates over recent developments in the medical and biological sciences bear witness. [3]

These conflicts among those who adhere to a doctrine which promotes the dignity of the human person reveal that there is need to understand more distinctly what is

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[1] Karl Marx, *Morceaux choisis,* eds. P. Nizan and J. Duret (Paris: NRF, 1934), p.37.
[2] John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, *Acta Apostolica Sedis*, LXXXIII (1991), p.810.
[3] See, for example, statements made in a recent lecture delivered by George Weigel. "Catholicism proposes a 'dignitarian' view of the human person, and challenges certain biotechnological procedures, including cloning, on the moral ground that they violate the innate 'human dignity' of persons. What, precisely, is the content of the 'human dignity'? What are its component parts? How is it violated by certain practices?" (G. Weigel, "The Fourth William E. Simon Lecture: The Next Pope…and Why He Matters to All of Us," *Notre Dame Magazine* (Spring, 2005)).

contained in the notion of human dignity and what the source of human dignity is. To this end the present thesis will examine the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas concerning the root of human dignity. This doctrine, as will be made manifest in what follows, grounds human dignity in the order of goods: more precisely, in the primacy of the common good of man over the merely private good of man. By showing that man is capable of participating in a common good that surpasses every created good, St. Thomas demonstrates convincingly that man can never be wholly subordinated to some merely created end, and in this way human dignity is guaranteed and safeguarded.

Methodology and Hermeneutical Presuppositions:

The aim of this thesis is not principally historical. The present thesis intends to contribute to human science and wisdom. For this reason this thesis principally aims to determine whether St. Thomas' teaching on the primacy of the common good is true: the historical fact of what St. Thomas intended to teach regarding the primacy of the common good is subordinated to this end as an instrument. This is not to minimize the importance of determining exactly what St. Thomas intended to teach on this issue. It is simply considering his teaching from a more fundamental perspective.[4]

The authority of St. Thomas, especially among Catholic philosophers, is of the highest rank. The Church points to him again and again as a teacher and source of wisdom, both in theology and in the philosophical sciences.[5] Hence, it makes no little difference whether we accurately understand his teaching on the primacy of the common

[4] See *De Modo Studendi* (Opusculum attributed to St. Thomas). "Do not have regard for the person from whom you hear [a doctrine], but keep in remembrance whatever is well said."
[5] See R.P.I.M. Ramirez, *De Auctoritate Doctrinali S. Thomae Aquinantis*, (Salamanca, 1952).

good. It is likely that one who possessed wisdom in such an extraordinary degree would have attained to the truth on the matter under consideration in large measure. Therefore, in order to participate in this truth it is necessary to establish certain criteria by which a safe and accurate judgment can be made about his teaching.

First, we presuppose that St. Thomas meant what he said: namely, that he did not intend to deceive his readers, or obscure his teaching by means of misleading or cryptic terminology. There is no historical evidence that indicates that he intended to deceive others or that he was using modes of expression intended only for a select group of disciples. On the contrary, the evidence shows convincingly that he was an honest, forthright man who was genuinely interested in discovering and teaching truth in a clear and accurate manner. Besides, a hermeneutic which presupposes that the author was intentionally deceiving or veiling his language, especially when clear evidence for such is lacking, is caught up in endless difficulties that make it all but impossible to guarantee the accuracy and certitude of one's interpretation.

Second, since it is important to know precisely what St. Thomas wrote, we will use authoritative Latin texts, not translations.[6] Moreover, we shall examine the pertinent texts for significant textual variants in critical editions of his work. In this way the various possible interpretations of St. Thomas' texts will not be excluded.

Third, the present thesis will be attentive to the genre of the texts being examined. To give some examples: It is clear that statements in an objection, since they are put forward not in St. Thomas' person, but in the person of an objector, should not carry the

[6] All quotations from works of St. Thomas in this thesis are translated from the Latin by the author. When a standard translation was lacking, or not readily available, for other sources in French, Italian, or Spanish, the translation is also the author's. In these cases the title of the cited work is given in the original language rather than in English.

same interpretive force as statements in the corpus of an article. Moreover, one should be attentive to whether a work is properly theological or philosophical since the nature of the arguments and the order in which the matter is treated often differs significantly in these two kinds of work. Again, since a commentary seeks principally to explain the thought of someone else, it cannot be presumed, *a priori* that a commentary represents St. Thomas' own opinion. These instances, and others like them, show the importance of considering the literary genre of the work being interpreted.

Fourth, it is important to attend to the development of St. Thomas' thought throughout his lifetime. If there is evidence that his thought changed significantly from an early treatment to a later one, it is essential that this be taken into account as a means of understanding his intentions more accurately. Thus, it is necessary to have some idea of the dates and order in which the relevant passages were written.

Fifth, it is important to take into consideration the particular historical circumstances and background in which St. Thomas formulated his doctrine of the primacy of the common good. To this end it will be helpful to examine the major influences on his thought and the controversies related to the common good among his contemporaries.

Finally, it should also be noted that this thesis does not intend to simply repeat and collect St. Thomas' teaching on the primacy of the common good but to develop it, both by more profoundly examining its principles and drawing out more fully what is virtually contained therein. For this reason, after Chapter I (Introduction and Methodology), Chapters II-IV will be principally dialectical, for the sake of penetrating more deeply into the principles of St. Thomas' thought on this matter since, as Aristotle

observed: "dialectic is a process of criticism wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries."[7] Chapters II and III will consider interpretations of St. Thomas, while Chapter IV will consider objections to the thesis from other sources. The next three sections (Chapters V-VII) will be essentially demonstrative: fashioning definitions and arguments for drawing out the elements virtually contained in these principles. The following section (Chapter VIII) will manifest how our interpretation resolves the difficulties (*i.e.*, those difficulties which were brought forth in Chapter IV), for, as Aristotle observed, the most satisfactory kind of exposition of some subject "will not only solve the difficulties connected with it, but will also show that the attributes supposed to belong to it really do belong to it, and further, will make clear the cause of the trouble and of the difficulties about it."[8] Finally, we shall recapitulate the main lines of our findings in a brief conclusion (Chapter IX).

[7] Aristotle, *Topics*, I.2, 101b4.
[8] Aristotle, *Physics*, IV.4, 211a8-11.

Chapter II: The Eschmann - De Koninck Debate

St. Thomas left to posterity a vast corpus of writings. The common good and the person were some of the topics which St. Thomas found so important that he returned to them again and again in his writings, often from significantly different perspectives and in radically different contexts. Therefore, it is not surprising, in a sense one could say it was inevitable, that among the several texts which St. Thomas has bequeathed to us, there are many which seem to assert diverse if not contradictory things about the common good and its relation to personal good and personal dignity. The purpose of this part of the thesis is to examine dialectically the most pertinent texts of St. Thomas in their respective contexts in order to determine as accurately as possible his definitive teaching on the common good and its relation to personal dignity.

Because it is generally admitted that human dignity is closely tied to man's greatest good, one of the most important issues which needs to be resolved in this matter is whether or not St. Thomas actually taught that man's greatest good is formally a common good. This was the question considered in a now famous controversy which took place in the shadow of World War II, on the continent of North America, between Charles De Koninck of the University of Laval in Quebec and Fr. Ignatius Thomas Eschmann of the University of Toronto. The controversy was ignited by the publication of a small book (an article really) by De Koninck in 1943 entitled: "De la Primauté du Bien Commun,"[9] which also contained an essay entitled "Le Principe de l'Ordre Nouveau." It was subtitled "Contre les Personnalistes," which, in Fr. Eschmann's mind,

[9] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun contre les Personnalistes, Le Principe de l'Ordre Nouveau* (Québec: Éd. de l'Université Laval, 1943).

meant the person of Jacques Maritain. Fr. Eschmann fired off a highly polemical response entitled "In Defense of Jacques Maritain,"[10] in which Fr. Eschmann brought a number of texts forward from St. Thomas which he claimed contradicted the substance of De Koninck's thesis. De Koninck responded with an equally polemical rebuttal to Eschmann's article, entitled "In Defense of St. Thomas."[11] The debate was remarkable in that it brought to the forefront many of the most significant texts from St. Thomas on the question of the primacy of the common good. The following dialectical consideration owes much to that debate.

II.A Texts of St. Thomas Which Imply That a Person's Greatest Good Is a Private Good

In the aforementioned debate Fr. Eschmann took the position that St. Thomas taught that man's ultimate and greatest good was formally a private good, not something whose very notion meant that it was communicable to many. Besides this Fr. Eschmann saw each and every intellectual creature as having an immediate and irreducible relation to God, such that no creature, not even the universe taken as a whole, could be understood as the end of a rational creature. His principal concern seems to have been to preserve the immediate contact, a personal relationship, between God and rational creatures.

> The most essential and dearest aim of Thomism is to make sure that the personal contact of all intellectual creatures with God, as well as their personal subordination to God, be in no way interrupted. Everything else – the whole

[10] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXII, n.4 (1945).
[11] "In Defense of St. Thomas: A Reply to Father Eschmann's Attack on the Primacy of the Common Good," *Éditions de l'Université Laval, Québec*, I, n.2 (1945); (Hereafter DST).

> universe and every social institution – must ultimately minister to this purpose. It is characteristically Greek and pagan to interpose the universe between God and intellectual creatures. Is it necessary to remind Thomists that they should not, in any way whatever, revive the old pagan blasphemy of a divine cosmos?[12]

The position that an intellectual creature should be subordinated to the universe as a whole, rather than being immediately subordinated to God, seems to rupture the immediate contact between God and intellectual creatures. Fr. Eschmann cites a text from the *Summa Theologiae* as evidence that St. Thomas would not permit such a subordination. The text is a response to an objection in which the objector argues that since the whole universe is more perfect than man, who is merely a part of the whole universe, then not only man, but even more so the entire universe should be said to be made to the image of God. St. Thomas offers the following response:

> The universe is more perfect in goodness than the intellectual creature extensively and diffusively. But intensively and collectively, the likeness of the divine perfection is more found in an intellectual creature, which is capable of the highest good. Or, it should be said that the part is not divided against the whole, but against another part. Hence, when it is said that only the intellectual nature is in the image of God, it is not excluded that the universe, as regards some part of it, is in the image of God, but there are excluded the other parts of the universe.[13]

As Fr. Eschmann interprets this passage God can be considered either as a cause or as he is in himself. From the standpoint of God's causal relationship to the universe the whole universe has "quantitatively more likeness [to God] in the whole than in the parts,"[14] but insofar as he is, in himself, the supreme good by his essence "a single intellectual creature is more likened to Him, because only the intellectual substance (every single

[12] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.192.
[13] *Summa Theologiae* (Hereafter *S.T.*), Ia, q.93, a.2, ad3.
[14] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.190.

intellectual substance) is capable of being, by knowledge and love, united with God as God is in Himself."[15] This is why St. Thomas says that only the intellectual creature can be said to be like God in the sense that it is made in the image of God. For Fr. Eschmann this latter is the more proper likeness, a likeness which is qualitatively closer to God. This likeness supersedes any good which the intellectual creature might have in virtue of being a part of the whole universe. Thus, intellectual creatures are compared by St. Thomas to children in a family, who are governed for their own sake and good, rather than like slaves who are governed for the good of others.[16] Thus, Fr. Eschmann rejects any notion that intellectual creatures have any other created end greater than themselves.

According to Fr. Eschmann not only is it true that there is no created good which is an end greater than the intellectual person himself, but it is also true that the intellectual creature's greatest good (which is found in God alone) is a good belonging to that person and no other. That is, Fr. Eschmann understands St. Thomas to teach that the person's ultimate good is not a common good. Fr. Eschmann bases this conclusion upon a series of texts, beginning with a text from the *Summa Theologiae*.

> For the creature is assimilated to God in two ways: namely, with regard to this, that God is good, [and so a creature is assimilated to God] insofar as the creature is good; and with regard to this, that God is the cause of goodness, [and so a creature is assimilated to God] insofar as one creature moves another to goodness.[17]

In short, as Fr. Eschmann interprets this text God can be considered from two perspectives: either as a *bonum universale in essendo* or a *bonum universale in causando*.

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[15] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.190.
[16] Fr. Eschmann cites St. Thomas' *In XII Metaph.*, lect.12; *De Spir. Creat.,* a.8; and *De Veritate,* q.5, a.5.
[17] *S.T.*, Ia, q.103, a.4, c.

When an intellectual creature is assimilated to God inasmuch as God is good in himself, then the creature is assimilated to God as the *bonum universale in essendo*. On the other hand, when an intellectual creature is assimilated to God inasmuch as, like God, the creature causes goodness in others, then the creature is assimilated to God as the *bonum universale in causando*. When St. Thomas speaks of God as a formally common good, he is referring to God under the latter formality. Moreover, when St. Thomas states that the common good is more divine than the private good, he is referring to the order of goods according as God is the *bonum universale in causando*. "He [Aristotle] says that this good [*i.e.*, the common good] is more divine on account of this: that it reaches more to a likeness to God, who is the universal cause of all goods."[18] That is, the common good is more divine in this respect: that it more attains to a likeness to God insofar as God is a cause of all goods (*i.e.*, a *bonum universale in causando*). According to Fr. Eschmann, however, "there is another respect to which the above text gives no consideration. This is the likeness to God *in linea essendi*."[19] Fr. Eschmann holds that this latter assimilation is the most profound likeness. "The very first and essential element of our ordination to God is not the fact that God is the *bonum universale in causando*, the fountain of all communications, but that He is the *bonum universale in essendo*."[20] To put it simply God is the object of our most profound ordination insofar as he is the highest good (*summum bonum*), that which is essentially good, not the common good (*bonum commune*).[21]

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[18] *In Ethic.*, I.2.
[19] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.197.
[20] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.196. We note here that Fr. Eschmann is making a formally theological statement insofar as he is presupposing that man is ordained by grace to see the essence of God. However, it seems to me that he could have made an analogous argument even considering God as an object of natural knowledge and love.
[21] *Cf.*, *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.5, ad4. "A common good is not the object of charity, but the highest good."

It is true, Fr. Eschmann admits, that this assimilation to God *in essendo* happens to be common to many intellectual creatures, but according to St. Thomas this is really accidental to the nature of this kind of good, for "if there would be only one soul enjoying God, it would be blessed, not having a neighbor whom it would love."[22]

So far we have traced Fr. Eschmann's argument that when an intellectual creature attains to God insofar as God is formally a common good, the creature is likened to God insofar as God is the cause of all goods, but no text has been brought forth from St. Thomas himself which indicates that the assimilation to God as he is in himself, *in linea essendi*, is a greater assimilation and a greater good than the assimilation to God inasmuch as God is a cause of goodness in other things. To this end Fr. Eschmann cites what he refers to as "the most concise and the most explicit statement of what we now call Personalism."[23] This text is a response to an objection in which the objector argues that beatitude consists formally in an act of the practical intellect since we are more like God in our practical knowledge (which is a cause of the things we make) than in our speculative knowledge (which, unlike God, we accept from things). Thomas' reply: "The aforesaid likeness of the practical intellect to God is according to proportionality since it [the practical intellect] is to its cognition just as God is to his [cognition]. But the assimilation of the speculative intellect to God, is according to union or information, which is a much greater assimilation."[24] To make the connection clearer, Fr. Eschmann cites *Summa Theologiae*, IIa-IIae, q.47, a.11, which he claims asserts that the highest object of the practical intellect is formally a common good. In contrast, Fr. Eschmann goes on, "the act and good of the speculative intellect" is a purely personal (in the sense

[22] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.4, a.8, ad3.
[23] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.197.
[24] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.3, a.5, ad1.

of private) good. It is in virtue of this private good, however, that we are most closely assimilated to God. Thus, it would seem that St. Thomas teaches that the highest good for man, for any intellectual creature, is a private good.

Fr. Eschmann avails himself of a second group of texts from St. Thomas to arrive at the same conclusion. In these texts St. Thomas speaks of the primacy of the solitary life of contemplation over the public life of action. St. Thomas poses the objection that beatitude consists more in an act of the practical intellect than in an act of the speculative intellect since the common good is more divine and the good of the practical intellect can be a common good, whereas the good of the speculative intellect belongs only to the one who is contemplating.[25] In his response St. Thomas states:

> The attainment of the end to which the speculative intellect arrives, insofar as it is such, is proper to the one attaining; but the attainment of the end which the practical intellect intends is able to be proper and common, insofar as through the practical intellect someone directs both himself and others to the end, as is clear in a ruler of a multitude. But someone from the fact that he is speculating, is himself directed singularly to the end of speculation. However, the end itself of the speculative intellect exceeds the good of the practical intellect inasmuch as its singular attainment exceeds the common attainment of the good of the practical intellect. And therefore, the most perfect beatitude consists in the speculative intellect.[26]

Since the good of the speculative intellect is something singularly attained, and yet even as such exceeds the common good, which can be attained through the practical intellect, it seems that the greatest good of the intellectual creature must be a purely private good, a

[25] See *In IV Sent*. d.49, q.1, a.1c, obj.1. "For to the extent that some good is more common, to that extent is it more divine, as is clear in the first book of the Ethics. But the good of the speculative intellect is singularly his who speculates, while the good of the practical intellect can be common to many. Therefore, beatitude more consists in practical understanding than in speculative."
[26] *In IV Sent*. d.49, q.1, a.1c, ad1. See also *In III Sent.* d.35, q.1, a.4c.

good that is formally attained in solitude. To add weight to this interpretation Fr. Eschmann cites a famous text from *Summa Theologiae*, IIa-IIae.

> It ought to be considered that that which is solitary ought to be *per se* sufficient. This, however, [is one] to whom nothing is lacking, which pertains to the notion of the perfect…[and] just as that which is already perfect is more excellent than that which is striving for perfection; so also the solitary life, if it be duly assumed, is more excellent than the social life.[27]

Clearly that which is more perfect is a greater good, and so, since the most perfect good is most self-sufficient, it seems to follow that the greatest good is a good which most of all can be obtained and enjoyed apart from dependence on others, but this can be nothing other than a private good. Hence, it seems from this authority as well that St. Thomas teaches that the private good exceeds the common good.

There remains one final argument which Fr. Eschmann implies,[28] based upon St. Thomas' writings on the person. St. Thomas, in a number of passages, states that "for the notion of a person, it is demanded that it be a whole and complete thing."[29] Therefore, it follows that it does not belong to a person, *qua* person, that it be a part of some larger whole. Therefore, since a common good demands that those who share it be part of a larger whole, it follows that any common good cannot be a good of the person, *qua* person. The greatest good of the person, therefore, must be a good wholly commensurate with the singular person.

These are the texts of St. Thomas and arguments which Fr. Eschmann brings forth to substantiate his claim that the greatest good of the person is a private good, a unique

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[27] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.188, a.8, c.
[28] Fr. Eschmann offers only an enthymeme here for which I have supplied the remainder of the argument.
[29] *In III Sent*. d.5, q.3, a.2, ad3. Also see d.5, q.1, a.3, ad3; and *S.T.*, IIIa, q.16, a.12, c.

good which belongs to each person singularly and cannot belong to anyone else. Let us turn now to the other texts of St. Thomas which seem to assert the opposite.

II.B Texts of St. Thomas Which Imply That a Person's Greatest Good Is a Common Good

Professor Charles De Koninck gave the texts of St. Thomas a strikingly different interpretation than the interpretation Fr. Eschmann gave them. According to De Koninck St. Thomas clearly and consistently taught that the greatest good of the intellectual creature is formally a common good. He bases his conclusion upon an analysis of St. Thomas' metaphysical doctrine of the good. De Koninck argues that since "the good has the notion of a final cause,"[30] the highest good must be a most common or most universal good. He reaches this conclusion by bringing together a number of texts from St. Thomas. "The higher some cause is, so much more does its causality extend itself to many. For a higher cause has a higher proper effect, which is more common and found in more things."[31] However, that cause and good which communicates itself to more things is better than that which extends itself to fewer things.

> For it is manifest that any cause is the more powerful inasmuch as it extends itself to more effects. Whence also the good, which has the notion of a final cause, is the more powerful inasmuch as it extends itself to more things. And therefore, if the same thing is the good of one man and of the whole city, it seems much better and more perfect to undertake - that is, to procure, to defend and to preserve - that which is the good of the whole city than that which is the good of one man. For it pertains to the love which ought to exist among men that a man seek and conserve

[30] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.4, c.
[31] *In VI Metaph*., lect. 3.

> the good even of only one man, but it is much better and more divine that this be shown to the whole people and to the cities.[32]

From this it follows that the most common good, in the sense of the good which is the highest final cause, is the best of all goods. If it be admitted, therefore, that the principal dignity of the person is found in the person's ordination to the highest good, it is clear that the root of personal dignity is found in this primacy of the common good.

De Koninck is careful to point out that there are many ways in which the expression "common good" might be understood or misunderstood. Someone might understand the common good as being the sum or aggregate of all the particular goods in a community, but this according to De Koninck is not the kind of common good which St. Thomas teaches has primacy. De Koninck therefore goes on to make some precisions to more accurately identify the kind of good he places at the foundation of personal dignity.

> The common good is not better insofar as it comprehends the singular good of all the singulars; [if that were so,] it would not have the unity of the common good which is from the fact that the common good is universal according to a certain manner; but it would be merely a collection; it would be only materially better [than the singular good]…When we distinguish the common good from the particular good, we do not intend to say by this that it is not the good of the particulars: if it were not the good of the particulars, then it would not be truly common.[33]

The common good is therefore not opposed to the proper good, but rather to the private good. Explaining the radical difference between a truly common good and a simple collection of singular goods, De Koninck states: "The common good differs from the

[32] *In Ethic*. I, lect. 2.
[33] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.8-9.

singular good by this very universality. It has the notion of superabundance and it is eminently diffusive of itself insofar as it is more communicable: it extends itself to the singular more than the singular good; it is the greater good of the singular."[34] Thus, according to De Koninck there can be no question of the common good not being the good of the one who shares in it. It is at once common and proper. Citing a text from St. Thomas, De Koninck goes on to distinguish the ways in which a good can be something's proper good, even though it is a common good.

> A thing's own good can be taken in many ways: In one way, according as a good is something's own good considered insofar as it is an individual. And in this way an animal desires its own good when it desires food, by which the animal is conserved in being. In another way, by reason of its species: and in this way an animal desires its proper good inasmuch as it desires the generation of offspring and the nutrition of its offspring, or whatever other thing it does for the conservation or defense of the individuals of its species. But in a third way, by reason of its genus: and in this way an equivocal agent desires its own good in causing other things as, for example, the heavens do. In the fourth way, however, by reason of the likeness of analogy of principled things to their principle: and in this way God, who is outside a genus, gives being to all things on account of his own good.[35]

Clearly, the second and third of these are proper goods which are also common goods, not merely private goods. Yet they are proper and common in different respects. Insofar as they are shared by many, they are common, but insofar as they belong to each of those who shares in them, they are proper. It is remarkable, De Koninck points out, that even a brute animal prefers the common good of its species to the singular good of its being. "Every singular naturally loves the good of its species more than its singular good."[36] De Koninck observes, however, that when the brute animal acts for the good of its species, it

[34] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.8.
[35] *S.C.G.* III.24.
[36] *S.T.*, Ia, q.60, a.5, ad1.

does not do so explicitly but implicitly and by instinct, for instinct is a participation in intellect, and hence follows the order of intellect. Furthermore, the good of equivocal agents is a good which extends to many species, and this kind of good is found especially in intellectual substances.

Citing St. Thomas again, De Koninck argues that the order found in nature according to which the common good is preferred to the singular good is also found in the desire that follows upon knowledge.

> To the degree that something is of more perfect virtue and more eminent in its level of goodness, so much does it have a more common desire for the good, and so much the more does it seek and bring about the good in things more distant from itself. For imperfect beings tend to only the good of the individual as such; but perfect beings tend to the good of the species; and more perfect beings tend to the good of the genus. God, however, who is most perfect in goodness, tends to the good of all being. Whence, not undeservedly is it said by some that the good, insofar as it is such, is diffusive: since to the degree that something is found to be better, so much does it diffuse its goodness to more remote things.[37]

Nowhere, says De Koninck, is this natural inclination to prefer the common good more evident than in purely spiritual beings. Thus, he quotes St. Thomas approvingly where he teaches that

> since affection follows cognition, the more universal is the cognition, the more the affection following it respects the common good. And the more particular is the cognition, the more the affection following it respects the private good. Hence, also in us private love arises from sensitive knowledge, but love of the common and absolute good arises from intellectual knowledge. Since, therefore, the higher the angels are, the more universal is the knowledge they possess, as Dionysius says in the twelfth chapter of the *Angelic Hierarchies*, their love most of all respects the common good.[38]

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[37] *S.C.G.* III.24.
[38] *De Spir. Creat.*, a.8, ad5.

It seems, therefore, that the principle of the primacy of the common good is absolutely universal, extending throughout the whole order of beings, even unto God. De Koninck concludes:

> One sees through this that the more a being is perfect, the greater is its relation to the common good, and the more it acts principally for that good which is, not only in itself, but for it, the better good. Rational creatures, persons, are distinguished from irrational beings, in that they are more ordered to the common good and in that they are able to act expressly for it…In every genus, the common good is superior.[39]

De Koninck, therefore, understands St. Thomas to teach that, although all beings are in some way related to the more common goods, the dignity of the intellectual creature in particular derives from an explicit striving for and attainment of these common goods.

De Koninck finds it necessary to offer a final precision in his assessment of the primacy of the common good, namely that the common good be loved precisely as a common good, under the aspect of its communicability to others, for to desire this good in any other way is to appropriate and subordinate it to oneself as if it were a private good. De Koninck makes reference to a passage where St. Thomas speaks to this very issue.

> To love the good of some city happens in two ways: in one way, so that it might be held [for oneself]; in another way so that it might be conserved. But to love the good of some city so that it might be held and possessed, does not make a good political man; since thus also a tyrant loves the good of some city so that he might lord over it, which is to love himself more than the city. For he desires this good for his very self, not for the city. But to love the good of the city so that it might be conserved and defended, this is to love the city truly, which makes a good political man: insofar as some men expose themselves to the danger of death

[39] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.14-15.

> and neglect their private good for the sake of conserving and increasing the good of the city.[40]

Thus, it is not sufficient that someone love the common good above every other good. A person must also love the common good precisely as common in order to attain to his highest dignity. De Koninck goes on to cite St. Thomas as teaching that beatitude itself must be attained formally as a common good. "To a man enrolled in the celestial [city] certain gratuitous virtues are befitting, which are the infused virtues, for the due operation of which is fore-demanded a love of the good common to the whole society, which is the divine good, insofar as it is the object of beatitude."[41] Thus, even the very divine good, attained as the object of beatitude, is a common good on this account.

Besides the fact that created persons are ordained to God as a separate, common good, and that in this right ordination persons find their proper and highest dignity, De Koninck claims that to achieve this dignity it is necessary that created persons also be ordained to the intrinsic common good of the universe, namely its order. To support this claim De Koninck cites four texts from the writings of St. Thomas which, when read together, lead one to this conclusion.

> God produced all things in being, not from the necessity of nature, but through intellect and will. However, there cannot be any other ultimate end of his intellect and will except his goodness, so that he might communicate it to things, as is apparent from the foregoing. Things share the divine goodness, however, through the mode of likeness, insofar as they are good. That, however, which is most of all good in caused things is the good of the order of the universe, which is the most perfect of all, as the Philosopher says: with which saying the divine Scriptures also are in accordance in Gen. 1 when it is said that "God saw all that he had made and they were very good," while about the singular works it had simply said that they were good. Therefore, the good of the order of things

[40] *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.2, c.
[41] *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.2, c.

> caused by God is that which is principally willed and caused by God. But to govern things is nothing other than to impose order on them. Therefore, God himself governs all things by his intellect and by his will. Furthermore, anyone intending some end cares more about that which is closer to the ultimate end: since this also is the end of the other things. But the ultimate end of the divine will is his own goodness, the closest to which in created things is the good of the order of the entire universe: since to it is ordered, as to an end, every particular good of this or that thing, just as the less perfect is ordered to that which is more perfect. Hence, also, any part is found to be on account of its whole. That which God mostly cares for in created things, therefore, is the order of the universe.[42]

From this it is clear, says De Koninck, that although God governs rational creatures for their own sake, nevertheless, God also wills and governs them for the sake of another. St. Thomas goes on to answer the question why did God will multitude and diversity in creatures.

> The distinction and multitude of things is from the intention of the first agent, which is God. For he produced things in being for the sake of communicating his goodness to creatures, and representing it through them. And since through one creature he is not able to be sufficiently represented, he produced many and diverse creatures, so that what is lacking to one for representing the divine goodness, is supplied from another; for the goodness which is simply and uniformly in God exists in creatures in a divided and multiform manner. Hence, the entire universe more perfectly shares the divine goodness and represents it than any other creature.[43]

Furthermore, St. Thomas teaches:

> In whatever effect, that which is the ultimate end is properly intended by the principal agent; just as the order of the army [is intended] by the leader. That, however, which is the best in existing things is the good of the order of the universe…therefore, the order of the universe is properly intended by God, not proceeding accidentally according to the succession of agents…But…this order of the universe is *per se* created by him, and intended by him.[44]

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[42] *S.C.G.* III.64 .
[43] *S.T.*, Ia, q.47, a.1, c.
[44] *S.T.*, Ia, q.15, a.2, c.

And further still, he writes:

> That which is good and best in an effect is the end of its production. But the good and best of the universe consist in the order of its parts to one another, which is not able to be without distinction. For through this order, the universe is constituted in its totality, which [totality] is the best of it. Therefore, this order of the parts of the universe and the distinction of them is the end of the production of the universe.[45]

From these texts, and others like them, De Koninck concludes that St. Thomas definitively taught that the singular person and his singular good cannot be the primary root (in the sense of an ultimate intrinsic end) and measure of all intrinsic good in the universe.

These are some of the texts which De Koninck uses to support his conclusions that for St. Thomas a person's highest good is formally a common good and that the person's highest dignity is found in being ordered to and expressly attaining such a good. Moreover, De Koninck concludes that every created person is ordained to the good of the order of the universe as to an end. In brief, we may say that De Koninck sees these doctrines as necessary conclusions from St. Thomas' understanding of the good as the preeminent cause. Let us now turn to Fr. Eschmann's critique of De Koninck's position.

II.C Fr. Eschmann's Critique of De Koninck

After the publication of *La Primauté du Bien Commun*, Fr. Eschmann offered a critique of the positions presented by De Koninck. This critique did not object to

[45] *S.C.G.* II.39.

everything found in De Koninck's work, but was restricted to a few central theses. The two theses against which Fr. Eschmann's critique is primarily directed can be expressed as follows:

1) Created persons are ordered and subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe, namely the order of the universe.[46]

2) Created persons are ordered and subordinated to the ultimate separate good of the universe (*i.e.*, God) first and foremost insofar as God has the notion of a common good.[47]

Before we examine Fr. Eschmann's arguments, it is important to observe that some of what is said in this critique is founded upon Christian revelation, or at least presupposes that both parties accept this revelation. Naturally, a properly philosophical work cannot pretend to judge of such matters except insofar as they touch upon truths which can be known by reason unaided by revelation. Therefore, we shall restrict ourselves to those parts of the debate which are of properly philosophical content. As it happens, however, it seems that the most essential issues in the debate did not concern the interpretation of revelation, but rather the philosophical underpinnings used to grasp the revealed truths more fully.

[46] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.187. On page 27 of his work, De Koninck expresses this first thesis in different terms. "dans l'univers même, les personnes ne sont voulues que pour le bien commun de l'ordre de l'universe;" ("In the universe itself, persons are not willed except for the common good of the order of the universe"). It seems, however, that he would have accepted the formulation offered by Fr. Eschmann.
[47] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.187.

Against the first thesis, Fr. Eschmann offers a two-fold refutation. First, he attacks a principle upon which he thinks De Koninck bases his conclusion, namely the principle that persons are material parts of the universe. He uses the texts of St. Thomas to show that, on the contrary, persons are primary and formal parts of the universe which are first ordained to God and, only then, through this immediate ordination to God, are persons related to other creatures. Second, Fr. Eschmann disputes the interpretation of some texts of St. Thomas cited by De Koninck.

Fr. Eschmann interprets De Koninck to say that "persons are subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe, *i.e.*, its order. And they are thus subordinated because they are material parts, materially composing and materially constituting that order and common good."[48] If, however, persons are just material parts of the universe, it follows that, "being material parts of the cosmos and subordinated, as material parts to the stars and the spheres, they will have just as much responsibility, just as much choice, as the pistons in a steam engine."[49] This conclusion serves as a *reductio ad absurdum* for Fr. Eschmann, and so he finds it unnecessary to argue further on this point. On the other hand, since texts of St. Thomas have been brought forward to support this position by De Koninck, Fr. Eschmann offers "the true meaning of St. Thomas' texts,"[50] namely, St. Thomas' teaching that persons are not material parts of the universe, but rather principal and formal parts of the universe.

At this point, Fr. Eschmann cites a number of texts from St. Thomas and gives a reason why these texts, and not those quoted by De Koninck, are more relevant and to the point for understanding St. Thomas' teaching on the common good. We have already

[48] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.187.
[49] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.189.
[50] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.189.

seen a number of the texts used by Fr. Eschmann (above in II.A). According to Fr. Eschmann's interpretation the thrust of these texts can be summarized as follows: The perfection of goodness is found more in that which is more closely assimilated to God,[51] but the assimilation of the single created person to God is a much greater assimilation than that of the universe taken as a whole.[52] Therefore, the perfection of goodness is found more in the single created persons than in the universe as a whole. Moreover, Fr. Eschmann draws the reader's attention to two other texts of St. Thomas, one from the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk.III, chapter 113, where St. Thomas says: "Acts of intellectual creatures are directed by divine providence not only insofar as they pertain to a species but as personal acts;"[53] and the other from the same work, Bk.III, chapter 112, where St. Thomas says: "Intellectual substances are…referred to God and to the perfection of the universe."[54] The former text seems incompatible with De Koninck's position, for how can that which is governed and willed for itself be governed and willed for the sake of another? In the latter text Fr. Eschmann takes St. Thomas to be teaching that intellectual creatures are *first* referred to God and then, only through this immediate relation to God, are they referred to the order of the universe. These texts, therefore, appear to contradict the texts cited by De Koninck.

Why should the reader give precedence to one set of texts over the other when trying to understand St. Thomas' doctrine on the common good? Because, as Fr. Eschmann argues, the problem which St. Thomas was attempting to resolve in the set of texts quoted by De Koninck is not directly related to the relation between the good of the

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[51] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.93, a.2, ad1; *In III Sent.*, d.2, q.1, a.1c; d.16, q.1, a.2; d.32, q.5, a4, ad2; *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.7, ad5; *S.T.*, IIIa, q.4, a.1, ad4.
[52] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.3, a.5, ad1.
[53] *S.C.G.* III.113.
[54] *S.C.G.* III.112.

person and the common good of the universe, while the set of texts quoted by Fr. Eschmann is meant to address this issue directly. According to Fr. Eschmann, in the texts quoted by De Koninck St. Thomas was facing the problem of Greco-Arabian necessitarianism which denied a personal God and an all-embracing providence.

> By these citations, no proper doctrine on the common good is taught; and still less is anything said about the relations between the common good and the proper good of the intellectual substances…This is the group of texts Professor De Koninck argues from. He should not have done so, because they do not properly and immediately belong to the question he undertook to treat.[55]

On the other hand, in the set of texts used by Fr. Eschmann, St. Thomas was facing the problem of the position or rank of intellectual substances, especially human souls, within the universe. "In St. Thomas' discussion of these problems, a doctrine is set forth which may well be called Thomistic personalism…This is the group of texts…which Professor De Koninck should have taken into account. But he did not."[56] Thus, Fr. Eschmann argues that the texts of St. Thomas cited by De Koninck were cited out of their broader historical and literary context, so that their meaning was substantially altered. Fr. Eschmann's conclusion is that St. Thomas nowhere teaches that created persons are ordered and subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe. Rather, St. Thomas teaches the exact opposite.

Fr. Eschmann now turns his attention to the second of the two theses mentioned above, namely the thesis that created persons are ordered and subordinated to God first and foremost insofar as God has the notion of a common good. Fr. Eschmann attacks this thesis as well as a corollary which follows upon this thesis, namely that the beatitude of

[55] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.191-192.
[56] "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.192.

the person is formally a common good. Against the thesis itself Fr. Eschmann first rejects De Koninck's interpretation of a text from the *De Caritate*[57] and then offers an alternative interpretation. Second, he makes a distinction which he uses to argue that created persons are principally ordered to God as their private good.

Because the text from the *De Caritate* treats of a formally theological matter, we shall only briefly sketch Fr. Eschmann's critique insofar as it relates to illuminating St. Thomas' opinion about the more general question of the divine good as a common good. The text from the *De Caritate* reads as follows:

> If a man is admitted so far as to share the good of some city, and is made a citizen of that city, certain virtues are befitting for accomplishing those things which are of the citizen and for loving the good of the city; so when a man is admitted through divine grace into the participation of the heavenly beatitude, which consists in the vision and fruition of God, he is made as it were a citizen and companion of that blessed society, which is called the heavenly Jerusalem according to Eph. 2:9, "You are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." Hence, to a man thus enrolled in the celestial [city] certain gratuitous virtues are befitting, which are the infused virtues, for the due operation of which is fore-demanded a love of the good common to the whole society, which is the divine good, insofar as it is the object of beatitude.[58]

Fr. Eschmann asserts that De Koninck took this text out of its context, thus altering its intended application from a relatively modest sphere of moral activity to an application which has universal import for moral action, "whereas, according to St. Thomas' text [the love of the common good] is prerequisite for the exercise of the infused virtues, according to Professor De Koninck, this [love of the common good] is made a

[57] Citations for this work hereafter are indicated as question 2 of the *De Virtutibus* since this is how the work is referred to in most recent compilations of St. Thomas' works.
[58] *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.2, c.

prerequisite for moral philosophy and social metaphysics."[59] Besides this, Eschmann continues, De Koninck has misconstrued the argument as an argument through proper analogy rather than an argument by way of example. According to Fr. Eschmann, St. Thomas is not asserting here that God as the object of our beatitude is formally a common good. He is simply using the example of the city as a way of coming to understand a similar case as it pertains to beatitude. The example is unlike the case of beatitude precisely in the respect that De Koninck wants to assert an analogy. For St. Thomas the object of charity (*i.e.*, God as our beatitude) is not a common good, but rather the highest good.[60] The common good, as such, Fr. Eschmann points out, is the object of infused justice, not charity. Thus, Fr. Eschmann rejects De Koninck's interpretation of this text from the *De Caritate*.

More to the point for our purposes, since it pertains to a properly philosophical matter, is Fr. Eschmann's claim that De Koninck has failed to grasp the fundamental distinction between the *bonum universale in causando* and the *bonum universale in essendo*. This distinction, as we saw above when treating of Fr. Eschmann's interpretation of St. Thomas, pertains to the way in which God can be considered a universal, or common good. When an intellectual creature is assimilated to God inasmuch as God is good in himself, then the creature is assimilated to God as the *bonum universale in essendo*. On the other hand, when an intellectual creature is assimilated to God inasmuch as, like God, the creature causes goodness in others, then the creature is assimilated to God as the *bonum universale in causando*. Eschmann's critique of De Koninck is that he confused the latter for the former. While it is essential to the notion of

[59] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.194.
[60] See *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.5, ad4.

a *bonum universale in causando* that it be a common good, since in its very notion it implies being communicated to many, it is only accidental to a *bonum universale in essendo* that it be a common good. "The common good, and every common good, is formally *bonum universale in causando*: it is not formally *bonum universale in essendo*."[61] This confusion, says Fr. Eschmann, led De Koninck to posit that man's ultimate good, the very possession of God, is a formally common good, when in fact it is not. On the contrary, Fr. Eschmann cites St. Thomas as teaching that what is formal in our ordination to God as our greatest good is that God be possessed as our personal, in the sense of private, good.

> The aforesaid likeness of the practical intellect to God is according to proportionality; since, namely, [the practical intellect] stands to its cognition just as God [stands] to his [cognition]. But the assimilation of the speculative intellect to God, is according to union or information, which is a much greater assimilation.[62]

This text, which we have already seen, speaks of the information of the intellect by the speculative cognition of God.[63] Since this form is an act of the very individual intellect which is so informed, Fr. Eschmann concludes that this greatest good by which we are most closely united to God is a purely personal good, not a formally common good, "for, is not this act and good of the speculative intellect a personal good?"[64]

Having offered his critique of De Koninck's position that created persons are primarily ordered to God as a common good, Fr. Eschmann next takes up a corollary

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[61] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.196.
[62] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.3, a.5, ad1.
[63] The question about whether this cognition involves seeing God through his essence, or not, is taken up later. It therefore leaves open the possibility that this text might be taken to refer to both the natural speculative knowledge man can have about God or to the supernatural knowledge man can have about God.
[64] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.197.

which follows from this position, namely that the created person's beatitude consists formally in a common good. Against this corollary Fr. Eschmann first argues that the concept upon which such a corollary is founded, namely, the concept of the speculative felicity of a community, is self-contradictory and opposed to the explicit teaching of St. Thomas. Second, he refutes the thesis and corollary together by arguing that beatitude cannot be objectively or formally a common good, but can be such only extrinsically and materially.

De Koninck, while considering objections to his own thesis, considers the objection that the supreme beatitude is speculative, while the speculative life is solitary, not lived in common. He responds by arguing, citing Peter of Auvergne, that even this speculative felicity is obtained precisely as a common good. It is this notion of a beatitude or felicity of the community which Fr. Eschmann attacks. According to Fr. Eschmann, "the very notion of the 'speculative felicity of the person qua member of the community' is contradictory. In fact, to be a member of the community means to be imperfect, perfectible and *in via*; whereas to have reached speculative felicity means to be perfect and *in termino*."[65] As evidence that St. Thomas also rejected such a notion of speculative felicity, Fr. Eschmann cites two texts of St. Thomas from his commentary on the Sentences in which St. Thomas treats a similar problem. "Just as the good of one consists in action and contemplation, so also the good of the multitude, according as it pertains to the multitude to be free for contemplation."[66] Fr. Eschmann notes that here St. Thomas' notion of a multitude sharing the good of contemplation does not refer to a single common act of contemplation, but rather to the liberty enjoyed by the members of

[65] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.201.
[66] *In III Sent.*, d.35, q.1, a.4a, ad2.

the community for contemplation. In the other text St. Thomas makes it clear that the good of speculation is a purely solitary act.

> The attainment of the end, to which the speculative intellect arrives, insofar as it is such, is proper to the one attaining. But the attainment of the end which the practical intellect intends is able to be proper and common inasmuch as through the practical intellect someone directs himself and others to the end, as is clear in a director of a multitude. But someone, from the fact that he contemplates, is himself singularly directed to the end of contemplation. However, the end itself of the speculative intellect exceeds the good of the practical intellect as greatly as its singular attainment exceeds the common attainment of the good of the practical intellect. And therefore, the most perfect beatitude consists in the speculative intellect.[67]

Basing himself upon this text Fr. Eschmann argues that since the most perfect beatitude consists in an act of the speculative intellect and since a person directs himself alone in this act, it follows that the supreme beatitude of the person is a private good.

Fr. Eschmann draws together the lines of argument we have summarized above to form a conclusive rejection of De Koninck's thesis.

> *Objectively*, *i.e.*, viewed from the part of its uncreated object, the vision [of God] is not a common good; it is not even God as a common good (to speak of common good in a proper and adequate language) but it is God Himself, the *Bonum universale in essendo*, as has been shown above. *Formally*, *i.e.*, viewed as a created act and good, the vision is that supreme, personal good by which a created intellect elevated in the light of glory, is most intimately united with, and perfectly likened to, God. With these two elements, the essence of the vision [of God] and of final beatitude is fully circumscribed. No further element pertains to the intrinsic nature of final beatitude.[68]

Fr. Eschmann's conclusion is that personal beatitude can only be considered as a common good materially and extrinsically insofar as it happens that many persons share

[67] *In IV Sent.*, d.49, q.1, a.1c, ad1.
[68] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.202-203.

in this good. He, therefore, categorically rejects De Koninck's thesis that God, as the object of personal beatitude, is a formally common good.

This concludes our consideration of Fr. Eschmann's critique of professor De Koninck. It remains to be seen how De Koninck responds to Fr. Eschmann's charges.

II.D De Koninck's Rebuttal and Counter-Critique of Fr. Eschmann

After the publication of Fr. Eschmann's article, Professor De Koninck published a rebuttal and counter-critique of Fr. Eschmann's position which turned out to be longer than his [De Koninck's] original article. The nature of this rebuttal is highly polemical, a tone set by Fr. Eschmann's article, and follows the format of Fr. Eschmann's article in order to provide a point-by-point refutation. The net effect is that the further refinements and contributions to the doctrine on the common good are somewhat obscured. This summary of De Koninck's rebuttal attempts to bring out in a more serene and synthetic manner the further contributions which this work makes to St. Thomas' doctrine on the common good. Therefore, first, we shall examine the main points of refutation and then offer a more synthetic account of the doctrine contained in the rebuttal.

Since Fr. Eschmann had attacked two main theses in his article, De Koninck's response is ordered to a defense of these two theses. Concerning the first thesis that the created person is ordered to God primarily insofar as God is a common good, De Koninck first defends his use of the phrase "principal parts materially constituting the universe." The reader will recall that in his critique, Fr. Eschmann had interpreted De Koninck as saying that created persons are "material parts, materially composing and

materially constituting" the order and common good of the universe. The problem is that De Koninck never said that created persons were "material parts" of the universe. These words were inserted by Fr. Eschmann. De Koninck is quick to point out Fr. Eschmann's insertion. "Why does he add the word 'material'? Is there no difference between 'parts materially composing" and "material parts materially composing'?"[69] To manifest the difference between the two in the doctrine of St. Thomas, De Koninck cites a passage from the Angelic Doctor's commentary on the *Physics* of Aristotle.

> [There seems to be a doubt] concerning that which he [Aristotle] says: that the parts are material causes of the whole, when above [he had said that] the parts of a definition reduce to formal cause. And it can be said that above he spoke about the parts of a species, which fall in the definition of the whole. Here, however, he speaks about the parts of matter, in the definition of which falls the whole, just as the circle falls in the definition of the semi-circle. But it is better to say that although the parts of the species which are placed in the definition are compared to the supposit of nature through the mode of formal cause, nevertheless, they are compared to the nature itself, whose parts they are, as matter. For all parts are compared to the whole as imperfect to the perfect, which is the comparison of matter to form.[70]

It is quite clear from this text that it is possible for principal, formal parts to constitute a whole materially, so that it is not at all the same to refer to created persons as "parts materially constituting the whole" and as "material parts materially constituting the whole." Moreover, since the remainder of Fr. Eschmann's argument on this point rests upon the assumption that persons were considered as material parts of the universe, it is clear that his argument against De Koninck fails on this point.[71]

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[69] De Koninck, DST, p.15.
[70] *In II Phys.* lect. 5. See also *In III Phys.* lect. 12. "It is manifest from those things which were said in the second [book] that the whole has the notion of form, but the parts have the notion of matter."
[71] In a particularly effective "closing argument," De Koninck refers to a passage in which St. Thomas expressly states that even Christ, according to his humanity is a member of the Church, though not

The next point with which De Koninck takes issue is Fr. Eschmann's criticism of the argument that the greatest perfection within the universe is the perfection of the order of the whole universe. Here is how De Koninck frames the question: "Is it in the very being of the individual persons taken separately that we find most perfectly realized the good which God produces, that is, *the good that is in the universe itself*? Or is it rather the total order of the universe which most perfectly represents, and is closer to, the ultimate separated and extrinsic good which is God?"[72] The question reduces to a question of order. Among the goods found *within* the universe, which is first: the perfection which is constituted by the individual persons taken separately, or the perfection which is constituted by the whole order of the universe? De Koninck argues for the latter, while Fr. Eschmann argues for the former. Yet, De Koninck points out, all along Fr. Eschmann has been arguing from a concept of the common good which De Koninck categorically rejects, a concept which conceives the common good as some thing one *per se*, like a natural body. As evidence of this De Koninck quotes, among other passages, the following text from Fr. Eschmann's article.

> It seems to me…that the bare essence of this doctrine might be summed up in the following *enthymema*: St. Thomas says: *ad rationem personae exigitur quod sit totum completum*; or again, *ratio partis contrariatur personae*. Hence, Jacques Maritain concludes, the person, *qua* person, is not a part of society; and if a person is such a part, this "being part" will not be based upon the metaphysical formality and precision of "being person."[73]

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according to his divinity, since as God he is the common good of the entire universe, and hence does not have the notion of a part (See *Super Prim. Ep. ad Cor.,* c.12, lect.3).

[72] De Koninck, DST, p.19 (Emphasis in the original text).

[73] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.205.

The two citations from St. Thomas refer to the position that the human soul, when separated from the body, is not a person. Hence, the clear context of these citations indicates that it is contrary to the notion of a person to be part of a substantial unity. How then could the conclusion follow that a person, *qua* person, cannot be part of a state unless the state is conceived as something *per se* one? "Since the argument calls for a consistent meaning of the term 'part,' and since the 'part' of the *antecedens* means 'part of an *unum per se*,' to 'be a part of society' must mean 'to be a part of an *unum per se.*'"[74] In view of this notion of the common good proposed by Fr. Eschmann, De Koninck not only denies that it is the notion he had proposed but also emphatically states:

> I must energetically reject all possibility of a subordination of the person to Father Eschmann's common good, or to anything like the common good as he understands it. Hence…we may be certain that, even within definite orders, my Opponent's totalitarian common good could not possibly be accepted, by any Thomist, as superior in any sense over the particular good of persons.[75]

Having distinguished his own understanding of the common good from Fr. Eschmann's, De Koninck returns to the question of whether the greatest good within the created universe is the good of the whole order of the universe. At this point De Koninck addresses Fr. Eschmann's method and principles of interpretation when it comes to the texts of St. Thomas. Recall that Fr. Eschmann had criticized De Koninck for failing to take into account the historical context of the passages he cited. More specifically, Fr. Eschmann argued that the texts of St. Thomas cited by De Koninck were concerned with defending the Christian doctrine of divine providence against "Greco-Arabian necessitarianism." Hence, Fr. Eschmann concluded that "no proper doctrine on the

[74] De Koninck, DST, p.23.
[75] De Koninck, DST, p.21-22.

common good is taught" in these texts. De Koninck responds first by supplementing the texts he had already cited with several other texts supporting the same position: namely that the best of all created beings is the order of the universe.[76] De Koninck then proceeds to criticize Fr. Eschmann's interpretation.

> According to Fr. Eschmann, when St. Thomas says that God governs the order of the universe and bestows upon it His greatest care (*maxime curat*) because it is the *maxime bonum in rebus causatis*, the *praecipue volitum et causatum*, and because the good of the order of the universe is the *propinquissimum in rebus creatis* to His own goodness, *cum ad ipsum ordinetur, sicut ad finem, omne particulare bonum hujus vel illius rei, sicut minus perfectum ad id quod est perfectum*, he does not really mean the reasons he gives to be taken as the true reasons. When St. Thomas exposes these reasons, and does so in language so unmistakable that even a reader who finds his view unacceptable must grant the obvious significance of these passages, still we are not to take the Angelic Doctor as meaning what he says.[77]

The fact that these passages are found in a larger context where they are used as supporting reasons for drawing other conclusions is not evidence that they are not true as stated. Otherwise, they would hardly support the conclusions they were meant to support. Rather, "the manifold truths which St. Thomas does draw from this fundamental truth illustrate its importance and fecundity;"[78] they do not invalidate the status of this fundamental principle as a truth in its own right. De Koninck notes that Fr. Eschmann's method of interpretation forces him into holding the position that "St. Thomas is not concerned here with strictly doctrinal truth, but with creating an impact against a Greek

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[76] The additional texts he cites are: SCG, II.42; II.44; I.70; I.71; *S.T.*, Ia, q.22, a.4, c.; q.49, a.2, c.; and *De Veritate,* q.5, a.3, c. and ad3. De Koninck also reiterates his position that here, contrary to the assertion of Fr. Eschmann, he is talking about the greatest good *within* the universe, not the greatest good absolutely speaking (*i.e.*, God).

[77] De Koninck, DST, p.29.

[78] De Koninck, DST, p.26. It should also be noted that St. Thomas' use of this principle is not restricted to showing that there is an all-embracing divine providence. For example, in SCG II.39, St. Thomas uses this principle to demonstrate that the distinction of things from one another is not a result of chance.

heresy, even at the cost of making false or misleading statements."[79] It is clear that such a method of interpretation leads one into endless difficulties that make it all but impossible to guarantee the accuracy and certitude of one's interpretation. Thus, it is clear that Fr. Eschmann's interpretation of these texts must be discarded.

De Koninck next turns his attention to criticizing the positive argument Fr. Eschmann had developed for his position from the texts of St. Thomas. This argument, as we saw above, was based upon a text from the *Summa Theologiae*. We quote it again here for the reader's convenience.

> The universe is more perfect in goodness than the intellectual creature extensively and diffusively. But intensively and collectively, the likeness of the divine perfection is more found in an intellectual creature, which is capable of the highest good. Or, it should be said that the part is not divided against the whole, but against another part. Hence, when it is said that only the intellectual nature is to the image of God, it is not excluded that the universe, according to some part of it, is to the image of God, but there are excluded the other parts of the universe.[80]

In this text, Fr. Eschmann had interpreted the expressions "extensively and diffusively" to mean that there is quantitatively more goodness in the universe as a whole than in each single creature taken separately, and the expression "intensively and collectively" to mean that there is qualitatively a greater likeness to the divine goodness and perfection in each created person than in the universe taken as a whole. More than this, Fr. Eschmann seems to think that this means that the good which is intensively more like the divine goodness, *i.e.*, the good of each person taken separately, is, absolutely speaking, better than the good of the universe taken as a whole. Indeed, Fr. Eschmann's reading of this text would in no way be an objection to De Koninck's thesis unless this is what he

[79] De Koninck, DST, p.30.
[80] *S.T.*, Ia, q.93, a.2, ad3.

thought, for in De Koninck's view the good of the order of the universe is a good able to be possessed by each created person, a good which is simply speaking, a greater good for that person than its own intensive likeness to God as an image of God.

De Koninck challenges Fr. Eschmann's interpretation of the expressions "extensively and diffusively" and "intensively and collectively" as well as his view that the latter perfection is absolutely, or simply speaking, better than the former. De Koninck's argument, in brief, is that, if Fr. Eschmann's interpretation is correct, St. Thomas' entire doctrine for why God made creatures many and varied is destroyed. Citing several texts from the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *De Potentia*,[81] De Koninck shows that the underlying reason in each case for why God created many creatures of various perfections is that "the superabundance of whatever exists in God *simpliciter et uniformiter*, is more perfectly expressed by what exists in creation *multipliciter et divisim*. The inexhaustible richness of the divine intelligible species is, absolutely speaking, more perfectly represented by the multiplicity of created species."[82] This teaching of St. Thomas can be gathered, for example, from the following texts from among those cited by De Koninck.

> Therefore, just as the first reason for the divine providence simply speaking is the divine goodness, so the first reason in creatures is their diversity (*numerositas*), for the institution and conservation of which all other things are seen to be ordered.[83]

> For both of these errors [of Origen and of the Manicheans] seem to disregard the order of the universe in their consideration, by considering only its singular parts.

[81] *S.C.G.* II.45 & III.97; *De Potentia,* q.3, a.16, c.; ad1; ad2; ad5; ad7; ad10; ad12; ad13; ad18; and ad22 (Also See *Comp. Theol.* c.72, 73 and 102).
[82] De Koninck, DST, p.33.
[83] *S.C.G.*, III.97.

> For from the very order of the universe its reason was able to be manifested, that from one beginning, with no difference of merits preceding, it was necessary that diverse grades of creatures be instituted so that the universe would be a completion (with the universe representing through many and various kinds of creatures what pre-exists in the divine goodness simply and without distinction) just as also the very perfection of a house and of a human body requires a diversity of parts.[84]

The multiplicity of creatures, in this view, is not a mere quantitative, homogenous multiplication of the same perfection which is found in the singular persons intensively, as Fr. Eschmann seems to understand it.[85] Rather, it is an amplification that compensates for and completes what is formally lacking in the singular creature's intensive imitation of the divine perfection. "The imperfection of intensive imitation is compensated by extension, by the manifold. By manifold, we do not mean the mere homogenous multiplicity of predicamental quantity; nor do we mean that the manifold of creation is an end insofar as it is a manifold…Material multiplicity is for the sake of formal multiplicity."[86] The extensive and diffusive perfection found in the order of the whole universe must be understood as signifying more than a mere quantitative improvement. It is an improvement which results in the whole having more than the mere sum of its parts, an improvement which makes the whole to be simply better than each of its parts, or even all of them taken as a mere aggregate. This is not to deny that the intensive perfection of any single part is *in some respect* better than the whole.[87] It is only to say that *simply*

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[84] *De Potentia,* q.3, a.16, c.
[85] As examples of how wide the latitude of the expressions "extensive" and "intensive" can be in St. Thomas' vocabulary De Koninck cites *In I Sent.* d.44, q.1 a.2 and *S.T.*, IIIa, q.1, a.4.
[86] De Koninck, DST, p.35-36. In this context, De Koninck quotes *S.T.*, Ia, q.47, a.3, ad2. "No agent intends material plurality as an end, since material multitude does not have a definite term, but of itself tends unto the unlimited. Moreover, the unlimited is repugnant to the notion of an end."
[87] Thus, De Koninck readily admits "it would be true to say that, *intensive*, any single creature represents more perfectly the uniqueness of anything it has in common with God. *Intensive*, any single created intelligible species represents more perfectly than a multiplicity of species the unique intelligible species

speaking the good of the order of the whole universe is better than the perfection found in any one of its parts, including any of the created persons in it. To hold, as Fr. Eschmann does, that the primary good intended by God in the production of creatures is the intensive perfections of the singular persons, while the good of the order of the universe is something secondary, is to reject St. Thomas' reasoning for why God made a multiplicity of creatures. If, absolutely speaking, the greater representation of the divine goodness could be accomplished with a single creature, there would be no further reason to create more creatures.[88] De Koninck concludes with a summary of his argument.

> What does my Opponent mean by: "there is quantitatively more likeness in the whole than in its parts"? Does he mean that whether God makes one image of himself, or many, the difference is merely quantitative? That, *absolutely* speaking, there is no better expression of Himself when He produces images many and varied, than when He produces a single one? By this superficial understanding of the term "extensive" Father Eschmann destroys the Thomistic doctrine of the reason why God made the intellectual creatures many and varied.[89]

Throughout this rebuttal to this portion of Fr. Eschmann's critique De Koninck notes that Fr. Eschmann attacks his position as if he were asserting that the end of rational creatures which is the order of the universe were the ultimate end of rational creatures. De Koninck denies having asserted this position, and, indeed, it is not found expressly anywhere in his book. On the contrary, De Koninck consistently affirms that God, who is outside of the universe, is the ultimate end of rational creatures. In this respect, however, the creature is not considered as a part of the universe.

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which is God's essence." DST, p.33. Again, he says: "*Intensive*, any indivisible part of a creature is, as to the formality 'indivisible,' a better imitation of divine simplicity than any created whole." DST, p.35.

[88] If we may be permitted to borrow an analogy from theology, the case would be like that of the procession of the Son from the Father. Since the Son perfectly represents and imitates the Father, there is no need for there to be a further procession by way of likeness. Hence, there is only one Son (See *De Potentia,* q.3, a.16, ad12).

[89] De Koninck, DST, p.39.

> When we consider God "as He is in Himself the supreme good by His essence" and the intellectual creature as "capable of being, by knowledge and love, united with God as God is in Himself," the good in question is beyond the universe to which the creature is compared as part to a whole. In this respect, the intellectual creature is not to be considered formally as a part of the universe at all.[90]

In this respect, Fr. Eschmann's criticism is not directed at De Koninck's thesis. Yet due to a confusion on Fr. Eschmann's part he takes De Koninck to be asserting something which he is not. De Koninck identifies where Fr. Eschmann's confusion lies. "He confuses the good of the persons that is the universe, with the good that is the persons; he confuses the persons as contributing to the essential perfection of the universe (which perfection is, within this order, their *finis cujus gratia*) with the persons considered as 'for whom' (*finis cui*) is the perfection of the universe."[91] The persons taken separately are truly goods for whom the perfection of the universe is a good. This good of the order of the universe is not for the sake of some "super-entity" which is the universe; rather it is precisely for the persons. Yet the perfection of the order of the universe is, within this order, the end for the sake of which the persons are made, not vice-versa. This end for the sake of which the persons are constituted is, simply speaking, their greater good: a good which is a formally common good since it is for each one of them and not possessed by one to the exclusion of the other.

This concludes De Koninck's refutation of Fr. Eschmann's criticism concerning the thesis that, for created persons, the greatest good within the universe itself is the whole order of the universe. De Koninck next considers Fr. Eschmann's re-interpretation of the passage which De Koninck had cited from the *De Caritate*. Again, because the

[90] De Koninck, DST, p.40.
[91] De Koninck, DST, p.41.

doctrine contained in this portion of the debate is principally and formally theological, we shall only consider De Koninck's refutation to the extent that it is necessary to reveal St. Thomas' actual doctrine on the primacy of the common good. In fact, De Koninck goes to some length in defending his interpretation, and his argumentation is well worth reading *in toto*. The reader is encouraged to consult the entirety of this section for which we shall provide only a brief summary.

Recall that the most substantial criticism which Fr. Eschmann had made of De Koninck's interpretation of *De Caritate*, a.2 was that the object of charity is not formally a common good but rather the highest good. Indeed, basing himself upon this objection, Fr. Eschmann concluded that in the text under consideration, St. Thomas could not have been referring to God as a common good in the proper sense of the term but only in a "certain sense." De Koninck, therefore, evaluates the text which Fr. Eschmann cites from article 5 of the same *De Caritate*. "*Bonum commune non est objectum caritatis, sed summum bonum*." De Koninck points out that the expression "*bonum commune*" might be taken in the sense of "*commune*" in predication, or "*commune*" in causation.[92] Unless the cited text uses the expression "*bonum commune*" in the sense of common in causation, the objection does not hold against De Koninck's thesis, since this is the sense

[92] De Koninck cites the following text from the commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard as an instance where St. Thomas makes this key distinction. "To the extent that some good is more common, to the same extent is it more divine, as is clear in the first book of the Ethics. But the bodily good is more common than spiritual good, since the bodily [good] extends to plants and brute animals, but not to spiritual things. Therefore, the bodily good takes precedence over the spiritual good, and so in beatitude is more to be sought in bodily goods." To which the response reads: "Something can be called common in two ways. In one way through predication. But in this way the common is not the same in number in the diverse instances. And in this way, the good of the body has commonness. The other way is something common according to participation of one and the same thing according to number. And this community is most of all able to be found in those things which pertain to the soul, since through it there is reached that which is the good common to all things, namely God. And therefore, the argument does not follow." (*In IV Sent.*, d.49, q.1, a.1a, obj.3 & ad3). For an in depth study on this distinction in St. Thomas, see Ronald McArthur, "Universal *in Praedicando*, Universal *in Causando*," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, XVIII, n.1, (1962): p.59-95.

in which he understands that the common good is an object of charity. A closer reading in context of the text, specifically the objection which it answers, reveals, however, that the "*bonum commune*" that St. Thomas denies is the object of charity is in fact a good common according to predication, not according to causation. Moreover, the common good referred to in the text cited by Fr. Eschmann does not even refer to the good of persons, but rather something shared by different virtues. "The 'common good' of this text is to be taken, not as the common good of persons, but as the good common to different virtues, nor is it a *commune in causando*, but in *praedicando* and *essendo*."[93] De Koninck goes on to evaluate Fr. Eschmann's translation of the Latin term "*quoddam*." Fr. Eschmann had assumed that the term "*quoddam*" was used as an adjective meaning "in a certain sense." He took this as evidence that when St. Thomas refers to God as "*quoddam bonum commune*,"[94] this means that he is not calling God a common good in a strict or proper sense, but only in "a certain sense." However, as De Koninck points out, in its first sense, the sense in which St. Thomas most frequently uses it, "quoddam" is an indefinite pronoun and can be translated simply as "a." More significantly, if Fr. Eschmann's translation were correct, the very argument which St. Thomas makes in *De Caritate*, a.5, would be lacking a univocal middle term.

> My Opponent does not realize that, besides making the gratuitous assumption that "quoddam" must mean "in a certain sense," he is implicitly accusing St. Thomas of constructing a syllogism with four terms. For unless "bonum universale" is a "bonum commune" in the strict sense…the whole proof of this article 5 is sophistical.[95]

[93] De Koninck, DST, p.43.
[94] *S.T.*, Ia, q.60, a.5, ad5.
[95] De Koninck, DST, p.45.

These considerations substantially weaken Fr. Eschmann's claim that the argument of St. Thomas is not meant to be construed as an argument through proper analogy having true demonstrative force but simply an argument by example. Indeed, De Koninck argues that unless St. Thomas understood that there is a true analogy between the common good of the earthly *civitas* and the common good of the heavenly *civitas*, which is God, his argument is no argument at all.

> Now he plainly must have some reason for using the example of the city. The comparison between the earthly city and the heavenly must strengthen his argument in some way. It follows that in his mind, the two have something in common if his proof is to be valid. In a word, what St. Thomas establishes here is that the divine good, *prout est beatitudinis objectum*, must be loved as the good citizen loves the good of the earthly city; and this means that it must be loved "ut permaneat et diffundatur," and not, like the tyrant, "ut habeatur et possideatur."[96]

From these considerations it is sufficiently clear that Fr. Eschmann's re-interpretation of *De Caritate*, a.5 cannot be upheld and that De Koninck's interpretation of the same is to be preferred.

De Koninck next tackles the accusation that he had failed to grasp the fundamental distinction between *bonum universale in causando* and *bonum universale in essendo*. Basing the heart of his argument upon several passages from St. Thomas' *De Veritate*, q.20-23,[97] De Koninck first distinguishes several senses in which the terms *bonum in essendo* and *bonum in causando* can be understood, and then goes on to distinguish the various possible senses of *bonum universale in causando* and *bonum universale in essendo*. He then evaluates Fr. Eschmann's criticism based upon these

[96] De Koninck, DST, p.51.
[97] Specifically, see *De Veritate* q.20, a.4, c.; q.21, a.1, c. & ad4; a.2, c.; a.3, ad2; a.4, c.; a.5, c.; q.22, a.1, ad7; and q.23, a.1, ad3. Also see *S.T.*, q.5, a.1, ad1; a.3; q.6, a.3; *In Div. Nom.,* c.4, lect.16; and *In Boetii de Hebdom.,* o.

distinctions. Because the reasoning in this section is so closely knit and carefully worded, it is better to simply quote it at length rather than to provide a summary.

> Let us now consider the expressions *bonum universale in essendo* and *bonum universale in causando*. The former may bear three distinct meanings: first, it may be taken to mean *bonum universale in praedicando* which is common to all things insofar as they are good in any way; secondly, it may mean the perfection of the divine being considered in itself, without formal reference to will; thirdly, it may mean *bonum universale per essentiam*, where the good is understood in the rigorous sense of "perfectivum alterius per modum finis," and this is the divine good, for God is good *simpliciter* by His very essence, "inquantum ejus essentia est suum esse."
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> *Bonum universale in causando* may mean the divine good considered according to the strict formality of the good, *i.e.*, as "perfectivum alterius per modum finis." It has already been emphasized that, when so considered with respect to the divine will, the divine good is a final cause only "secundum modum significandi," because in God, "voluntas et volitum distinguuntur tantum ratione." However, unless we use this "modus significandi," we do not express the proper formality of the good. But the divine good becomes a final cause in the strict sense of "cause," when considered with respect to a will which is not identical with the divine good: "voluntas et volitum aliquando distinguuntur secundum rem; et tunc volitum comparatur ad voluntatem sicut realiter causa finalis." In either case, however, God is called *bonum universale in causando*, and this term is opposed to the second meaning of *bonum universale in essendo*. Finally, the same expression – *bonum universale in causando*, may also be used to signify the divine good as the universal effective and exemplary cause of all created goodness.
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> Hence, *bonum universale in essendo* understood in its third sense, and *bonum universale in causando* taken in its first sense are the same thing, the only difference being that the former expresses the identity of the divine goodness and the divine being; the latter brings out the proper formality of the divine good as final cause, either "per modum significandi," or "sicut realiter causa finalis." When we oppose the two and apply them to God, then *bonum universale in essendo* must be taken in the second sense, which prescinds from the proper formality of the good as "perfectivum alterius per modum finis."
>
> And now let us examine Fr. Eschmann's reasoning more closely. In *forma*, it amounts to this: The term of our ordination to God is *bonum universale in essendo*. But *bonum universale in essendo* is not *bonum universale in causando*. Therefore, the term of our ordination to God is not *bonum universale in causando*.
>
> To this we answer that if *bonum universale in essendo* means *bonum per essentiam*, and *bonum universale in causando* means *bonum universale per modum finis*, the major of the argument is true, but the minor false. If, on the

> contrary, *bonum universale in essendo* is taken to mean the perfection of the divine being considered absolutely, *i.e.*, prescinding from the formality: "perfectivum alterius per modum finis," the minor is true, but the major is false. In either case, the conclusion is null.[98]

Recall that De Koninck consistently refers to God as a *bonum universale in causando* in the sense of a *bonum universale per modum finis*. Hence, if Fr. Eschmann's distinction is to have any weight in refuting De Koninck's position, he must take *bonum universale in causando* in the same sense as De Koninck does, but if this is the case, then whatever sense of *bonum universale in essendo* Fr. Eschmann uses, his argument fails, as De Koninck shows above. In fact, the principal difficulty is that Fr. Eschmann has failed to distinguish between the good through the mode of efficient and exemplary causality, and the good, in its strict and proper sense, through the mode of an end.

> While it is true that, according to the proper usage of the word, 'to diffuse' is seen to imply the operation of an efficient cause, nevertheless, broadly taken, it is able to indicate a habitude of whatever cause, just as 'to influence' or to 'make' and other things of this kind. When, however, it is said that the good is diffusive according to its own notion, diffusion is not to be understood according as it implies the operation of an efficient cause, but according as it implies the habitude of a final cause. And such a diffusion is not by the mediation of some superadded power. Moreover, the good signifies the diffusion of a final cause, and not of an agent cause: first since an efficient [cause], insofar as it is such, is not the measure and perfection of a thing, but rather its beginning, and then since the effect participates in the efficient cause according to assimilation of form only, but a thing obtains the end according to its whole being (*esse*), and the notion of the good consists in this.[99]

Because of his failure to make this distinction, Fr. Eschmann assumed that De Koninck was referring to the divine good as the exemplary and efficient cause of created good.

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[98] De Koninck, DST, p.57.
[99] *De Veritate* q.21, a.1, ad4.

Hence, Fr. Eschmann fundamentally misunderstood De Koninck's argument, in spite of the numerous places in his original article where De Koninck made this very distinction.

Basing himself upon the same distinction it is easy for De Koninck to refute Fr. Eschmann's reasoning that personal beatitude can only be considered as a common good extrinsically and materially insofar as it happens that many persons share in this good, for Fr. Eschmann has not rightly understood the meaning of the expression "objective beatitude." God is the object of beatitude, not insofar as he is the exemplar and efficient cause of created goods, but insofar as he is the final cause of intellectual creatures. Hence, the basis for Fr. Eschmann's objection is removed.

Having made these fundamental distinctions De Koninck next considers what Fr. Eschmann refers to as the "chief personalist text." For the reader's convenience we reproduce the text here.

> The aforesaid likeness of the practical intellect to God is according to proportionality; since, namely, [the practical intellect] stands to its thing known [*i.e.*, its object] just as God [stands] to his [thing known]. But the assimilation of the speculative intellect to God is according to union or information, which is a much greater assimilation.[100]

This text, according to Fr. Eschmann, teaches that the assimilation to God by union or information, which is a purely personal, *i.e.*, private, good, is a much greater good than the good which one possesses in being assimilated to God insofar as God is a common good. De Koninck first attempts to understand Fr. Eschmann's argument.

> Fr. Eschmann desires to show that God, as the object of beatitude, cannot be a common good. Now, if such is to be his conclusion from the quotation and

[100] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.3, a.5, ad1.

> parenthesis, it can follow only from an argumentation which, simplified to its utmost, will go something like this:
>
> 1. The object of the practical intellect is an operable good. But the common good is the highest object of the practical intellect. Therefore, the common good is an operable good.
>
> 2. The operable good is not an object of the speculative intellect. But the common good is an operable good. Therefore, the common good is not an object of the speculative intellect.
>
> 3. The common good is an operable good. But God is not an operable good. Therefore, God is not a common good.
>
> 4. The assimilation of the speculative intellect to God is not a common good. But beatitude is "assimilatio intellectus speculativi ad Deum." Therefore, beatitude is not a common good.
>
> Our answer will be brief. We distinguish the minor of the first two arguments and contradistinguish their conclusions: the common good which is the highest object of the practical intellect is the common *operable* good, not the common good which is an intelligible end [See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.3, a.4]. The same distinction applies to the major of the third argument, and to its conclusion: the minor of the argument we concede. We concede the major of the last argument, and contradistinguish the minor and the conclusion: if beatitude is taken as it is in the major, *i.e.*, formal beatitude, we agree; if taken to mean the objective beatitude of the creature, we deny.
>
> Father Eschmann may object to the form in which the minor of the first argument is cast: for it states the common good to be the highest object of the practical intellect, whereas his parenthesis ran: "the highest object of the practical intellect is a common good." But the point is that, unless he accepts this statement of his premise, he cannot possibly reach that conclusion. It is the interpretation he must put upon his own words.[101]

The distinctions which De Koninck makes here, and which render the arguments ineffective, again reveal Fr. Eschmann's inability to understand the divine goodness precisely as a final cause. For Fr. Eschmann the common good must be an operable good because it is one which is in the order of efficient cause. We can only be assimilated to God in this way insofar as we are agents producing good in other things, but, as De Koninck points out, the divine goodness is truly an object of the speculative intellect as an intelligible end and as the ultimate formal and final cause of the beatitude of the created person. Moreover, Fr. Eschmann considers only the formal aspect of beatitude

[101] De Koninck, DST, p.69-70.

which is the very speculative act subjected in the person, but he fails to consider that beyond this act, there is the object of beatitude itself, the divine common good understood as a final cause, drawing our intellect to its perfection. It is this attracting, divine good, a good drawing *all* things to itself (and hence a common good), which is the ultimate reason for beatitude. "However, our act is not posited to be beatitude, except by reason of its perfection, from which it has it that it is co-joined in a most noble way to the exterior end. And therefore, we are not the cause of our own beatitude, but God [is]."[102] It is this exterior end which is the common good, the object of beatitude, whose primacy De Koninck is concerned to defend.

Next De Koninck takes up Fr. Eschmann's criticism of the concept of the "speculative felicity of the community." Recall that Fr. Eschmann had characterized such a concept as "contradictory," which is nothing other than to say that it is no concept at all. De Koninck's response is that if one were to understand what is meant by the expression "speculative felicity of the community" in the way that Fr. Eschmann understands it, then it is true that it implies a contradiction, but De Koninck argues that it is in fact Fr. Eschmann's misunderstanding of the way in which God is a common good which leads him to misunderstand what is meant by the speculative felicity of the community. Fr. Eschmann was once again considering only the formal beatitude which consists in the operation of the individual person, but not the very object of beatitude which is the divine good.

> What I mean by the speculative good of the community is none other than the object of beatitude…The apparent opposition between the solitude of the speculative life and the community of its object is due to a failure to distinguish

[102] *In IV Sent.* d.49, q.1, a.2b, ad2.

> beatitude on the part of those who enjoy it, from the beatitude which is the very object.[103]

This object of speculative contemplation which is the ultimate good for the created person is called a common good because of its superabundance and communicability, not because it is actually communicated to many.

> Our formal felicity is not *beatitudo per essentiam*, but by participation and hence cannot be equal to its cause – objective beatitude. In its incommensurable communicability to many, objective beatitude is numerically one. That it is actually communicated to many does not affect it intrinsically. Even for the creature, the respect of *excedens et excessum* remains entirely the same. It is for this reason that, as we have already shown, the divine good can only be compared to the creature as the good of the whole to the part, whether other creatures actually exist or not.[104]

For De Koninck, then, God as the object of beatitude is a common good not because he happens to be possessed by many but because his goodness is of its nature superabundant and incapable of being exhausted or possessed completely by any creature, or even all creatures taken together.[105] There will always be a partial grasping of this goodness by the creature so that the creature will always stand to the divine goodness as a part to an exceeding whole.[106]

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[103] De Koninck, DST, p.76.
[104] De Koninck, DST, p.76.
[105] In an unpublished letter to Fr. R. J. Belleperche, S.J., dated Dec. 17, 1946, De Koninck wrote the following: "The common good has the nature of what is common as opposed to proper, *primo et per se* because, in a given order, its perfection is greater than what can be possessed by an individual as a proper good – which shows that it always denotes an imperfection *in eo cujus est bonum*. Otherwise (and this is important especially in the case of beatitude) the community of the good would arise only from the existence of the many to share in it. And thus you also see what 'part' and 'whole' mean in this connection." This letter can be found among the De Koninck correspondence held at the Center for Maritain Studies, University of Notre Dame, Indiana.
[106] Since the divine goodness infinitely exceeds the created goodness which participates in it as a line exceeds a point, the creature is not even a part in the full sense in relation to the divine good, just as a point is not a part of the line if we take part in the strictest sense.

Not only is the objective beatitude of the created person distinct from the formal beatitude of the created person, but there exists a definite order between them, namely the personal speculative felicity which consists in the very operation of the one contemplating is to be ordered to its object as to a common good. That such is the doctrine of St. Thomas, De Koninck shows from the article in the *Secunda Secundae*, which asks whether a man ought to love God more than himself. There St. Thomas argues that indeed a man ought to love God more than himself, precisely because God is a common good to whom the creature stands as a part. "The part loves the good of the whole according as it is befitting to it, not however so that it refers the good of the whole to itself, but more so that it refers itself to the good of the whole."[107] If Fr. Eschmann's interpretation of what St. Thomas means by saying that God is loved as a common good is correct, then it would follow that we love God more than ourselves because God is a good actually shared by many. That is, we would love God more than ourselves because of our neighbor, a position which clearly inverts St. Thomas' position on the order of love between God and neighbor. It would also mean that if there were no other creatures to love God, then we would not love God more than ourselves. Certainly these positions cannot be sustained, and so Fr. Eschmann's understanding of the beatitude of the created person must be rejected.

The aforesaid distinctions permit De Koninck to avoid Fr. Eschmann's charge that the *assecutio* of this common good is an *assecutio communis* as opposed to the *assecutio singularis* of the speculative intellect.[108] Rather, the attainment of the divine common

[107] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.26, a.3, ad2. It should be noted that this same argument is found wherever St. Thomas deals with the question of whether God is naturally loved more than self (see, for example, *Quodl.,* I, q.4, a.3, ad2).
[108] See Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.200.

good is, in each case, a singular attainment, yet of a good *per modum finis* which is loved precisely as common. With the same distinctions De Koninck shows how the texts of St. Thomas which Fr. Eschmann has cited to the contrary can be authentically interpreted.

This concludes our summary of De Koninck's rebuttal and counter-critique of Fr. Eschmann's article. It remains to provide a brief, synthetic treatment of De Koninck's doctrine for the sake of manifesting more clearly his position and interpretation of St. Thomas.

Perhaps the chief reason why De Koninck was able to correctly and precisely interpret the texts of St. Thomas is that De Koninck was aware of the relevant key distinctions in St. Thomas' thought and vocabulary. Thus, De Koninck's appreciation of the latitude of meaning of terms such as "good," "common," "extensive," and "intensive" prevented him from falling into a maze of equivocations. Another important reason why De Koninck was such an able interpreter of St. Thomas is that he saw what came first in St. Thomas' thought, namely he discerned which truths were more fundamental and universal. With regard to this latter point De Koninck saw clearly that the order of final causality is the key issue which determines the relationship of private and common goods, and the place of the person in society. Indeed, De Koninck himself states that he was successful in treating this problem in St. Thomas while many contemporary Thomists were not because he approached the difficulty from the perspective of the good as a final cause.

> Instead of discussing the problem in terms of "person" and "society," I approach it in the fundamental terms of "proper good" and "common good." Ultimately, person and society are not to be judged by what they *are* absolutely, but by what is their perfection, *i.e.*, by what is their good; that is the only way in which

> Aristotle and St. Thomas ever discussed this problem. To look upon the absolute comparison of the person and society as the most basic consideration is distinctly modern. It is also distinctly modern to accord absolute priority to the subject…[109]

Thus, De Koninck saw that the order of goods, the order of final causality, was the more fundamental consideration, while the consideration of person and society taken absolutely, *i.e.*, according to their being rather than according to their good, was a secondary consideration.

From the very beginning, then, De Koninck precisely distinguished between the notion of the good in its strict and proper sense, the perfection of a being as having the nature of an end, and the notion of the good as the perfection of being as formally identical with being. In the former sense, the sense that De Koninck uses throughout his essay, the good pertains to the order of final causality, while in the latter sense it falls within the orders of efficient and formal causality. Beginning with this notion of a good *per modum finis* De Koninck formulates a doctrine of the common good and its relationship to proper goods and personal dignity.

Again, De Koninck distinguishes between the various senses of common, or universal, concentrating upon the distinction between universal in predication and universal in causality. When De Koninck speaks of the primacy of the common good, he means a good which is common in the way that a universal final cause is common, common as the object of an appetite, an object capable of moving and fulfilling the appetite. Indeed, he says that a good which is common according to predication only is

[109] De Koninck, DST, p.92-93. It is somewhat ironic to note that the ones claiming to approach St. Thomas with a historically nuanced appreciation of his positions were the very ones who attempted to interpret him in terms of distinctly modern categories. Indeed, De Koninck was successful in stepping outside of these modern prejudices precisely by being docile to the texts of St. Thomas, allowing them to speak for themselves.

not really a good at all; it is not good analogically, but equivocally.[110] Since this good is common according to causality, it has the capacity to reach down to the singulars more powerfully and intimately than their private goods, for, in contradistinction to a universal predication, a universal cause is not more vague and potential but more distinct and actual. It reaches the singulars at a deeper level of their being and more distinctly actualizes their latent potencies. This is why De Koninck can say, with St. Thomas, that the common good is the greater good of the individuals than their private goods.

De Koninck's interpretation of the order of goods as pertaining to the order of causality permits him to explain how it is that "the whole man is ordained, as to an end, to the whole community of which he is a part"[111] while at the same time "man is not ordained to the political community according to his whole self, and according to all of what is his…but the whole which a man is, and what he is capable of and has, is ordained to God."[112] This is because universal causes cooperate with the more particular causes subordinated to them so that each causes the whole of the effect. One part of the effect is not to be attributed to one cause, and another part of the effect to the other cause, for both causes are responsible for the whole effect, yet in such a way that the more particular cause depends upon the more universal cause. Yet only the most universal cause is responsible for everything that the effect is. Thus, the whole man is ordained to both the political community and to God, but he is ordained according to everything he is, *i.e.*, in every respect, to God who is the most universal good.

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[110] Something similar happens when one speaks of a horse and a dead horse. By adding the adjective "dead" to the term "horse," the very meaning of the term "horse" has been rendered equivocal. For a parallel theological example, one could say the same about Augustine's "ordo naturae" in reference to the "order" of Persons in the Trinity.
[111] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.65, a.1, c.
[112] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.21, a.4, ad3.

The common good, pertaining as it does to the order of final cause, and being superior in this order, has a perfection and nobility which totally and formally exceeds the private goods under it in this order. It is because of its exceeding perfection that it cannot be restricted to one or other individual. It can be communicated to all because it is not able to be exhausted by any of those to whom it is communicated. Thus, the common good can be communicated to many without being diminished. The limitation upon its possession by each singular under it is determined not by any lack in the common good itself but by the imperfection of each singular which shares this good. This is the basis for De Koninck's claim that the common good always holds primacy over the proper goods in the same order. This primacy refers first of all to a primacy of election, or preference, according to which the person is always to prefer his common good to his private good. Here, as we shall see later, is where the root of human dignity lies.

Chapter III: Jacques Maritain's Reading of St. Thomas

Another person who factored into this controversy on the primacy of the common good was the well-known Thomist, Jacques Maritain. Over the course of many years, and in several published works, Maritain considered the issue of the common good and the person from both a political and metaphysical perspective, claiming to have based his doctrine upon the teaching of St. Thomas. Not long after the publication of De Koninck's work *In Defense of St. Thomas*, Maritain offered his own account in a work entitled *The Person and the Common Good*. In this book Maritain gives his own reading of St. Thomas in a more nuanced and carefully worded form which he hoped would "put an end to misunderstandings and confusions."[113]

It is helpful to take into consideration the historical milieu in which Maritain wrote. The Second World War had just come to a close, and the fascist Nazi regime was displaced in much of Central and Eastern Europe by a totalitarian Communist regime. Both of these regimes represented a view of the state which considered the human person as a mere instrument, wholly subordinated to the interests of the state. On the other hand, the western allies, including France and the United States, promoted a democratic view of government which emphasized the radical autonomy of the individual as the path to true freedom. It was to the latter that Maritain gave his sympathies. It is not surprising,

[113] Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (Hereafter PCG), tr. by John J. Fitzgerald (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p.6, footnote 6 (Throughout the thesis, all citations from this work are provided in the translation of J. Fitzgerald). In this portion of our thesis, we are primarily interested to expose and critique M. Maritain's interpretation of St. Thomas, not in this book alone, but over the course of his career. Nevertheless, this book clearly was written to address the very problem we are considering. Therefore, while concentrating primarily on this work we shall also use other works which treat the same or a related issue in order to more fully understand Maritain's position and his interpretation of St. Thomas.

therefore, that Maritain wished to emphasize the particular manner in which the person was radically free and independent from the state.

Anyone familiar with the controversy between De Koninck and Fr. Eschmann will appreciate immediately that *The Person and the Common Good* follows Fr. Eschmann's text very closely, citing the identical texts in St. Thomas and usually in the same order. Often Maritain will paraphrase or, in one case, actually quote Fr. Eschmann's work. Yet, in a number of key areas he provides disclaimers which seem to respond, by way of concession or distinction, to many of the fundamental objections made by De Koninck in his response to Fr. Eschmann. Virtually all of the texts of St. Thomas cited by Maritain in this work were already brought forward by Fr. Eschmann, with only a few exceptions, exceptions which we shall carefully examine further on in this part of our thesis.

Maritain frames the problem to be addressed in this work on the very first page: "Does society exist for each one of us, or does each one of us exist for society?"[114] It is significant that he poses the problem to be resolved in these terms, in terms of existence, not in terms of perfection or of the good. Recall that this was one of the most fundamental criticisms offered by De Koninck.

> Instead of discussing the problem in terms of "person" and "society," I approach it in the fundamental terms of "proper good" and "common good." Ultimately, person and society are not to be judged by what they *are* absolutely, but by what is their perfection, *i.e.*, by what is their good; that is the only way in which Aristotle and St. Thomas ever discussed this problem. To look upon the absolute comparison of the person and society as the most basic consideration is distinctly modern. It is also distinctly modern to accord absolute priority to the subject…[115]

[114] Maritain, PCG, p.1. "La société est-elle pour chacun de nous, ou chacun de nous est-il pour la société?"
[115] De Koninck, DST, p.92-93.

Was Maritain aware of this criticism? It seems unlikely that he was not since it is clear that he read De Koninck's work. It is more likely that he rejects De Koninck's position and that he thinks that a thorough and sufficient solution to the problem can be given in terms of existence rather than in terms of the good and perfection. As we shall see later on, this attempt to resolve the problem in terms of existence reflects Maritain's stance with regard to the nature of metaphysics, a metaphysics of existence founded upon the key distinction between *esse* and *essentia*.

After stating the problem Maritain defends his use of the term "personalism," indicating that while the name is indiscriminately applied to a host of philosophical positions, many of which are not tenable, still there is a legitimate and properly Thomistic personalism which he aims to expose in his book.

> Our desire is to make clear the personalism rooted in the doctrine of St. Thomas, and to separate, at the very outset, a social philosophy centered in the dignity of the human person from every social philosophy centered in the primacy of the individual and the private good. Thomistic personalism stresses the metaphysical distinction between individuality and personality.[116]

Three things are to be noted about this passage. First, it clearly places Maritain in the camp of those who claim that human dignity is not upheld in a social philosophy which asserts the primacy of the private good over the common good. Second, Maritain implies that the fundamental distinction which resolves the difficulties involved in this problem of the relationship between the person and society is the distinction between individuality and personality. Third, Maritain claims that this distinction is formally a metaphysical distinction. Maritain will devote a large portion of his book to this distinction of

[116] Maritain, PCG, p.3.

individuality from personality, but before this he provides his own exposition of St. Thomas on the question of the person's ordination to God as its ultimate end. As will become manifest later on, Maritain sees this distinction between individuality and personality as the point of development of St. Thomas' thought which allows him to go beyond the express teaching of Aquinas while remaining grounded in his doctrine.

III.A Survey of St. Thomas on the Ordination of the Person to the Last End

Maritain begins by laying down the fundamental truth governing the whole discussion.

> The human person is ordained directly to God as to its absolute, ultimate end. Its direct ordination to God transcends every created common good – both the common good of the political society and the intrinsic common good of the universe.[117]

This is a rather uncontroversial statement to which any Thomist, Fr. Eschmann and Professor De Koninck included, would readily give assent. At this point Maritain has not addressed the points of contention in the De Koninck/Eschmann debate, namely he has not determined whether or not the human person is formally ordained to God insofar as God is a common good; nor has he considered whether or not a person's ordination to the intrinsic common good of the universe in any way interrupts this direct ordination. Turning his attention to the latter of these two theses, he admits that St. Thomas teaches the substance of De Koninck's position.

[117] Maritain, PCG, p.5.

> [St. Thomas] emphasizes that intellectual creatures, though they, like all creatures, are ordained to the perfection of the created whole, are willed and governed for their own sake.…Obviously, this does not prevent them from being related first to God and then to the order and perfection of the created universe, of which they are the most noble constitutive parts.[118]

Maritain then gives an extended footnote where he states more distinctly what he means.

> Each intellectual substance is made, first, for God, the separated common good of the universe; second for the perfection of the order of the universe (not only as the universe of bodies, but also as the universe of spirits); and third for itself, that is, for the action (immanent and spiritual) by which it perfects itself and accomplishes its destiny. (See *S.T.*, Ia, q.65, a.2, and Cajetan's commentary). Using a distinction established further on, we may say that as individual or part, the intellectual substance is first willed and loved for the order of the universe and the perfection of the created whole; as person, it is first willed and loved for itself. Yet like every creature, it differs from God, or Personality in pure act, more than it resembles Him. Hence, absolutely speaking, it is part or "individual" more than "person" and before it is a "person." (It is this that Kant failed to see). It follows therefrom that, absolutely speaking, the intellectual substance is loved and willed for the order of the universe of creation before being loved and willed for itself. This in no wise hinders it, in contrast to irrational beings, from being really for itself and being referred directly to God.[119]

There is no doubt that he concedes De Koninck's position here concerning the primacy of the good of the order of the created universe over the private good of the person. Moreover, he admits that according to St. Thomas the person is made for God insofar as God is a common good, which is to grant, in substance, the first of the positions which De Koninck defends against Fr. Eschmann's interpretation of St. Thomas. It would seem, then, that there is no further dispute to be had since both Maritain and De Koninck

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[118] Maritain, PCG, p.7. One might object to Maritain's qualification "obviously" ("évidemment") since it was not so obvious to an educated man like Fr. Eschmann that the two positions were compatible. Fr. Eschmann's confusion seems to have stemmed from his inability to see that some good can be for its own sake *and* for the sake of another. This would be an example of ignorance of refutation, thinking that one is faced with a contradiction when in fact no contradiction exists: one of the thirteen sophistic fallacies which Aristotle identifies in his *Sophistic Refutations.*

[119] Maritain, PCG, p.7-8 (footnote 7).

agree that St. Thomas taught: 1) Created persons are ordered and subordinated to the ultimate separate good of the universe (God) insofar as God has the notion of a common good; and 2) Created persons are ordered and subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe, namely the order of the universe. Yet Maritain already alludes to the way in which his distinction between individuality and personality modifies the claim that the created person is loved and willed for the good of the order of the universe before being loved and willed for itself.[120] What is particularly striking is the claim that the intellectual creature is, simply speaking, more individual than person. It is not yet clear why the intellectual creature should be more individual than person (since it is difficult to see what is meant here by the term "more"), nor is it clear why from this it should follow that God should love and will the intellectual creature more for the sake of the good of the order of the universe than for itself. These are questions to which we shall return when considering Maritain's treatment of the distinction between individuality and personality. It is also notable that the only text of St. Thomas on this important point to which Maritain refers is question 65, article 2 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* (together with Cajetan's commentary).[121]

Having conceded that the created person is ordained to God insofar as God is a common good and that the good of the order of the universe is, simply speaking, better than the private good of a created person, Maritain immediately balances this assessment

[120] We shall also see that, further on, Maritain makes significant qualifications to the first of these theses as well.

[121] Given the large number of texts which treat this issue, as witnessed by De Koninck's two articles, it seems clear that Maritain is not as interested in developing the theme of the precise relation of the private good to the common good as he is in developing the theme of the relation of the reason for existence of the person with the reason for existence of the state.

by referring to the text of St. Thomas which Fr. Eschmann had cited against De Koninck (*S.T.*, Ia, q.93, a.2). Maritain summarizes the teaching in this text, saying:

> In intellectual creatures alone, Aquinas teaches further, is found the image of God. In no other creature, not even in the universe as a whole, is this found. For without doubt, *extensive et diffusive*, or as regards the extension and the variety according to which the divine attributes are manifested, there is more participated similitude of the divine perfections in the whole totality of creatures. But *intensive et collective*, that is to say, considering the degree of perfection with which each one approaches God according to its capacity, the intellectual creature, which is capable of the supreme good, is more like unto the divine perfection than the whole universe in its entirety.[122]

It is clear that Maritain is attempting here to prevent one from overemphasizing the primacy of the common good of the created universe over the private good of persons. He indicates the respect in which the single intellectual substance is more like God than the universe taken as a whole, yet he does not clearly indicate which likeness is absolutely more perfect or better. Nor does he clearly state how he understands St. Thomas' expressions "*extensive et diffusive*" and "*intensive et collective*." Maritain concentrates upon the passage of St. Thomas "*capax summi boni*" as identifying precisely where the greater intensive perfection lies.[123] According to De Koninck's interpretation of St. Thomas this means that, in the particular respect of manifesting some perfection of the divine essence (*i.e.*, the perfection of being capable of the highest good, which, on account of the non-intellectual creatures, the universe as a whole does not manifest), the intellectual creature is more like the divine perfection than the whole universe. Maritain instead sees this capacity for the highest good as a link to a further perfection.

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[122] PCG, p.8-10 (I have slightly modified Fitzgerald's translation here to include the Latin terms which Maritain uses, and which Fitzgerald leaves out).

[123] It is interesting to note that the property: "capable of the highest good" is something that belongs to the *genus* of intellectual creatures, not to any one of them as proper to its *species*.

"Elsewhere, the Angelic Doctor writes that the good of grace of one person is worth more than the good of the whole universe of nature. For, precisely because it alone is capable of the supreme good, because it alone is the image of God, the intellectual creature alone is capable of grace."[124] Maritain holds that because of this property unique to the intellectual substance, being "*capax summi boni*," a door is opened to a perfection greater than the entire natural universe. The implication seems to be that since the good of grace is simply speaking better than the good of the entire universe, it follows that the capacity for grace is, simply speaking, better than the good of the universe taken as a whole. Yet Maritain does not expressly state this conclusion, nor is it clear how such a conclusion could be reconciled with what he had already stated in his footnote quoted above that, "absolutely speaking, the intellectual substance is loved and willed for the order of the universe of creation before being loved and willed for itself." Moreover, it is not clear if Maritain intends this observation to be a corrective to the position upon which De Koninck so strongly insisted. At the most we can say that Maritain interprets this text of St. Thomas to be a qualification of the position that the intrinsic common good of the whole universe is simply speaking better than the good of the intellectual creature taken separately.[125]

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[124] Maritain, PCG, p.10.

[125] We must note that with this move Maritain enters the realm of revealed truths, truths which this thesis does not intend to take up. From a purely philosophical perspective Maritain's argument can be considered only hypothetical, dependent upon the real possibility of divine grace as something God actually wills to give. It is characteristic of Maritain's thought to make use of revealed truths to defend, strengthen, or clarify his philosophical arguments and positions. We do not intend to criticize this method as such since there may be properly philosophical questions and problems which have properly theological answers and solutions, such as, for example, the question: If the soul is naturally united to the body, can the human soul remain in a perpetually deprived state after death? It should be considered, however, whether or not the question of the relation between the person and the universe as a whole demands a theological response; or would a properly philosophical answer be satisfactory?

Maritain continues on to a second consideration, the possession itself of the ultimate end in the beatific vision.[126] This possession according to St. Thomas takes place without the mediation of any species but rather is accomplished by a direct information of the intellect by the divine form itself. On this basis Maritain concludes that it absolutely transcends every kind of created common good. While admitting that the source of the happiness is itself a common good, common at least to the three Persons of the Trinity, Maritain thinks it important to qualify this by remarking that this beatitude does not demand that other intellectual creatures share in it.[127]

> Ordained to Him who is Good by His essence and Good by essence, it has, as the object of its vision and the substance of its beatitude, God as He is in Himself. Together, God and the soul are two in one; two natures in a single vision and a single love. The soul is filled (*comblée*) with God. It is in society with God. With Him it possesses a common good, the divine Good Itself.[128]

The fact that the divine good is shared between God and the creature suffices to make it a common good, so that no other creature is necessary. This good is a common good for God as well as for the creature. Maritain supports this claim with a text from St. Thomas. "[By the love of friendship, God] not only loves the creature as an artist loves his handiwork, but also with a certain friendly association, just as a friend [loves] a friend, inasmuch as he draws them into the society of his own enjoyment, so that their glory and beatitude consists in that by which God is happy."[129] Here St. Thomas speaks about the love and good shared between God and the intellectual creature, not the love among

[126] Again, here we are considering properly theological matters about which we cannot judge in this thesis. Yet for purposes of understanding the philosophical implications of Maritain's thought, it is important to examine his interpretation of St. Thomas in these properly theological texts.
[127] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.4, a.8, ad3.
[128] Maritain, PCG, p.12.
[129] *In II Sent*. d.26, q.1, a.1, ad2.

creatures themselves. This love Maritain characterizes as a "divine solitude" between God and the single created person. Thus, while there is a shared, or common good, yet it is a good attained in solitude, a very personal good. With this text Maritain seeks to show how this common good can also be deeply personal and, in a sense, private. Expressing the paradox of a common yet personal and solitary good Maritain calls this unique union between God and the soul a "most open, most generous, most inhabited solitude."[130] It is open because each and every intellectual creature is able to share in the same vision and divine solitude in such a way that this shared vision becomes the foundation for communication among the created persons themselves.

Maritain denies that the divine good is called common because it is actually shared by many creatures, and this is clearly in agreement with St. Thomas' doctrine; yet it is not clear in what sense he thinks that the divine good can be called common. He seems to mean that it is called common by reason of being equally shared by God and the intellectual creature. He implies this when he says: "Together, God and the soul are two in one; two natures in a single vision and a single love." This becomes even clearer in another text further on. Speaking of the good possessed by the creature in the vision of God, Maritain says:

> But in what sense might the personal good, of which each soul thus takes possession, be inferior to this common good? They are identical; the [personal] good is also God Himself. In relation to the divine service and the divine praise, each soul is a part of the community of the blessed. In relation to the object of the vision, there is no longer a question of being a part, but of being identified with the Whole in this society of the blessed, the common object of which is better only because it is, for the multitude of the members, the same object in which each one shares, though in different degrees, as a whole identified with the Whole. Here, in the intentional identification of each soul with the divine

[130] Maritain, PCG, p.12-13.

> essence, the law of the primacy of the common good over the personal good comes to an end in a certain sense. And it comes to an end here precisely because the personal good *is* at that moment the common good.[131]

Maritain then quotes with approval the words of Charles Journet: "The personal good of each of the blessed is *as divine* as the separated common good of the entire universe: it is *identically* this very same Good, spiritually possessed."[132] In the beatific vision according to this account the primacy of the common good comes to an end because the common good and the personal good are commensurate. The good shared by God and the creature are "identical," "the personal good is God himself," and "in relation to the object of vision there is no longer a question of being a part." All of these assert that the same good is equally shared by both God and the creature. When Maritain calls this good a common good, he means that the whole of the good is received in each person since each person is itself commensurate with the whole. "The common good is common because it is received in persons, each one of whom is a mirror of the whole."[133] Thus, here the divine good is not called common because of its infinite communicability in virtue of which it stands to every created good as exceeding whole to part. On the contrary it is called common because of the commensurability of the person to the divine good. It is because the created person is a whole that it is common, not because God is a whole.[134] Thus, the separated common good, objective beatitude, is only materially better than the personal good "because it is, for the multitude of the members, the same

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[131] Maritain, PCG, p.78-79.
[132] Charles Journet, "La cause matérielle de l'Eglise glorieuse," *Nova et Vetera*, XX, n.1 (1945): p.86.
[133] Maritain, PCG, p.39.
[134] See Michael Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good in the Aristotelian-Thomistic Tradition* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen University Press, 1995), p.100. "Whereas Maritain holds that human dignity is explained by the fact that human persons are wholes, De Koninck is of the opinion that our dignity is to be found in being a part of something larger than ourselves."

object in which each one shares, though in different degrees, as a whole identified with the Whole."

Maritain next makes a crucial move by which he indicates the order and relationship of the intellectual creature to God considered both as the "separated common good of the universe" and as the object of beatitude. "Though God is the 'separated common good' of the universe, the intellectual creature is related, primarily as to the object of its beatitude, not to God as the common good of the universe of nature and creation, but to God in the transcendence of His own mystery; to God as Deity, conceptually ineffable, expressible only in the Uncreated Word; to God as common good of the divine Persons and of the souls which have entered by participation into the universe of the Deity."[135] Here, Maritain makes a distinction between God as the common good of the universe of nature and creation, and God in his very essence, an essence which he calls a "common good of the divine Persons." This is clearly not a matter of a real distinction, as if the being which is the common good of the created universe were one thing and the divine essence shared by the Persons were another thing. Therefore, the only reasonable way to interpret Maritain here is to say that he is positing a distinction of reason, identifying distinct formal aspects under which God can be considered by reason as an object. One might formulate his position as follows: The created person is ordained to the ultimate separate good of the universe (God) primarily insofar as God is considered in his very essence and only secondarily insofar as God is considered as a common good.

The difficulty here is in substantiating Maritain's claim that "the intellectual creature is related, primarily as to the object of its beatitude, not to God as the common

[135] Maritain, PCG, p.13-14.

good of the universe of nature and creation, but to God in the transcendence of His own mystery." Maritain cites no text from St. Thomas to support this claim.[136] His text does, however, bear a striking resemblance to the distinction which Fr. Eschmann had made between God as the *bonum universale in essendo* and the *bonum universale in causando*: "God…is first and primarily God – *Ego sum qui sum* – the divine Good, the object of our personal beatitude (*bonum universale in essendo*), rather than being, first and primarily, the creator of all things, and therefore the supreme common good in which all beings are finally united (*bonum universale in causando*)."[137] Fr. Eschmann had used this distinction to argue that God, as the *bonum universale in causando* is not essentially the term of the created person's ordination to God.[138] Maritain does not go so far. Rather, he restricts himself to saying that the *primary* relation of the intellectual creature to God as the object of beatitude is to God as he exists in himself, *i.e.*, in his essence. We see here how Maritain's decision to formulate the problem of the relationship of the person to society in terms of existence rather than in terms of perfection and good leads him to this point. If objective beatitude is considered formally as the perfection of the intellectual creature *per modum finis*, then it seems that this beatitude is nothing other than God considered formally as the common good of the intellectual creature, for the intelligible end of a rational creature is formally an object of the will, which can be nothing other

[136] It is likely, therefore, that he sees himself as furthering and developing St. Thomas' thought here. In his essay on the sin of the angel, Maritain cites *S.T.*, Ia, q.60, a.5, ad5 as evidence that St. Thomas distinguishes God considered as common good and God considered in his essence, according as he is distinct from and above all other things. That text from St. Thomas reads: "Since in God his substance and the common good are one and the same, all who see the very essence of God are moved by the same motion of love towards the essence of God itself insofar as it is distinct from other things, and according as it is a common good." *Cf.*, Maritain, *The Sin of the Angel*, tr. By William L. Rossner (Westminster, Maryland:The Newman Press, 1959), p.28.
[137] Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.204.
[138] "The very first and essential element of our ordination to God is not the fact that God is the first *bonum universale in causando*, the fountain of all communications, but that He is the *bonum universale in essendo*." Eschmann, "In Defense of Jacques Maritain," p.196.

than some good. On the other hand, if objective beatitude is considered as the perfection of being which is formally identical with being, then it is clear that God will be considered as the object of beatitude as he exists in himself, *i.e.*, in his essence.

After considering the common good which is the foundation of the community with God and each creature, Maritain next turns his attention to the communion of persons outside of the vision of God.

> It is only consequently, because God is the common good of the multitude of beatified creatures which all communicate with Him, that they communicate in His love with one another, *outside of the vision*, by all the created communications of mutual knowledge and mutual charity and common adoration, which flow from the vision; by those exchanges and that celestial conversation, those illuminations and that common praise of God, which render back unto each of them the goods which they have in common. The eminently personal act in which each beholds the divine essence at once transcends their blessed community and provides it with a foundation.[139]

Maritain intends to make it clear that the primary focus of the community of the blessed is their personal relationship with God and that their love for and communication with each other is something founded upon their love for and communication with God. God is loved first and the neighbor for God's sake.

Maritain, however, says more than this. He speaks of other common goods which seem to establish a formally different community, a community "outside of the vision" of God. Here again one must ask what Maritain means by "common good" and "common goods" in this text. When he speaks of the "created communications of mutual charity and common adoration," "exchanges…illuminations and that common praise of God," can these be common goods in the sense of *bonum in causando*? Clearly at least some of

[139] Maritain, PCG, p.14 (Italics in original).

these things are the singular acts of individuals, which, as we have already seen, can only be common *in praedicando*.

In the next part of his survey of St. Thomas' doctrine on man's ultimate end Maritain considers St. Thomas' teaching on the relation between the contemplative and active life. Here again he follows the order of Fr. Eschmann's work, citing the same texts of St. Thomas[140] and making a reference to Fr. Eschmann's text. Yet at the same time he adds important qualifications. "These two texts, which we have just quoted and which yield, as has been noted, one of the keys to the "personalism" of a doctrine that also asserts, at each degree of the analogy of being, the primacy of the common good, introduce us to the second great Thomistic theme…the pre-eminence of the contemplative life over the political life."[141] While citing the same texts from which Fr. Eschmann had argued for the primacy of the personal good over the common good and endorsing his estimation that these texts are keys of Thomistic personalism Maritain is very careful to acknowledge that they assert "at each degree of the analogy of being, the primacy of the common good," a position Fr. Eschmann was not willing to admit. Maritain goes on to characterize St. Thomas' doctrine on the primacy of the contemplative life as a doctrine of the "primacy of the act"[142] of the "eminently personal,"[143] which is "at the same time a doctrine of the primacy of the common good."[144] Maritain, however, also makes a very important precision. He argues that not only is the principle "the common good is more divine than the private good" to be

[140] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.3, a.5, ad1; IIa-IIae, q.47, a.2, ad1; *In III Sent*. d.35, q.1, a.4c, ad2&3; and *In IV Sent*. d.49, q.1, a.1c, ad1.
[141] Maritain, PCG, p.16.
[142] Maritain, PCG, p.18.
[143] Maritain, PCG, p.18.
[144] Maritain, PCG, p.18.

understood analogously but also that its primary analogate is found in its application to human society and human goods.

> At every opportunity, he repeats the maxim of Aristotle that the good of the whole is "more divine" than the good of the parts. Unceasingly, he strives to preserve this *dictum authenticum*, applied according to the most diverse degrees of analogy. *A fortiori*, then, does he give it its full value in strictly social matters. Because the common good is the human common good, it includes within its essence, as we shall see, the service of the human person. The adage of the superiority of the common good is understood in its true sense only in the measure that the common good implies a reference to the human person.[145]

This claim is notable for purposes of interpreting the text and understanding the doctrine of St. Thomas. He applies the same principle later in the same work where he states:

> The common good of the intellects can be understood in two ways: in the first way, it is truth and beauty themselves, through the enjoyment of which minds receive a certain natural irradiation or participation of the Uncreated Truth and Beauty or of the separated common good. This common good of the intellects is obviously superior to the personal act by which each intellect conquers a fragment of it; but it is not a social good, a common good in the strict sense.[146]

Thus, according to Maritain the good of the speculative order, as opposed to a good of the practical order, is not a common good in the strict sense.[147] Moreover, since, in relation to man, the separated intelligences belong to the speculative order, Maritain draws the conclusion that the primacy of the common good holds in the strict sense only when speaking of human affairs. "The adage of the superiority of the common good is understood in its true sense only in the measure that the common good itself implies a

[145] Maritain, PCG, p.19-20.
[146] Maritain, PCG, p.73.
[147] See R. Rybka, "L'Attuazione del Bene Comune nel Pensiero Politico di S. Tommaso d'Aquino," *Angelicum*, LXXVII, n.3 (2000): p.488.

reference to the human person."[148] With this assertion, Maritain concludes his survey of interpretations of St. Thomas.

At the beginning of his survey Maritain had granted the theses that 1) created persons are ordered and subordinated to the ultimate separate good of the universe (God) insofar as God has the notion of a common good and that 2) created persons are ordered and subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe, namely the order of the universe. Yet he has significantly qualified these theses in the course of his survey. As regards the first thesis Maritain's position can be restated in this way: Created persons are ordered and subordinated to God, the ultimate separate good of the universe, insofar as he has the notion of a common good, *but only in a secondary sense*. Created persons are ordered to God *primarily* in the transcendence of his own mystery, to God as he is in himself. In this latter respect there is no primacy of the common good in the strict sense of the expression. As regards the second thesis Maritain's position can be restated in this way: *Human* persons are ordered and subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe (the order of the universe), though only according to a part of what they are. In speculative matters and among the separated intelligences, there is not a primacy of the common good, strictly speaking. Maritain will qualify this second thesis more fully and distinctly by way of his analysis of individuality and personality, which he takes up in the next chapter.

[148] Maritain, PCG, p.20.

III.B Difficulties with Maritain's Interpretation of St. Thomas

A careful examination of Maritain's interpretation of St. Thomas reveals a number of significant difficulties. In this section of the thesis we shall provide a critique of some of Maritain's positions and offer an alternative interpretation of St. Thomas on these points.

One difficulty concerns the relevance of the texts to which Maritain had made reference concerning the intellectual creature's capacity for the highest good.[149] The contextual purpose of these references was to counterbalance the thesis that the private good of created persons is subordinated to the common good of the order of the universe. Yet considering the texts themselves it is not clear how they modify the thesis that the good of the order of the universe, being a more common good, is greater than the private good of an intellectual substance taken separately, for all intellectual substances are made in the image of God and have this capacity for the highest good. Thus, it seems that the same proportion holds between the parts and the whole as before, so that no modification is made to the doctrine of the primacy of the common good over the private good.[150]

A second difficulty arises when attempting to understand Maritain's concept of "common good" as applied to the good shared between God and an intellectual creature

[149] I refer to the texts in St. Thomas which indicate that the intellectual creature is "capable of the highest good" and that the "good of grace of one person is worth more than the good of the whole universe of nature."

[150] Even if one said that the capacity for the highest good places the intellectual substance in direct relation with God, this no longer pertains to the thesis that the common good of the order of the universe is superior to the private good of the intellectual substances which are parts of the universe. Recall De Koninck's critique of Fr. Eschmann. "When we consider God 'as He is in Himself the supreme good by His essence' and the intellectual creature as 'capable of being, by knowledge and love, united with God as God is in Himself,' the good in question is beyond the universe to which the creature is compared as part to a whole. In this respect, the intellectual creature is not to be considered formally as a part of the universe at all." (De Koninck, DST, p.40). To consider the intellectual substance's relation to the separated common good is simply to leave aside the question of its relation to the intrinsic common good of the universe, not to modify it.

in the union of friendship, a love which Maritain had described as a "divine solitude." What is the good which Maritain here calls a "common good," and in what sense is it common? Moreover, how is it at the same time "solitary?" If the good to which Maritain refers is the formal, essential beatitude of the created person (*i.e.*, the very operation of the intellect by which the divine essence is attained), then this good cannot be common to God and the creature except by a community of predication. It is common only in the sense that the same name "good" is given to many things. Clearly, when this name "good" is said of God and this created operation of the creature, it cannot be said univocally. On the other hand, if the good refers to the objective beatitude of the creature, then this is nothing other than the divine essence, which is the proper good of God himself.[151] Once again, for the same reason, this good can only be common to God and the creature by a community of predication. Again, if the divine good is considered common insofar as it is a final cause communicable to many, this would require that God and the intellectual creature share the same, *i.e.*, a common, final cause, but this clearly cannot be reconciled with St. Thomas' teaching that the divine good is not a final cause for God himself since the divine goodness and the divine will are only distinct according to reason.[152] Thus, whatever Maritain means by "common good" here, he cannot mean a good which is diffused to many *per modum finis*. This means that there are two different senses of common good being used when Maritain speaks of the good which each singular person shares with God in the "divine solitude" and the good which is common

[151] See, *inter alia*, *In IV Sent*. d.49, q.1, a.4b, c. "The object of the operation in which beatitude consists is altogether one and the same, namely, the divine essence, from whose vision all will be happy. Hence, from this part, there will not be some degree in beatitude. But from the part of the one exercising the operation, the operation of beatitude will not be perfect in the same mode, since insofar as a habit, namely the light of glory, is perfective regarding the aforesaid operation, it will be more perfect in one than in another; according to this the operation will be more perfect, and the delight greater. And according to this all the blessed will not be in the same degree of beatitude."

[152] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.28, a.4, ad1 and *De Veritate*, q.23, a.1, ad3.

as a final cause to the society of rational creatures. The latter concept of the common good is expressly taught in a number of texts of St. Thomas, while the former concept of the common good is not.

Furthermore, from the text we have cited it seems that Maritain asserts that the good which is common between God and the intellectual creature in this bond of friendship is a good which is equally shared by God and the intellectual creature. Yet this stands in stark contrast to the express doctrine of St. Thomas, who teaches that same object is *unequally* participated by God and the creature[153] and that from the standpoint of its proper good the intellectual creature is related to God as part to whole.[154] Indeed, Maritain himself indicates that he is aware of this difficulty when he observes in a footnote. "In another sense, this law [of the primacy of the common good] always holds, in the sense that the infinite communicability of the incomprehensible Essence forever transcends the communication which, through its vision, the creature receives of it."[155] Furthermore, Maritain admits, as we saw in the text already quoted, that each member shares the object which is the common good "in different degrees."[156] How does

[153] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.5, a.3, ad2. "Participation in beatitude can be imperfect in two ways. In one way, from the part of the very object of beatitude, since it is not seen according to its essence. And such an imperfection takes away the notion of true beatitude. In the other way, it can be imperfect from the part of the very participants, who indeed attain to the object of beatitude according to itself, namely God, but imperfectly in respect to the way in which God enjoys himself. And such an imperfection does not take away the true notion of beatitude because, since beatitude is a certain operation, as was said above, the true notion of beatitude is considered from its object which gives the species to the act, but not from the subject." Also see *In II Sent.*, d.1, q.2, a.2, c.

[154] See *De Perfectione Vitae Spiritualis*, c.13 : "According to right reason, the common good is to be preferred to the proper good. Hence, each and every part, by a certain natural instinct, is ordered to the good of the whole. A sign of this is that the hand exposes itself to a blow so that the heart or the head, from which the whole life of man depends, might be protected. But in the aforesaid community in which all men come together in the end of beatitude, each man is considered as a certain part. But the common good of the whole is God himself, in whom all beatitude consists. Therefore, according to right reason and the instinct of nature, everyone orders himself to God, just as a part is ordered to the good of the whole, which is perfected through charity by which a man loves himself because of God."

[155] Maritain, PCG, p.79.

[156] Maritain, PCG, p.78.

Maritain reconcile these apparently contradictory positions? Once again, it is difficult to be certain how Maritain would defend his reading of St. Thomas since he neither cites any text nor gives a complete argument based upon any texts of St. Thomas. However, some of the vocabulary which Maritain employs indicates what he has in mind. Indeed, when Maritain makes reference to the "intentional identification of each soul with the divine essence,"[157] he seems to give the basis for his claim that the personal good does not stand to this good as a part to a whole but as a whole to a Whole. Maritain seems to teach that the whole good which belongs to God belongs also to the beatified soul, yet in a different way, namely by intention or spiritual possession. Moreover, his reference to the "incomprehensible Essence" of God naturally brings to mind the places in St. Thomas where he considers whether the essence of God can be comprehended.[158] In these texts St. Thomas teaches that the whole essence of God is seen by the beatified creature but not wholly seen. Taking these texts together one can interpret Maritain to be asserting that the intellectual creature possesses, by intention, the whole of the divine good but not wholly. In this sense the created person is like a mirror which receives the whole divine good, yet not according to the full degree in which it is possessed by God.

Yet, if this is his position, it is no less problematic, for unlike the true the good is in things.[159] Moreover, while there can be a certain commensuration of the intellect with the divine essence, according to intentional information (*i.e.*, so that the whole essence of

[157] Maritain, PCG, p.78.
[158] See, *inter alia*, *In IV Sent.* d.49, q.2, a.3; *De Veritate* q.8, a.2; *S.T.*, Ia, q.12, a.7; Ia-IIae, q.4, a.3, ad1; IIIa, q.10, a.1; and *S.C.G.*, III, 55.
[159] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.1, c. "The good is in things, as the Philosopher says in the sixth book of the Metaphysics. But inasmuch as one being is perfective and consummative of another, it has the notion of an end in respect to that which is perfected by it."

God is seen), there cannot be a commensuration of the divine good with the good that has a creature as it subject. A text from the *De Veritate*, q. 21 is pertinent here.

> In any being there are two things to consider: namely the very form (*ratio*) of the species, and the very being (*esse*), by which something subsists in that species. And thus some being (*ens*) is able to be perfective in two ways. In one way, according to the form (*rationem*) of the species only. And in this way, the intellect, which receives the form (*rationem*) of a being, is perfected by a being. Neither is the being (*ens*) in it according to natural being (*esse*). And therefore, the true adds this mode of perfecting to being. For the true is in the mind, as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* VI. And every being (*ens*), is called true to the extent that it is conformed or conformable to intellect. And therefore, all who rightly define the true place intellect in its definition. In another way, a being (*ens*) is perfective of another not only according to the form (*rationem*) of the species, but also according to the being (*esse*) which it has in the nature of things. And in this way, the good is perfective.[160]

According to St. Thomas' account of the beatific vision God is possessed by intentional information of the intellect, but not by informing the substance or the intellect of the beatified person as its own form.[161] Since the notion of the good requires that it be possessed not only according to the notion of the species but also according to the *esse* it has in its own nature, it follows that one who possesses the divine essence by intention only cannot be said to have the divine goodness as its own goodness. Thus, it does not follow that if the whole essence of God is seen and spiritually possessed, then the whole goodness of God is spiritually possessed. It *is* true to say that the beatified creature possesses the whole thing which is the divine good, but it is not true to say that the

[160] *De Veritate,* q.21, a.1, c.
[161] See *In IV Sent*. d.49, q.2, a.1, c.

beatified creature possesses the whole divine good.[162] To confuse the two is to fall prey to the fallacy of the accident, which "deceives even the wise."[163]

Again, even assuming that the full divine good could be spiritually possessed as the private possession of a creature in such a way that the good in the creature were as good as the good which is in God, this would necessitate that only that one creature could possess God in this way, for "the good of one singular person is not the end of another."[164] The divine good would be, so to speak, exhausted by its communication to the single created person.

Besides this, according to Maritain's position this divine good is conceived as a common good between two friends, God and the creature, so that it is a common good not only for the creature, but also for God. This, however, destroys St. Thomas' argument for why God is to be loved more than self. In his first objection, and its response, to the position that man ought to love God more than himself out of charity, St. Thomas writes:

> It seems that man ought not to love God more than himself out of charity. For the Philosopher says in the ninth book of the Ethics that the amicable relations that are toward another arise from those that are toward oneself. But the cause is more powerful than the effect. Therefore, the friendship of a man for himself is greater than that for anyone else. Therefore, he ought to love himself more than God.
>
> To the first, therefore, it ought to be said that the Philosopher speaks of the friendly relations which are toward another in which the good which is the object of the friendship is found according to some particular mode, not about the

[162] De Koninck takes note of this fact in , *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.13 . "It is appropriate to note here the radical difference between knowledge and appetite: 'the known is in the knower, the good is in things.' If, like that which is known, the good were in the one who loves, we ourselves would be the good of the universe." ("En effet, il convient de marquer ici la différence radicale entre la connaissance et l'appétit : 'le connu est dans le connaissant, le bien est dans les choses.' Si, comme le connu, le bien était dans l'aimant, nous serions á nous-mêmes le bien de l'univers.").
[163] Aristotle, *Sophistic Refutations*, I. See St. Thomas, *In XI Metaph.*, lect. 8.
[164] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.58, a.9, ad3.

> friendly relations which are toward another in which the aforesaid good is found according to the notion of a whole.[165]

St. Thomas expands upon this in his response to the third objection.

> The fact that someone wills to enjoy God pertains to the love by which God is loved by a love of concupiscence. But we love God more with the love of friendship than with the love of concupiscence, since the good of God is greater in itself than we are able to participate by enjoying Him. And therefore a man simply loves God more than himself from charity.[166]

If the good which is common to God and the creature is conceived as something where each stands equally to it, rather than the creature standing to it as part to whole, then there is no reason why the creature should love God more than himself. In fact, there is as much reason for God to love the creature more than Himself as for the creature to love God more than himself since each stands to this shared good as whole to whole.

In light of these objections it is difficult to see how Maritain's interpretation of St. Thomas on this point can be sustained. There seems to be no evidence in the text of St. Thomas for the notion of the divine common good as Maritain conceives it, namely as a good which is common because it is received as a whole by the created person; nor is it clear how one could sustain Maritain's notion of the divine common good without destroying a number of essential Thomistic theses. In the doctrine of St. Thomas the divine good is called a common good in the strict sense because of its infinite communicability in virtue of which it stands to every created good as exceeding whole to part. Because the divine good by its nature infinitely exceeds the private good of any

[165] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.26, a.3.
[166] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.26, a.3.

creature, it belongs to God by his very nature to be a common good. The divine good is a common good because it is a whole, not because it is received into a whole.

A further problem arises in regard to Maritain's position that the primary relation of the intellectual creature to God as the object of beatitude is God as he exists in himself, in his essence. The problem is that the term of any ordination or intrinsic inclination is a good in the strict sense, and St. Thomas clearly teaches that when good is taken in the strict and proper sense, the good refers to that which is perfective of another *per modum finis*.

> Being is perfective of another not only according to the notion of its species, but also according to the being which it has in the nature of things. And in this way the good is perfective. For the good is in things, as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* VI. Inasmuch, moreover, as one being, according to its own being, is perfective and consummative of another, it has the notion of an end with respect to that which is perfected by it; and thence it is that all those rightly defining the good place in its definition something which pertains to a relationship of an end.[167]

This means that the good which is the perfection of being that is formally identical with being is not good in the primary sense. For St. Thomas, taking good in its strict sense, the intellectual creature would be related, as to the object of its beatitude, to God as the common good of the universe, not primarily to God as considered in his essence.

Considering Maritain's position that there is a formally different community "outside of the vision" in which their created communications constitute the common goods of this formally distinct society, it is evident that at least some of these goods are goods common *in praedicando*. As we have already seen, a good common in predication is really not a good at all, for it is really a common name, nor can it be the cause

[167] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.1, c.

responsible for the unity of the community. The fact that they are communications outside of the vision makes no difference. The principle holds in any community. Most significantly Maritain claims that the "eminently personal act in which each beholds the divine essence at once transcends their blessed community and provides it with a foundation," but the act of formal beatitude cannot provide a foundation for the community. This is because this act can only be a good common *in praedicando*. On the contrary, it is the divine good as the object of this vision which provides the foundation for the community, a good which is common *in causando*.

Considering this very issue, St. Thomas teaches: "To a man enrolled in celestial [things] certain gratuitous virtues are befitting, which are the infused virtues, for the due operation of which is fore-demanded a love of the good common to the whole society, which is the divine good, insofar as it is the *object* of beatitude."[168] St. Thomas very clearly identifies the common good which is the foundation for the community of the blessed as the divine good insofar as it constitutes objective beatitude. This objective beatitude is the foundation of their communications with each other outside of the vision, not only with God himself. St. Thomas makes this clear in another text from the *De Veritate*. "There is also in the Church a continuity by reason of the Holy Spirit, who *being one and the same in number*, fills and unites the whole Church."[169] Clearly, in this text God the Holy Spirit is considered as that which unites the Church as its objective good. Thus, it is clear that St. Thomas teaches the foundation of the communion of saints to be the divine good as an object common to all those members of the community. On the other hand, Maritain has brought forth no text of St. Thomas to show that the very act

[168] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.1, c., (Emphasis mine).
[169] *De Veritate*, q.29, a.4, c. (Emphasis mine). See Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, *Acta Apostolica Sedis* (*AAS*), July 20, 1943, p.222.

of beatitude, formal beatitude, constitutes the foundation of this community outside of the vision.[170]

Finally, Maritain's position that the dictum "the good of the whole is more divine than the good of its parts" has its full value in human, social matters also invites criticism. Professor De Koninck, for example, had made a strikingly different claim for which he provides texts from St. Thomas as support. De Koninck's claim is that it is in the speculative order and the order of separated substances that the primacy of the common good has its truest application. Here is the text of St. Thomas (the first objection and its response) together with De Koninck's exposition.

> It appears that beatitude consists more in an act of the practical intellect than of the speculative intellect. For to the degree that some good is more common, so much more is it divine, as is clear in the first book of the *Ethics*. But the good of the speculative intellect singularly belongs to him who beholds, while the good of the practical intellect is able to be common to many. Therefore, beatitude consists more in the practical intellect than in the speculative intellect.
>
> To the first, therefore, it ought to be said that the good to which the speculative intellect is united through cognition is more common than the good to which the practical intellect is united, inasmuch as the speculative intellect is more separated from the particular than the practical intellect whose cognition is perfected in an operation which consists in singulars. But this is true, that the attainment of the end to which the speculative intellect arrives, inasmuch as it is such, is proper to the one attaining; but the attainment of the end which the practical intellect intends is able to be proper and common, inasmuch as through the practical intellect someone directs both himself and others to the end, as is clear in the ruler of a multitude. But someone from the fact that he beholds, is himself singularly directed unto the end of speculation. However, the very end of the speculative intellect surpasses the good of the practical intellect as much as the singular attainment of it exceeds the common attainment of the good of the practical

[170] De Koninck, arguing against this very position writes: "The unity of the divine City is to be sought, not in an absolute comparison of its parts or in their interrelations, but in the identity and universality of the divine good of the City. If we merely consider the parts in their formal beatitude, the good that is common to them is common only according to predication." (DST, p.86.).

> intellect. And therefore, the most perfect beatitude consists in the speculative intellect.[171]

De Koninck comments:

> St. Thomas avoids distinguishing the major ("Quanto aliquod bonum est communius tanto est divinius"). On the contrary, he shows that the *dictum authenticum* applies more perfectly to the good of the speculative intellect than to that of the practical. And we must note carefully that St. Thomas calls "communius," not the good which consists in the *act* of the speculative intellect, but the "bonum *cui* intellectus speculativus *conjungitur* per cognitionem," and this is objective beatitude. The good of the speculative intellect as such is more common because it is formally more abstract, more separated from the singularity of the operable which involves potentiality, and hence, more communicable.[172]

If one considers the dictum "The more common a good is, the more divine it is" accepting "good" here to mean that which is perfective of another as an object and end, then the dictum holds more perfectly in the speculative order since the notion of diffusion and communicability can be more perfectly applied to that which is more separated from matter and particulars. If, however, we consider the act of attaining the objects of both the practical and speculative intellects, the act of beholding is not more common than the act by which a multitude attains some practical good, *e.g.*, the victory commonly attained by a team. In this case St. Thomas argues for the primacy of the speculative order based upon the excelling dignity of the object attained by the act of speculation. This latter case is not a denial of the primacy of the common good but rather a denial that the primacy of the common good extends outside a given order of goods. This is because the good of the whole exceeds the good of the parts precisely insofar as a part is considered as a part

[171] *In IV Sent*. d.49, q.1, a.1a, obj.1 & ad1.
[172] De Koninck, DST, p.88.

of that whole and not some other.[173] That is to say, so long as the goods in question belong to the same order and depend from the same principle, the dictum holds true, but when goods from independent orders are compared, there is no reason why a private good from a higher order could not exceed a common good from a lower order. The main point to see, however, is that St. Thomas does not assert here that the primacy of the common good is less applicable in the speculative order than in the practical order. In fact, his reasoning implies the opposite. Nor does Maritain bring forth a text from St. Thomas which asserts this.

One way in which the positions of Maritain and De Koninck might be reconciled is to distinguish between two ways in which an analogical name or dictum can be applied "first." Sometimes one speaks of the primary analogate as that case in which the term or dictum is first imposed or used, while at other times one speaks of the primary analogate as that case in which the notion of the thing signified is most perfectly found.

> Names of this kind are not only said of God causally, but also essentially. For when it is said that God is good or wise, not only is it signified that He is a cause of wisdom or of goodness, but that these pre-exist in Him more eminently. Hence, according to this, it ought to be said that with regard to the thing signified by the name, they are said of God before they are said of creatures, since from God perfections of this kind flow into creatures. But with regard to the imposition of the name, they are imposed first by us on creatures, which we know before [God].[174]

One might say that the position of Maritain recognizes that with respect to the imposition of the expression the dictum that "the good of the whole is more divine than the good of the part" is first of all said with regard to human, political affairs, but the position of De

[173] See J. Madiran, *Le Principe de Totalité* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1963), p.69-70.
[174] *S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.6, c.

Koninck recognizes that with respect to the thing signified this dictum is truer in the speculative order than in the practical order. However, this solution, as appealing as it may seem, does not fully account for Maritain's position. Maritain asserts that the "full value" of the dictum concerning the primacy of the common good is found in strictly social matters. The most natural way to understand this statement is that the sense in which the dictum is most of all true is in strictly human, social matters. This becomes even clearer in the subsequent chapters of his book, where, as we shall see, Maritain asserts that the primacy of the common good tends to disappear in a community of separated substances.

A careful examination of Maritain's survey reveals that a number of significant concepts and positions set forth by Maritain are not expressly taught by St. Thomas. Thus, the concept of a common good equally shared, in solitude, by God and an intellectual creature is not expressly taught by St. Thomas; nor is the concept of a good which is common because it is received into a created person as a whole expressly taught by St. Thomas. Furthermore, St. Thomas does not expressly teach the position that the intellectual creature is related, primarily as to the object of its beatitude, to God in his very essence, as opposed to God as common good of the universe; nor does St. Thomas expressly teach that the act of formal beatitude is the foundation for the communion of saints; nor does St. Thomas expressly teach that the primacy of the common good over the private good of the same order is a dictum which holds primarily in human, social affairs. On the contrary, we have brought forth evidence to show that such concepts and positions are even opposed, either implicitly or openly, to St. Thomas' doctrine.

How is it that Maritain can assert that he has set forth an interpretation of St. Thomas which is fundamentally faithful to his thought? He seems to be of the opinion that the positions laid out in his survey are consistent with the deeper logic of St. Thomas' thought, that his interpretation represents a development of a more fundamental principle of Thomistic philosophy. The principle in question is the metaphysical distinction between individuality and personality, a distinction which is founded upon a metaphysics of being as distinct from essence.

III.C The Distinction Between Individuality and Personality in Maritain

At the foundation of many of the positions which Maritain proposes as developments of the teaching of St. Thomas is the distinction between individuality and personality. This distinction, "fundamental in the doctrine of St. Thomas,"[175] according to Maritain, is grounded in the human experience of the polarity of the notion of self. The notion of self begets seemingly contradictory positions, some of which assert the baseness, others the supreme dignity, of the self. From these experiences Maritain draws the conclusion that the human being has a selfhood which takes its origin from two, opposing poles. "What do these contradictions mean? They mean that the human being is caught between two poles; a material pole, which, in reality, does not concern the true person but rather the shadow of personality or what, in the strict sense is called *individuality*, and a spiritual pole, which does concern the *true personality*."[176] Maritain

[175] Maritain, PCG, p. 24.
[176] Maritain, PCG, p.23.

goes on to give an account of each of these poles so as to explain more profoundly the relation between them in the human being.

Individuality according to Maritain belongs to every real thing existing outside of the mind: God, angels, and material beings. "It designates that concrete state of unity and indivision, required by existence, in virtue of which every actually or possibly existing nature can posit itself in existence as distinct from other beings."[177] Yet individuality belongs to spiritual and material beings in different ways. It belongs to spiritual beings by virtue of their very form but to material beings in virtue of their matter, insofar as this matter stands under extension. The substantial forms which inform this or that matter acquire individuality in virtue of their relation to some determinate matter. "Their specific form and their essence are not individual by reason of their own entity (*par elles-mêmes*), but by reason of their transcendental relation to matter understood as implying position in space."[178] Thus, it is not in virtue of what they are but that in which their forms exist that makes such substances individual. Because matter implies imperfection and divisibility, the unity of the human person is precarious. Thus, in virtue of the material principle of his being the human being tends towards multiplicity. "As an individual, each of us is a fragment of a species, a part of the universe, a unique point in the immense web of cosmic, ethnical, historical forces and influences – and bound by their laws. Each of us is subject to the determinism of the physical world."[179] It is important to understand the sense of the word "part" being used here. According to this

[177] Maritain, PCG, p.24.
[178] Maritain, PCG, p.27.
[179] Maritain, PCG, p.28. See Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics* (London: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1954), p.58.

claim man is a part of the *material* universe. As individual, man is not called a part in the sense that one would call an angel a part of the universe.

In contradistinction to the concept of individuality Maritain posits the concept of personality. Maritain approaches the concept of personality through the experience of love. He appeals to the fact of experience that when a person loves another person in the fullest sense, what is loved is not the mere qualities or essence of the beloved but the very being of the other. "We love the deepest, most substantial and hidden, the most *existing* reality of the beloved being. This is a metaphysical center deeper than all the qualities and essences we can find and enumerate in the beloved."[180] A little further on, he continues: "This brief consideration of love's own law brings us to the metaphysical problem of the person. For love is not concerned with qualities or natures or essences, but with *persons*."[181] Implied in this line of reasoning is the position that personhood is found at the level of being as distinct from essence. Maritain uses this principle to distinguish personality from individuality. "Unlike the concept of the individuality of corporeal things, the concept of personality is related not to matter, but to the deepest and highest dimensions of being. Its roots are in the spirit inasmuch as the spirit holds itself in existence and superabounds in existence."[182] For Maritain personality is constituted by this self-possession of existence, in short, by subsistence. "Personality is the subsistence of the spiritual soul communicated to the human composite."[183] As such personality is something which is communicated to matter and exists in matter but in no way arises from matter.

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[180] Maritain, PCG, p.29 (Italics in original).
[181] Maritain, PCG, p.29 (Italics in original).
[182] Maritain, PCG, p.30.
[183] Maritain, PCG, p.31.

Because matter is an essential principle of the substance of the human being, it follows that for Maritain a human being cannot be a pure person. "Man is very far from being a pure person; the human person is the person of a poor material individual."[184] In an earlier work Maritain expounds this at greater length.

> The notion of person is an analogical notion, which is realized in different degrees and on essentially different ontological levels. The human being is a person; that is to say, a universe of a spiritual nature, endowed with freedom of choice and destined for freedom of autonomy. He is not any more a *pure person* than a *pure intelligence*. On the contrary, since he is at the lowest degree in the scale of intellectuality, he is also at the lowest degree in that of personality. To forget that would be to confuse the human person with the angelic person or the divine Person, in whom alone (because He is subsistent Being itself through himself, and subsisting Freedom of autonomy) is realized in a pure state – in pure act – the perfection designated by the word "personality."[185]

It is important not to misunderstand Maritain here. When he says that a human being is not a pure person, he is not claiming that a human being is part individual and part person. Rather, he is claiming that while man is wholly a person, yet he is such only in virtue of some part of him, the spiritual part. In the same way it can be said that a man is wholly an individual by reason of the material part of man. Thus, Maritain states:

> There is not in me one reality, called my individual, and another reality called my person. One and the same reality is, in a certain sense an individual, and in another sense, a person. Our whole being is an individual by reason of that in us which derives from matter, and person by reason of that in us which derives from spirit.[186]

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[184] Maritain, PCG, p.50.
[185] Maritain, *Du RégimeTemporel et de la Liberté*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1933), p.55.
[186] PCG, p. 33. See *Scholasticism and Politics*, p.52. "I am wholly an individual, by reason of what I receive from matter, and I am wholly a person, by reason of what I receive from spirit."

Thus, there exists only one reality which can be understood in relation to its diverse principles. When considered in relation to materiality, the reality is called an individual. When considered in relation to spirit, this reality is called a person.

With this distinction in hand Maritain seeks to explain the diverse relationships which man has to the political order. In an early work, *The Three Reformers* (1925), Maritain had used this distinction to formulate the relation of the human being to the state in this way:

> According to the principles of St. Thomas, it is because he is first an individual of a species that man, having need of the help of his fellows to perfect his specific activity, is consequently an *individual* of the city, a member of society. And on this count, he is subordinated to the good of his city as to the good of the whole, the common good which as such is more *divine* and therefore better deserving the love of each than his very own life. But if it is a question of the destiny which belongs to man as a *person*, the relation is inverse, and it is the human city which is subordinate to his destiny. If every human person is made, as to his first and proper good, for God, Who is his ultimate end, and 'the distinct common good' of the entire universe, he ought not therefore, on this count, in accordance with the law of charity, to prefer anything to himself save God. So much so that, according as personality is realized in any being, to that extent does it become an independent whole and not a part (whatever be its ties on other grounds).[187]

According to this early formulation Maritain seems to be asserting that human beings enter into society only on account of defects, and human development is portrayed as escaping the ties of human society and its demands so as to relate oneself only to God.[188] In the *Person and the Common Good*, however, Maritain stresses that human beings enter into society not only on account of some defect but also as a result of the eminent

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[187] Maritain, *Three Reformers: Luther, Descartes and Rousseau* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1955), p.24.

[188] See Ralph McInerny, *Art and Prudence*: *Studies in the thought of Jacques Maritain* (Notre Dame: University Press, 1988), p.83. Even as late as 1942, we find this sentiment in Maritain's work. "Because the person as such is a root of independence, there will always exist a certain tension between the person and society." (*The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, tr. by D. C. Anson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p.18).

perfection and diffusiveness of the person. "Because, in our substance, it is an imprint or seal which enables itself to possess its existence, to perfect and give itself freely, personality testifies to the generosity or expansiveness in being which an incarnate spirit derives from its spiritual nature…."[189] A little further on Maritain continues: "By the very fact that each of us is a person and expresses himself to himself, each of us requires communication with *other* and *the others* in the order of knowledge and love. Personality, of its essence, requires dialogue in which souls really communicate."[190] Moreover, Maritain asserts that the primary reason why the person enters into society is on account of its dignity and perfections. Its needs are only a secondary reason why the human person enters into society.

> Why is it that the person, as person, seeks to live in society? It does so, first, because of its very perfections, as person, and its inner urge to the communications of knowledge and love which require relationship with other persons. In its radical generosity, the human person tends to overflow into social communications in response to the law of superabundance inscribed in the depths of its being, life intelligence and love. It does so secondly because of its needs or deficiencies, which derive from its material individuality.[191]

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[189] Maritain, PCG, p.31.

[190] Maritain, PCG, p.31-32 (Italics in original). Notice that the self-diffusiveness of which Maritain speaks does not seem to be diffusiveness in the order of final cause, but in the order of efficient and exemplar cause.

[191] Maritain, PCG, p.37-38. It is interesting to compare this text with another on the same point by Charles De Koninck, not only for the sake of determining the truth of the matter, but also to see how the rhetorical elements of the presentation of a position affect the way in which that position is perceived. "It is entirely in the line of humanism to see the first roots, the most fundamental reason, for the social character of man not in the common good, but in the poetic nature of the individual, in the need to express oneself, and to speak oneself to others under the pressure of an interior superabundance of pure self. Every object then becomes an original-means for a work which has its real first principle in the I. You understand, according to this, that the other person is necessary because I sense the need to have myself heard; because I need someone to appreciate me; I need a person-subject. In short, as for myself, your reason for being is so that you might participate in my personal life. Is it indeed a man that speaks thus?" *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, Appendix 1, p. 127.

Therefore, the human being is a member of society as a person and as an individual, yet first of all insofar as he is a person and secondarily insofar as he is an individual.

The primary reason Maritain gives why the human being is a member of society is in order to distribute from the perfection of his being to others. The relations which a person has, as person, are based upon the diffusiveness of his perfection of being to others. Thus, as person, one enters into society not to receive or participate in some fuller good but only to share and diffuse the perfection of goodness already possessed. The person, existing as a whole in society, has a good identical to the whole of the society. Indeed, for Maritain it is repugnant to the very notion of a person, as person, to be a part of society. "It is a fundamental thesis of Thomism that the person, as such, is a whole. The concept of part is opposed to that of person."[192] One cannot say properly, therefore, that persons, as persons, are parts of society. Thus, when one speaks of a person as a member of society, this is not to be understood as if the person stands to that society as a part stands to a whole. Rather, one must say that a society of persons is "a whole composed of wholes."[193]

At this point in his text Maritain thinks that it is helpful to defend himself against an objection put forth by Fr. J. Baisnée,[194] an objection which was echoed by De Koninck against Fr. Eschmann, namely that when St. Thomas says it is opposed to the notion of person to be a part, he is only referring to a part of an *unum per se*. Maritain responds by arguing that this principle is a universal principle and applies analogously to persons as incorporated into society.

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[192] Maritain, PCG, p.46.
[193] Maritain, PCG, p.47.
[194] Baisnée, "Two Catholic Critiques of Personalism" *The Modern Schoolman*, XXII, n.1 (Jan., 1945): p.59-75.

> St. Thomas, in this text, refers to the human composite (*unum per se*) and shows that, because it is only a part of the human being, the separated soul cannot be a person. To anyone whose knowledge of Thomism is sufficiently deep…it is clear that the principle – the *ratio* of part is repugnant to that of personality – is an entirely general principle and is applied analogically depending upon the case. Thus, John of St. Thomas shows, in speaking of the hypostatic union, which takes place in *persona* (*S.T.*, IIIa, q.2, a.2), that God can be united to human nature only as a person just as He can be united to human intelligence only as a *species intelligibilis* because in both cases He is united to them as term and as whole, not as part. (*Cursus Theol.*, De Incarnatione, Disput. IV, a.1). The same principle must evidently come into play also – though under completely different conditions and following another line of application – when the notion of person is considered with respect to wholes which are no longer, like the human composite, substantial but have only an accidental unity, and are themselves composed of persons like the social whole.[195]

By appealing to the cases in which God is united to something else as a whole Maritain intends to show that St. Thomas' principle that the *ratio* of part is repugnant to that of personality extends beyond those cases where "part" means part of an *unum per se*.

From the position that a pure person does not partake of a greater good in society but is related to that society as a whole to a whole, it follows that the primacy of the common good over the private good disappears in a society of pure persons, a position which Maritain expressly asserts. "In truth, if human society were a society of *pure persons*, the good of society and the good of each person would be one and the same good."[196] There is some difficulty in determining what Maritain means by the expression "pure person." In a number of his texts Maritain indicates that a pure spirit, or a pure intelligence, is pure person. Since angels are certainly pure spirits inasmuch as matter in no way enters into their being or composition, it would seem to follow that they are pure

[195] Maritain, PCG, p.46.
[196] Maritain, PCG, p.49-50 (Italics in original). See *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, p.11.

persons. Yet, in fact, in one text, Maritain seems to assert that only a divine Person is a pure person and that angels are not pure persons.

> A society of pure persons is not possible except in God, where the character of a part is entirely absent from the members of the society, and where the good of the whole is purely and strictly the same good of each person – because it is the selfsame essence of each of them. In every other case, persons who are members of society will also be parts of this same society. That is to say, the society will not be a society of pure persons, but a society of persons who are also individual beings (individuals of one species, such as man, or individual-species, like the angels).[197]

According to this text it would seem that the notion of pure person is not simply a being completely separated from matter but rather a being which is in no way an individual. However, recall that Maritain had defined individuality as that which "designates that concrete state of unity and indivision, required by existence, in virtue of which every actually or possibly existing nature can posit itself in existence as distinct from other beings."[198] Every real being is an individual in this sense so that God is also an individual, as Maritain expressly admits.[199] If an angel is not a pure person because it is an individual, while a divine Person is a pure person even though God is an individual, this must mean that the term individual is used equivocally by Maritain in these two texts. The individuality which is opposed to personality does not signify a "concrete state of unity and indivision, required by existence" but rather it signifies that principle in virtue of which something can be a part of some whole.

Having argued that in societies of pure persons there is no divergence between the common good and the good of the person, Maritain goes on to consider the divergence

[197] Maritain, *Du RégimeTemporel et de la Liberté*, p.58.
[198] Maritain, PCG, p.24.
[199] Maritain, PCG, p.25.

which does exist in human societies. He cites two texts of St. Thomas which elucidate the distinction between person and individual and how each is related to the good of the state.

> Two texts of St. Thomas, which supplement and balance one another, can guide us to a deeper penetration of these ideas. "Each individual person," St. Thomas writes, "is related to the entire community as the part to the whole."…St. Thomas' second text that completes and balances the first is pertinent here: "Man is not ordained to the body politic according to all that he is and has."[200]

Maritain takes the latter text of St. Thomas to refer to his distinction between personality and individuality. According to that which man is and has as individual his private good is ordained to the common good of the political community, but according to that which man is and has as person his private good is not ordained to the common good of the political community.

Because of this necessary dichotomy of man's being there exists according to Maritain a natural and necessary conflict inherent in human society.

> Social life is naturally ordained – in the way in which we have tried to describe – to the good and the freedom of the person. And yet there is in this very same social life a natural tendency to enslave and diminish the person in the measure that society considers the person as a mere material individual…This paradox, this tension, and this conflict are something natural and inevitable.[201]

For Maritain, then, the irreducible principles of man's being result in an inescapable conflict among his goods. Corresponding to each principle of man's being, matter and

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[200] Maritain, PCG, p.60-61. The first citation from St. Thomas is taken from *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.64, a.2. (See also, IIa-IIae, q.65, a.1. "The whole man himself is ordered as to an end to the whole community of which he is a part"). The Second citation is taken from *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.21, a.4, ad3.
[201] Maritain, PCG, p.67.

spirit, there corresponds an order of goods which must be in tension and which must balance one another.

Let us return now to the two theses which were under debate between Fr. Eschmann and professor De Koninck in order to re-evaluate Maritain's position concerning the second of these theses. Recall that De Koninck asserted, in opposition to Fr. Eschmann, that created persons are ordered and subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe, *i.e.*, the good which consists in the right order of the universe. Maritain accepted this formulation but only with significant qualifications, qualifications which we are now in a better position to enumerate. For Maritain in speculative matters and among the separated intelligences there is not a primacy of the common good in the strict sense. Thus, the law of the primacy of the common good holds in its proper sense only for human persons in regard to the human political community. In this regard human persons are ordered and subordinated to the common good of the political community, though only according to that which they are on account of matter. On the contrary, if they be considered according to that which they are according to spirit, the relation is inverse. It is clear that these qualifications are not simply specific determinations of the thesis as set forth by De Koninck. They alter the very substance of this thesis. Yet Maritain still maintains that "absolutely speaking, the intellectual substance is loved and willed for the order of the universe of creation before it is loved and willed for itself."[202] The reason for this is because the created person "differs from God, or Personality in pure act, more than it resembles Him. Hence, absolutely speaking, it is part or 'individual' more than 'person' and before it is a 'person.'"[203]

[202] Maritain, PCG, p.8 (footnote 7).
[203] Maritain, PCG, p.7 (footnote 7).

III.D Difficulties with Maritain's Account of Individuality and Personality

Maritain's account of individuality and personality contains difficulties on many grounds. First, his account of person does not seem to take into account sufficiently the fact that individuality and matter are part of the very notion of human person for St. Thomas. Second, his notion of individuality is not consistent with the concept of individuality found in St. Thomas. Again, he does not explain how it is that a created person can be "more individual than person." Moreover, his account of why a person, as person, cannot be part of an accidental whole, such as a political community, is problematic. Finally, according to his principles he does not seem to be able to account for St. Thomas' teaching on angelic society.

In his account of the notion of person, in particular the human person, Maritain teaches that personality is something communicated to matter but not something which arises in any way from matter. Matter shares in human personality but does not contribute to it. The reason for this position is that according to Maritain personality is found at the level of being. It is fundamentally subsistence, the self-possession of existence. Matter itself receives existence through the form which actuates it; hence, it cannot contribute to personality as such. Nothing gives what it does not have.

However, for St. Thomas the notion of individuality is essential to the notion of person.[204] In the human person, moreover, this individuality is derived precisely from matter.

[204] In general, we can say that Maritain seems to ignore the fact that for St. Thomas incommunicability, not just existence, is of the very essence of personhood. Personality as it is found in God according to St.

> Person, generically taken, signifies an individual substance of a rational nature, as was said. An individual, however, is what is in itself indistinct, yet distinct from others. Therefore, person, in whatever nature, signifies what is distinct in that nature: just as in human nature it signifies this flesh and these bones and this soul, which are the principles individuating man. Which, indeed, although they are not of the signification of person, are nevertheless, of the signification of human person.[205]

For St. Thomas the particular nature or essence enters into the determination and notion of person. The notion of personality is not derived exclusively from being but also from essence or nature, and because materiality is part and parcel of human nature, personality is derived from matter as well as from spirit. Thus, the contra-distinction between personality and individuality in the human being, even if it be only a distinction of reason,[206] is foreign to the thought of St. Thomas. The very *notion* of human personality includes individuality derived from matter. According to St. Thomas' notion of person to say that man is more individual than person is like saying that Socrates is more animal than man, more the genus than the species.[207] It seems to be speech without a corresponding concept.

Thomas has the notion of person not only because it has the notion of subsistence and intelligence in the fullest sense but also because it has most of all the notion of incommunicability, for opposites, in this case, correlatives, have the notion of incommunicability more than natures or things distinct on account of matter have the notion of incommunicability.

[205] *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.4, c. See *De Potentia,* q.9, a.4, c. "Since a distinct subsisting thing in human nature is nothing other than something individuated and diverse from others through individual matter, it is therefore necessary that this be signified materially when [something] is called a human person."

[206] Recall that Maritain's position seems to assert a distinction of reason between personality and individuality as opposed to a real distinction.

[207] One possible source of this way of speaking might come from a confusion between the principles of knowing and the principles of being. It is true that the genus is more a principle of knowing than the species. For example, St. Thomas says in his commentary on *Metaphysics* XI, lect. 1. "It is the truth that the universals are principles, namely in knowing. And thus the genera are more principles, since they are simpler. And because they are divided into more than the species, that is, since they contain many in potency. But the species contain many in act. Hence, they are more divisible through the mode of resolution of a composite into the simple." On the other hand, it is not true that the genus is more a principle of being than the species, which is what Maritain seems to be asserting.

Furthermore, Maritain's concept of individuality also poses difficulties. The definition which Maritain gives here in this work is consistent with St. Thomas' definition of individual. Yet, in fact, Maritain does not use this definition when he opposes personality to individuality. Instead, the individuality which is opposed to personality signifies that principle in virtue of which something can be a part of a whole.[208] Yet this notion of individual is nowhere found in St. Thomas.

Maritain's attempt to fully characterize the person and the person's relation to society in terms of being results in the postulation of diverse orders of good of the human being. If one considers the perfection of the person precisely insofar as the person is a being, the good of the person as person will be diverse from the good of the person as individual. This is because the *existence* of the human person does not arise from matter. It is communicated to matter.[209] On the other hand, according to St. Thomas the *personality* of the human person does arise, in part, from matter. Thus, when St. Thomas considers the good of the human person, he considers that good which reaches the whole person, form and matter, namely, the good *in causando*, *per modum finis*.

> The good is extended to existing things and non-existing things, not according to predication, but according to causality (so that through non-existing things we understand not those things simply which utterly do not exist, but those things which are in potency and not in act). For the good has the notion of an end, in which not only those things that are in act rest, but those things also which are not in act, but are in potency only, are moved to it. Being, however, does not imply a relationship of a cause, unless as a formal cause only: whether inhering or exemplary, the causality of which does not extend itself except to those things that are in act.[210]

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[208] If this were not the sense of individual which Maritain opposes to personality, then there is no principle by which Maritain could hold that a divine Person is a pure person while an angel is not a pure person.
[209] See *In I Sent.*, d.8, q.5, a.2, ad6.
[210] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.2, ad2. See *In I Sent.* d.8, q.1, a.3, ad2; *De Veritate*, q.21, a.2, ad2 ; and *In Div. Nom.*, c.5, lect.1.

Hence, matter itself is able to be called good,[211] for even though the matter in virtue of which the person is individuated is in potency, it is nevertheless ordained to the same good to which the form of the person, the spiritual principle in man, is ordained. Therefore, there is but a single order of goods for the human person corresponding to the integral nature in man. Because Maritain is convinced that the most fundamental consideration of the problem is to treat it from the point of view of being, he begins with an analysis of the diverse principles of being of the human person and is deceived into thinking that there is one order of goods for the human being as individual and another order of goods for the human being as person. The good of the rational creature is fractured. A consideration from the more fundamental perspective of final causality reveals that there is a unified order of goods for the rational creature, a good which extends to his whole being, form and matter, not diverse goods for each. St. Thomas' analysis is unifying, and instead of discovering an opposition between the common and private goods he finds an order between them; instead of a tension there is a harmony.

This harmonizing perspective can be applied to the particular relationship between the person and society. If one understands membership in society to be based upon the common good, since the good, as final cause, is diffusive of itself and reaches even the matter of a human person, we are members of society on account of both our form and our matter for the same reason. There is integrity to our membership in human societies such as the family and the political community.

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[211] *S.C.G.*, III, c.11. "But the evil of nature, which is the privation of form, is in matter, which is good insofar as it is a being in potency."

A further difficulty with Maritain's teaching on the person is how a created person can be more individual than person. Things which are compared to one another as more or less have a common measure, but it is not clear how there can be a common measure between individuality and personality as conceived by Maritain. Maritain states that the created person "differs from God, or Personality in pure act, more than it resembles Him. Hence, absolutely speaking, it is part or 'individual' more than 'person' and before it is a 'person.'"[212] Presumably personality in imperfect act is what characterizes the created person. This would seem to imply that the actuality of personhood is the common measure which relates individuality to personality. But what is the actuality of personhood? Recall that Maritain had insisted that every person is entirely a person. Thus, the actuality of personhood cannot signify that which makes a person more fully a person.[213] Instead, it must signify that which makes a person to have personality more fully, *i.e.*, to approach to the most perfect definition of person. Individuality would, therefore, signify that which makes some being recede from the perfect definition of person. However, if this is so, "to be more individual than person" would mean "not to be a person," simply speaking.

Another difficulty arises in attempting to verify Maritain's assertion that "the principle – the *ratio* of part is repugnant to that of personality – is an entirely general principle." More specifically, Maritain asserts that it is a principle that can be applied by analogy to accidental wholes such as a political community. He does this by appealing to the cases in the texts of St. Thomas in which he teaches that God is united to something else as a whole, namely the case of the Hypostatic Union and the case of the information

[212] PCG, p.7 (footnote 7).
[213] If this were the case, then to say that a created person is more individual than person, would require that the created person is more than entirely an individual.

of the human intellect by the divine essence without the mediation of a species in the beatific vision. Yet it is not clear how these examples help Maritain's position. In order for these examples to be pertinent, they must show that God is not made a part of something else, which is not an *unum per se*, precisely because God is a person, but in fact, neither of these examples indicate this. First of all, both cases refer to a union which is *per se* one. Second, neither of these cases indicates that it is in virtue of being a person that God cannot enter into composition with another thing to form a whole, for it belongs to God's very *nature* that he not be part of some *per se* whole since nothing can be prior to God and a *per se* whole is prior to its parts.[214] There is even a further difficulty with Maritain's position here. When St. Thomas says that the notion of part is repugnant to the notion of personality, he very clearly indicates that this is due to the person not precisely insofar as it is a person but insofar as it is a hypostasis.[215] Hence, first and *per se*, the notion of part is repugnant to hypostasis, and only by virtue of the fact that a person is a kind of hypostasis is it true that the notion of part is repugnant to the notion of person. Therefore, if Maritain's assertion that this principle is universal were correct, he would be forced into holding the absurd position that no individual substance, *i.e.*, hypostasis, as individual substance, could enter into an accidental union.

A final difficulty with Maritain's teaching on the distinction between personality and individuality is his assertion that as a person becomes more pure the divergence between the private and common good disappears. Thus, among purer persons, the

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[214] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.3, a.8 ; and *In III Sent*. d.6, q.2, a.3, ad4. See also *S.C.G.*, III.51. "Therefore, it is manifest that the divine essence is able to be compared to the created intellect as an intelligible species by which it understands, which does not happen in the case of the essence of some other separated substance. Nor, nevertheless, is it able to be the form of another thing according to natural being (*esse*), for it would follow that, together with the other united thing, it would constitute one nature, which is not able to be, since the divine essence is perfect in itself in its own nature."

[215] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.1, ad2 & ad5.

ordination to the common good as distinct from the private good becomes less pronounced. On the other hand, professor De Koninck reads St. Thomas to say that in pure spirits the primacy of the common good over the private good is even more manifest. "It is in the most perfect created persons, in the pure spirits, that one best sees this profound ordination to the common good."[216] Not only this, but rather than seeing a convergence or identification between the common good and private good of pure spirits, De Koninck understands St. Thomas to teach an even greater divergence. "This love of the common good is so perfect and so great that the angels love their inequality and the very subordination of their singular good, which is always the more distant from their common good, all the more subjected and conformed to the [common good], in proportion as they are more elevated in perfection."[217] De Koninck cites St. Thomas' *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures* to support his interpretation.

> Since affection follows cognition, the more universal is the cognition, the more the affection following it respects the common good. And the more particular is the cognition, the more the affection following it respects the private good. Hence, also in us private love arises from sensitive knowledge, but love of the common and absolute good arises from intellectual knowledge. Since, therefore, the higher the angels are, the more universal is the knowledge they possess, as Dionysius says in the twelfth chapter of the *Angelic Hierarchies*, their love most of all respects the common good. And therefore, they have more love among themselves if they differ in species (which pertains more to the perfection of the universe, as was shown) than if they came together in one species, which would pertain to the private good of one species.[218]

In this text, St. Thomas clearly indicates that the private good of the angels, which also happens to be the good of their species since each angel is of a different species, differs

[216] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.15.
[217] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.16.
[218] *De Spir. Creat.,* n.8, ad5.

from the common good of the order of the universe in which they all share.[219] Moreover, since their love respects the common good more and respects the private good less the higher they are, it follows that the distance between their natural affection for the common good and their natural affection for their private good increases as one ascends the order of spiritual beings.

St. Thomas does not explicitly teach in this text that the higher the angel, the greater the distance between its singular good and its common good, as De Koninck asserts. However, a more careful reading of this text seems to support De Koninck's claim, for when St. Thomas speaks of the knowledge of one angel being more universal than the knowledge of another angel, this does not refer to a greater universality as regards the thing known, for even the lowest intellectual substance, the human intellect, has the whole of being as its object. Rather, the greater universality refers to the very "that through which" something is known.[220] This is because by many species a lower angel has proper knowledge of as many things as a higher angel knows through only a single species. Thus, the intelligible species of the higher angel, extending to the proper knowledge of more things, is more universal. The universality considered here is not one of predication, which is less distinct the more universal it becomes. On the contrary, the knowledge of the angels is prior to the things known and is more likened to the universal in causality, which is more distinct the more universal it is.[221] This kind of universality in angelic knowledge is a universal in representation since by one intellectual species

[219] Indeed, if the common good and the private good of the pure spirit were identical, it would be impossible to maintain, as St. Thomas does, that the angels sinned by preferring their private good to the common good. See *S.T.*, Ia, q.63, a.2, c. "The good of another was not able to be deemed an impediment to the good desired by the evil angel except inasmuch as he desired his singular excellence which singularity would cease through the excellence of another."
[220] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.55, a.3, ad2.
[221] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.55, a.3, ad1.

many things are represented to the knower.[222] Therefore, when St. Thomas speaks about the angels having a greater love for the common good based upon their more universal knowledge, he indicates that they understand more distinctly and perfectly that in which the common good consists and are able to act as universal causes in realizing the common good.[223]

> To the degree that something is of more perfect virtue and more eminent in degree of goodness, so much does it have a more common desire for the good, and so much the more does it seek and bring about the good in things distant from itself. For imperfect beings tend to only the good of the individual as such; but perfect beings tend to the good of the species; and more perfect beings tend to the good of the genus.[224]

In a similar way man, due to his intellectual knowledge, is placed over the animals and the rest of the material creation so that he might assist in realizing the common good which his reason discovers in the order of creation. Thus, a higher angel looks to a more perfect archetype of the common good and is, therefore, enabled to govern a larger part of the created order to bring about the common good at a more fundamental level than does a lower angel.[225] Moreover, since the private good of any angel is always the good of an individual, and of a single species, while the common good to which an angel looks grows in proportion to its rank, it follows that the distance between the private good of an angel and the common good to which that angel looks increases as one ascends the angelic hierarchy.

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[222] See *S.C.G.*, II.98. "The intelligible likeness which is in the separated substances is of more universal power, sufficient for representing many. And therefore, it does not produce a more imperfect cognition, but a more perfect cognition."
[223] See *S.C.G.*, III, 78, 79, and 91.
[224] *S.C.G.* III.24.
[225] See *S.C.G.*, III, 79. "The more universal powers are motive of the more particular powers, as was said. But the superiors among the intellectual natures have more universal forms, as was shown above. Therefore, they are regulative of the inferiors of intellectual natures."

Hence, a careful consideration of St. Thomas' texts reveals that, in opposition to the position stated by Maritain, among creatures the distance between the common good to which they look and their singular good increases the more as one ascends the gradations of being and actuality.

To conclude, in view of the difficulties considered above it is not reasonable to accept Maritain's interpretation of St. Thomas on the primacy of the common good without significant reservations. A careful reading of Maritain's interpretation of St. Thomas reveals major differences between Maritain's interpretation and St. Thomas' actual doctrine. Among the most significant differences are Maritain's concepts of the common good and of the person, concepts which Maritain attempts to express in terms of that being which signifies the act of existence.

Was Maritain's reading of St. Thomas distorted by the particular political circumstances in which he was writing? In fact, his positions and interpretations of St. Thomas tended to favor the particular political systems which were considered the champions of freedom and human dignity on the heels of the Second World War. Yet it seems that there is a more fundamental explanation for Maritain's particular reading of St. Thomas, namely an approach to metaphysics which tends to ignore the role of essences and causality in favor of being. While, according to St. Thomas, being *qua* being is the subject-genus of metaphysics[226] and while the distinction between *esse* and essence is fundamental for St. Thomas, there is much more to a science than its subject. Neither is being the most fundamental consideration for every metaphysical problem. Indeed, for St. Thomas metaphysics is first of all wisdom, and wisdom has to do with the first causes, especially the final cause since it is the first among causes. A metaphysical

[226] See St. Thomas' prooemium to the *Metaphysics*.

approach which restricts itself to the consideration of being and the *actus essendi*, which pertains properly to the consideration of formal causality, is impoverished precisely because it cannot account for the whole of reality, from pure act to pure potency. For a complete metaphysics there is need for a return to the recognition of the primacy of final causality.

III.E Summary and Conclusions

We have considered and critiqued various interpretations of St. Thomas' doctrine on the relation of the common good to the private good. A careful consideration of the most relevant texts from St. Thomas reveals that his authentic teaching on the matter asserts that the common good in any order always has primacy over the private good in the same order and that the ultimate and greatest good for the created person is a common good. More particularly it can be said that, taking good in the strict sense as a good *in causando, per modum finis*, St. Thomas teaches that (1) the created person is ordained to the ultimate separate good of the universe, God, formally and primarily as a common good; and (2) the created person is ordained and subordinated to the intrinsic common good of the universe, the good of the order of the universe, which includes the society of created persons. Furthermore, it can be said that the *dictum* concerning the primacy of the common good in the strict sense pertains not only to the practical order but also to the speculative order, and not only to human society, including the family and the state, but also to the society of separated substances. In short, it is applicable wherever the good as

final cause is found, and it is most perfectly applicable where final cause is most perfectly operative.

III.F Personal Dignity as a Participation in a Higher Order of Good in St. Thomas

If, as we have seen, the common good in any order has primacy for St. Thomas, *i.e.*, the common good is more lovable and *dignius* in itself than the private good of the same order, what conclusions must we draw as regards his teaching about personal dignity? A particular question arises in this regard since it also pertains to dignity that a good be possessed in a more perfect mode. Stated plainly, is there greater dignity in possessing a higher good in an imperfect or less perfect way, or is there greater dignity in possessing a lower good in a perfect or more perfect way?

St. Thomas holds as a universal principle that if there is a higher order of goodness and being in which something may participate, it is of greater dignity to be united to that higher order by way of participation than to possess fully and *per se* that which is greatest in a lower order. Thus, for example, St. Thomas says that dignity consists more in existing through something better than existing through oneself. "Personality pertains necessarily to the dignity and perfection of a thing, inasmuch as it pertains to its dignity and perfection that it exist *per se*, which is understood in the name 'person.' However, it is of greater dignity for something to exist in another thing of a dignity higher than itself, than that it exist *per se*."[227] St. Thomas applies the same principle in relating the dignity of grace to the dignity of the substance in which it inheres

[227] *S.T.*, IIIa, q.2, a.2, ad2. Also see IIIa, q.2, a.5, ad1; and *S.C.G.* IV, c.49.

and the dignity of charity in relation to the dignity of the soul in which it inheres.[228] Again, the same principle is at work concerning the relation of mercy to charity, for St. Thomas says that in man charity is better than mercy, not in itself, but because it unites man to something higher.[229] Moreover, he says the same about the possession of the sciences, namely that it is better to possess a nobler science imperfectly than a less noble science perfectly.[230]

Thus, we can conclude that universally it pertains to greater dignity to participate imperfectly in a good of a higher order than to possess a good of a lower order perfectly according to the doctrine of St. Thomas. Hence, it is clear that for St. Thomas the ultimate dignity of a created person consists not in the perfect possession of a proper good commensurate with created being but rather in the imperfect possession of a good which exceeds the nature and capacities of the created person. However, that good which so exceeds the capacities of the created person that it can only be possessed imperfectly is a common good, a good which is capable of being possessed by many without being diminished. It is because the common good is prior to the private good that it can be the ultimate ground of personal dignity. Thus, for St. Thomas the root of personal dignity is the primacy of the common good.

[228] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.110, a.2, ad2; and IIa-IIae, q.23, a.3, ad3.
[229] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.30, a.4, c.
[230] *In I De Anima*, lect.1.

Chapter IV: Arguments that the Primacy of the Common Good Is Not the Root of Personal Dignity

In the previous two chapters of the thesis (II and III), the principle aim was to establish an authentic interpretation of St. Thomas concerning the primacy of the common good as the root of personal dignity. As mentioned in Chapter I, arriving at the correct interpretation of St. Thomas is an instrument to a further end, namely, the establishment of the truth of the matter. In this section of the thesis, also dialectical in nature, we will set forth arguments, principally based upon principles set forth by various notable and influential philosophers, against the position that the primacy of the common good is the root of personal dignity.

It is hardly possible to consider all of the objections which one might raise against the primacy of the common good and its status as a basis for personal dignity. Nor is it possible in such a limited endeavor as ours even to consider all the most significant voices that have contributed to this debate. However, we do hope to identify the principal difficulties in this debate which are in some sense the basis of other difficulties and to take as a starting point those philosophers who have given the most forceful expression to these difficulties.

IV.A Arguments that the Common Good Is Not the Primary Good of the Person

Since the basis of personal dignity in the primacy of the common good presupposes that the common good is the primary good (in the sense of the best and

ultimate good) of and for the person, it follows that arguments against the primacy of the common good are arguments which conclude that the primacy of the common good is not the root of personal dignity. The following are a number of arguments against the primacy of the common good.

IV.A.1 Pleasure Is the Ultimate Good

A first argument can be drawn from the principle that pleasure is the best good. "The ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments."[231] A sign of this is that the great majority of men prefer pleasure to other goods.[232] Moreover, pleasure is desirable for its own sake and not for the sake of another, for no one asks why someone desires pleasure. The fact that something is pleasing is sufficient grounds for it being desirable. Pleasure is not a common good since it is experienced only by the one who has it. "Each person's happiness is a good to that person."[233] Thus, the best good is not a common good. Since the best good is the root of the highest dignity (which we call personal dignity), it follows that each man's highest dignity is not

[231] J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, reprinted with a study of the English Utilitarians (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), p.174. See also p.198. "The utilitarian doctrine is, that happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as a means to that end." Here happiness is taken as equivalent to a life of pleasure and free from pain, as is clear from what Mill says earlier in chapter 2 (p.169). "By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain." We should make it clear that by pleasure Mill means not only sense pleasure, but also (and especially) spiritual pleasures of a more noble kind. Mill is not a hedonist. The objection which we are presenting here intends to take pleasure in all its amplitude, both spiritual and sensible.

[232] See Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p.198: "The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it: and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people actually do desire it."

[233] Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p.198.

rooted in a common good but in a private good. Mill seems to teach this when he states: "In proportion to the development of his individuality, each person becomes more valuable to himself, and is therefore more capable of being valuable to others;"[234] and further on, he continues: "Having said that individuality is the same thing with development, and that it is only the cultivation of individuality which produces, or can produce, well developed human beings, I might here close the argument: for what more or better can be said of any condition of human affairs, than that it brings human beings themselves nearer to the best thing they can be?"[235]

IV.A.2 Existence Is the Ultimate Good

A second argument can be drawn from the principle that existence is the ultimate good and is that for the sake of which all goods, even common goods are sought. "The final cause, end, or design of men (who naturally love liberty and dominion over others) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves (in which we see them live in commonwealths), is the foresight of their own preservation…"[236] If existence is

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[234] J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), p.63. This citation should not necessarily be taken to assert a doctrine of ethical ego-centrism by Mill, though it does imply a kind of individualism.

[235] Mill, *On Liberty*, p.64. In another passage from the same essay, Mill appears to place personal dignity outside the forum of the common or public good. "[Self-regarding faults] may be proofs of any amount of folly, or want of personal dignity and self-respect; but they are only a subject of moral reprobation when they involve a breach of duty to others, for whose sake the individual is bound to have care for himself…The distinction between the loss of consideration which a person may rightly incur by defect of prudence or of personal dignity, and the reprobation which is due to him for an offense against the rights of others, is not merely a nominal distinction." (p.79) While this citation does not strictly demonstrate that Mill places mans highest dignity in a private good, it does manifest the fact that Mill tends to consider personal dignity as a fundamentally private matter. In fact, Mill writes infrequently about personal dignity and he does not seem to have significantly developed the theme of personal dignity in his works.

[236] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1894), p.82. Also see p.63 where Hobbes states that the end of men "is principally their own conservation." The identification of the good simply with being necessarily entails that the final cause is reduced to efficient cause. The reason for this is

removed, all goods which depend upon existence are removed. Therefore, the greatest of goods is existence, or self-preservation. Furthermore, existence is clearly a private good, so that the ultimate good must be a private good, and the ultimate dignity must be rooted in this private good.

IV.A.3 Perfection Is a Private Good

A third argument can be drawn from the principle that a thing's perfection is its own and not a common good. The ultimate good of a thing is its perfection. "The good and the perfect are the same."[237] The perfection of a thing belongs to it and to nothing else, since it is a modification of its being, either according to first or second act, "for 'perfect' is said in two ways: in one way, that to which nothing is lacking, and this intrinsically, and that is the perfect by an essential intrinsic perfection, or first perfection; in the other way, something is called perfect by second perfection."[238] Therefore, the ultimate good of a thing belongs to it and to nothing else, so that it is not a common good.

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that being acts upon another only insofar as it is in act. If the good simply is the same as being, then the good's mode of acting upon another would be the same as the mode in which being acts upon another. Thus, the good would act to perfect another only as an efficient cause. Spinoza, who also identifies the good simply with being simply, expressly teaches this conclusion. "The cause which is called final, is nothing other than the human appetite…which is in truth an efficient cause" (*Ethica*, pars IV, def. VIII). We shall consider the mode of causality proper to the good as such in greater detail below in Chapter VI.

[237] Duns Scotus, *Reportata Parisensia*, II, d.34, n.14. Also see L. Molina, *Commentaria in Primam Partem S. Th. Div. Thomae*, q.5, a.1, disp. unica. "Good adds above being the notion of the perfect through its entity." This is to be understood in such a way that the notion of the appetible and of an end do not belong to the formal definition of the good, as Molina indicates later in the same disputation. "The notion of the appetible is not of the essence of the good;" "that it attains to the notion of an end is not of the essence of the good, but is a certain formality added above it, which is formally distinct from it."

[238] Duns Scotus, *Reportata Parisensia*, II, d.34, n.14. See Molina, *Commentaria in Primam Partem S. Th. Div. Thomae*, q.5, a.1, disp. unica. "Just as white formally signifies that which has whiteness, so good formally signifies that which has entity by which it is perfected." Since the entity which a thing has and by which it is perfected belongs to that thing and no other, it follows that the good in this sense is a private good.

Moreover, the ultimate good of a thing is the root of its dignity. Thus, the root of personal dignity is not a common good.

IV.A.4 Love of Others Is Founded upon Love of Oneself

Fourth, the order of natural love follows the natural order of goods, but a person naturally loves himself more than other persons. "Friendly relations with one's neighbors, and the marks by which friendships are defined, seem to have proceeded from a man's relations to himself."[239] The reason for this is that friendship is based upon unity. Moreover, a man is more united to himself than to others.[240] Since the natural order of love demands that a person love himself more than others, it follows that the natural order of goods sets the private good of a man over the common good belonging to others. Therefore, the private good is better than the common good.

IV.A.5 The Common Good Is an Alien Good

Fifth, since a common good is a good inhering in the community and not in the individual as such, it is a good alien to the individual. No good which is an alien good can be the highest good of the person but must rather be a means to a good proper to the person.

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[239] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, IX.4, 1166a1-2.

[240] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.60, a.3, ad2. "Just as it is greater to be one than to be united, so love for oneself is more one than love for others which are united to someone." See also *Super Ev. Johannis*, c.15, lect.4. "In love of friendship, likeness is the cause of love, for we do not love someone except insofar as we are one with him, and likeness is a certain unity."

> In short, every act of justice implies a relation to the common good, and as seems paradoxical, is by that very fact selfish, because the common good is not an end in itself; it is a means for the individual happiness that every man pursues, but which he cannot attain and possess except through virtue, including justice. It follows that no obligation founded on justice can turn a man away from the pursuit of his own happiness towards the pursuit of some alien good, unless this obligation is a part of his individual good, or is a means to the attainment thereof.[241]

A similar position is voiced by Lorenzo Valla in his *De Voluptate*. Answering the question whether one should give his life for others, he says: "I have no obligation to die for a citizen, nor for two, nor for three, and so on to infinity. How could I be obliged to die for the fatherland, which is the sum of all the latter? Will the fact of adding one more change the quality of my obligation?"[242] The life of another person is an alien good, and for the same reason so are the lives of many others. According to John of St. Thomas, F. Suarez implies the same when he argues that the individual loves himself more than the species since one is more inclined to one's proper good than to an alien good.[243] Indeed, every common good seems to be an alien good.

From this it follows that a common good, being an alien good, cannot be the root of personal dignity, since each person's dignity is his own and is rooted in a good which is or can be his own.

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[241] Mortimer Adler and Walter Farrell, "The Theory of Democracy," *The Thomist*, 1942, Vol.4, p.323-4.
[242] L. Valla, *De Voluptate*, Lib.II, cap.2, apud P. Monnier, *Le Quattrocento*, 8th edition, Vol.1 (Paris, 1924), p.46.
[243] See John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*: *Tertia Pars Philosophiae Naturalis*, q.3, a.1, ed. L. Vives, *Tomus* III (Paris, 1924), p.251. John of St. Thomas does not give a reference to a particular place in Suarez for the position which he attributes to him.

IV.A.6 Love of Friendship Is Better Than the Love of Concupiscence

The love of friendship, whereby someone is loved for his own sake, is better than the love of concupiscence, whereby someone or something is loved for the lover's sake.[244] Therefore, the good which is the object of the love of friendship is better than the good which is the object of the love of concupiscence. Moreover, society must be loved with a love of concupiscence, since society is not a rational being but an accidental whole,[245] while the individual members of a society are to be loved with the love of friendship, since they are rational beings.[246] Therefore, the good of individual persons, which is a private good, is to be preferred to the good of society, which is a common good.

IV.A.7 Society Is Loved for the Sake of its Individual Members

Any society is loved on account of the members of that society, but that on account of which something is loved is loved still more. Therefore, the individual members of society are loved more than the whole society.[247] Consequently, the good of the individual members, which is a private good, is to be preferred to the good of the society, which is a common good.

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[244] See *S.T.*, I-IIae, q.26, a.4, c.; q.28, a.3, c.; *De Virtutibus*, q.4, a.3, c.
[245] See *S.T.*, II-IIae, q.23, a.1, c.
[246] See Remigio de Girolami, *De Bono Communi*, c.18, obj.13. "Charity is properly had only for rational beings, but that which is common in itself is not something rational. Therefore, *etc.*" (as cited in E. Panella, *Dal Bene Comune al Bene del Comune: I Tratatti Politici di Remigio dei Girolomi nella Firenze dei Bianci-Neri* (Pistoia: Provincia Romana dei Fratri Predicatori, 1985), p.161).
[247] See Remigio dei Girolami, *De Bono Communi*, c.18, obj.14. "The common is not directly loved from charity except by reason of the parts of it, in which also, as in a subject, charity properly is [found]. Therefore, each citizen is loved more from charity than the city" (p.162).

IV.A.8 Persons Are Ends in Themselves

An eighth argument against the primacy of the common good can be drawn from the teaching of Immanuel Kant. Kant begins from the concept of a person as an end in itself and never a mere means. "Every rational being exists as an end in himself, and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will."[248] He defends this proposition that each and every person is an end in himself by appealing to human experience.

> Rational nature exists as an end in itself. Man necessarily thinks of his own existence in this way; thus far it is a subjective principle of human actions. Also, every other rational being thinks of his existence by means of the same rational ground which holds also for myself; thus it is at the same time an objective principle from which, as a supreme practical ground, it must be possible to derive all laws of the will.[249]

In other words, every rational being must consider himself as an end (presumably since he necessarily experiences himself as acting for his own happiness), and since this is a property belonging to all rational beings, every rational being necessarily thinks of other rational beings as being ends in themselves.

Kant further observes that an end which is never a mere means is never wholly subordinated to some other end but rather exists in itself as an end absolutely. "Such beings [i.e., rational beings] are not merely subjective ends whose existence as a result of our action has a worth for us, but are objective ends, i.e., beings whose very existence in itself is an end. Such an end is one for which no other end can be substituted, to which

[248] Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (hereafter FMM), tr. L.W. Beck, The Library of Liberal Arts, v.23 (New York: The Bobbs-Merill Company, 1959), p.46.
[249] Kant, FMM, p.47.

these beings should serve merely as means."[250] Therefore, a person is never wholly subordinated to an end other than himself.

> The rational being itself must be made the basis of all maxims and actions and must thus be treated never as a mere means but as the *supreme limiting condition* in the use of *all* means, i.e., as an end at the same time. It follows incontestably that every rational being must be able to regard himself as an end in himself with reference to *all* laws to which he may be subject, whatever they may be.[251]

Since a person's ultimate end is that to which he is wholly ordained, it follows further that a person is his own ultimate end and good. More specifically, one can conclude that a person's own dignity is his ultimate end.[252] Therefore, the ultimate dignity of the person is rooted in himself,[253] not in a common good outside of the person.

IV.A.9 The Common Is Less Precious than the Unique and Irreplaceable

That which is common to many individuals is not lost when the individual is lost, but that which is private to only one person is lost when that person is lost. Thus, only private goods are unique and irreplaceable. It is in virtue of the fact that something is common to many and, therefore, interchangeable and replaceable, that it is lacking in

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[250] Kant, FMM, p.47. J.F. Crosby, who follows Kant in his definition of person, makes a similar observation. "There is no totality that can encompass a person in such a way as to relativize the totality that he or she is. Persons stand in themselves in such a way as to be absolute, that is, unsurpassable, unrelativizable totalities. Persons can no more be mere parts than they can be instrumental means." (*The Selfhood of the Human Person*, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1996), p.17) The position that the person cannot be a mere part follows necessarily from the position that the person cannot be for an end other than itself since every part is for an end other than itself.

[251] Kant, FMM, p.56 (emphasis mine).

[252] See Kant, FMM, p.57. "Merely the dignity of humanity as rational nature without any end or advantage to be gained by it, and thus respect for a mere idea, should serve as the inflexible precept of the will."

[253] Kant more specifically identifies the ground of personal dignity as the radical autonomy of the will. "Autonomy is thus the basis of the dignity of both human nature and every rational nature." (FMM, p.54)

dignity and true worth. "The interchangeability of the persons prevents them from being loved as individuals."[254] Personal dignity is commonly considered as something of great value, as something unique and irreplaceable, rather than as something common. Therefore, personal dignity is founded upon a good that belongs uniquely to each individual. Crosby expressly teaches this conclusion.

> Suppose now that in our apprehension of persons we were to undergo a great awakening to the incommunicable selfhood of each of them; suppose we were to become aware of the mysterious concreteness of human persons, and were to begin to experience each as if he or she were the only human person…Now for the first time the value datum called the dignity of the human person would appear, and it would appear as rooted in incommunicable selfhood.[255]

IV.A.10 The State Exists for Man

According to the words of Pius XI: "The state is for man, not man for the state." (*Civitas homini, non homo Civitati exsitit*)[256] That which is of a higher dignity is not for the sake of that which is of a lesser dignity since that for the sake of which something exists is better than that which exists for its sake.[257] Thus, the dignity of man as individual must be a higher dignity than the dignity of man considered as a member of some larger society. Since personal dignity signifies the greatest dignity of a person, it follows that the dignity of a man considered as an individual is his personal dignity. Thus, personal dignity is rooted in a private good.

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[254] Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, p.66.
[255] Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, p.66.
[256] Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, *AAS*, Vol. XIX, 1937, p79.
[257] "It is necessary that the end be better than those things which are to the end." *De Pot.*, q.5, a.5, c.

IV.A.11 The Ultimate Good Is Self-Sufficient

Finally, the ultimate good has the notion of something self-sufficient. "The final good is thought to be self-sufficient."[258] Therefore, if some good is possessed by a person which is easily lost, it cannot be the ultimate good since it needs something other than it to belong in a stable and enduring manner to the person whose good it is, for the ultimate good must be something which brings all desire to rest. "The self-sufficient we now define as that which when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing;"[259] and to the extent that someone desires something further than some good, it lacks the notion of an ultimate good. That good which cannot be possessed in the most secure manner clearly lacks something desirable, for all prefer to hold a good securely rather than insecurely. It follows that the ultimate good will be something firmly possessed by the person. However, the common good is not firmly possessed by the person since it lies, in great part, outside his own power to obtain and possess. Therefore, the common good is not the ultimate good but rather some private good.

IV.B Other Arguments Concluding that the Root of Personal Dignity Is a Private Good

Besides those arguments which conclude that the common good is not simply speaking better than the private good there are those which, admitting the superiority of

[258] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, I.7, 1097b7.
[259] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, I.7, 1097b15.

the common good, will still conclude that the private good is the foundation for personal dignity.

IV.B.1 Personal Dignity Is Rooted in a More Perfect Mode of Possessing the Good

First, even if it be granted that a common good is objectively a better good than the private good, nevertheless the mode in which a good is possessed must also be taken into account in order to determine the best good *for the particular person*. A good which is possessed in a more perfect manner is often better than a greater good which is possessed in a less perfect manner. For example, it is better to have a secure income now than to only have a tenuous hope for a higher income in the future. According to the old proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Common goods are possessed in a less perfect manner than private goods, especially those private goods which are necessarily linked to one's own existence and nature. Moreover, the more common a good is, the less securely a person holds it since his own powers for attaining such a good diminish in proportion to the magnitude of the common good. Therefore, it seems that private goods pertaining to someone's existence and nature are better than common goods *for that person*. Therefore, the dignity of some person is also rooted in those goods pertaining to a person's being or nature.

IV.B.2 Personal Dignity Is Not Common to Many

Second, a dignity founded upon a common good is a dignity common to all those who share in that common good, but personal dignity is not something shared by many. Rather, personal dignity belongs to each individual. Therefore, personal dignity is rooted in a private good rather than a common good.

IV.B.3 Personhood Consists in Being

A third argument can be built upon the premise that personhood consists essentially in being. "Personality in the ontological sense, i.e., to be a person, is rooted in the act of existing: to be a person is to be an intellectual nature possessing its own unique act of existing so as to be the autonomous source of its own actions."[260] A sign of this is that when we truly love persons, we love them principally for who they *are*, not for what they have or can do. "We love the deepest, most substantial and hidden, the most *existing* reality of the beloved being. This is a metaphysical center deeper than all the qualities and essences we can find and enumerate in the beloved."[261] Moreover being, in the sense of the act of existing of a thing, has the notion of something perfect which is contracted by a particular nature or essence. Since personhood formally and principally consists in being rather than essence, person as such signifies something uncontracted and unlimited. The person is defined "in terms of independence, as a reality which, subsisting spiritually, constitutes a universe unto itself."[262] To the degree, therefore, that a person is a person, he does not participate in something else, for that which participates has the notion of a part and something contracted. Therefore, the dignity of the person as

[260] Norris Clarke, "Person, Being and St. Thomas," *Communio* 19 (Winter, 1992), p.609.
[261] Maritain, PCG, p.29 (Italics in original).
[262] Maritain, PCG, p.30.

person is not taken from the participation of the person in some larger whole but from the very being of the person which has the notion of something full and perfect. "Presence is but another name for the being of something insofar as it is actual…This unique presence is the root of personal and therefore of distinctively human dignity."[263] While human nature in some sense specifies this dignity, it is not the root of this dignity. "Personal dignity is specified by the formal dignity appropriate to human nature, but that formal dignity is itself rooted in the dignity of actual personal existence."[264] This personal existence, or being, is something incommunicable, not common, nor is it related to something else as a part. Therefore, personal dignity is not rooted in a common good but rather conversely. "The dignity of all [persons] rests upon the original dignity of each [person]."[265]

IV.C Conclusion

These arguments, and others based upon similar principles, manifest the serious difficulties which exist in asserting that the root of personal dignity is found in the common good and its primacy over the private good. As we hope to show, many of these difficulties arise from an insufficiency in the definition of the terms being used. In the following section (Chapters V-VII) the thesis will give a scientific argument, beginning from correct and precise definitions of the key terms, demonstrating that the primacy of the common good is the root of personal dignity. By way of the definitions of the key

[263] K. Schmitz, "The Geography of the Human Person," *Communio* 13 (Spring, 1986), p.44-45.
[264] K. Schmitz, "The Geography of the Human Person," p.45.
[265] K. Schmitz, "The Geography of the Human Person," p.48.

terms we hope to show not only the truth of the matter but also to manifest why the aforesaid difficulties should arise around this question in the first place.

Chapter V: The Doctrine of the Good in St. Thomas

V.A The Doctrine of Analogy in St. Thomas

Any careful and scientific investigation on the nature of the good, and the common good in particular, must begin with a consideration of analogy, both in words and in causes, for it is generally admitted that the name "good" and the expression "common good" are both used in different senses. Moreover, as we shall see, the causality of the common good is such that the nature of the cause and effect are in diverse orders. Therefore, we shall begin with a consideration of the doctrine of analogy in St. Thomas.

V.A.1 The Analogy of Names

For St. Thomas, following Aristotle, the doctrine of analogy begins with the use of names,[266] for the analogous is distinguished from the univocal and purely equivocal, which are, first of all, divisions of names.[267] When two or more things are called by the same name with the same account or definition,[268] then this name is said univocally of many things; but if the same name is applied to many things with a different account or definition, then this name is used equivocally. Since "same account" and "different account" is an exhaustive and mutually exclusive division, it is clear that all names are used either univocally or equivocally.

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[266] See Aristotle, *Categories* Ch. 1 (1a1-11).
[267] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.5; *S.C.G.*, I.34, n.2; and *De Prin. Nat*. ch. 6.
[268] As used here, account can be taken more broadly than definition. For example, terms like substance, being, quantity, *etc.*, can be said to have an intelligible account even though they do not have a definition in the strict sense.

Among names used equivocally, however, some are purely equivocal, that is, the imposition of the same name comes about by chance since there is no rational order between the names. On the other hand, some names used equivocally are not purely equivocal, that is, the imposition of the same name comes about as a result of some determinate or *per se* relation which reason sees between the two things so named. For example, since the act of sight, the act of the imagination, and the act of the understanding have a likeness of account or definition, the name "see" is applied to each of them, not by chance, but because of the definite proportion which exists between them. Such names are rationally equivocal or equivocal *a consilio*[269] since there is a rational order among the things having the same name.

The distinction between pure equivocation and rational equivocation is essential since in names which are purely equivocal there is no rational relation between the things signified by the same name; and so through the common name the mind cannot be lead from the knowledge of one thing signified by that name to a knowledge of the other thing signified by that name.[270] Yet when a name is rationally equivocal, the common name

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[269] To my knowledge, St. Thomas does not use the expression "rationally equivocal" or "equivocal *a consilio*" (equivocal by design) to signify those names which have a rational order among their accounts. Instead he seems to have used the term "analogous" as a blanket term to cover all names equivocal by some rational order. He does, however, speak of the "equivocal by chance," which is opposed to the analogous. See, for example, *S.C.G.*, I.35, n.1. "In those things which are equivocal by chance, no order or respect of one to the other is noted, but it is entirely accidental that one name is attributed to diverse things: for the name imposed on one does not signify it to have an order to the other." Here the equivocal by chance is opposed to what is equivocal, not by chance, but by some work of reason, imposing a name because it sees some order to some other thing having the same name. Hence, the terminology "rationally equivocal" or "equivocal by design" seems to be the best way to express what is opposed to the equivocal by chance, or purely equivocal. See also *De Potentia* q.7, a.7, c.; *Comp. Theol.* I.27; *In I Ethic.*, lect. 7; *In I Metaph.*, lect. 14.

[270] See *Comp. Theol.* I.27. "In those things which are equivocal by chance, the same name imposed on one thing holds no order to another thing: hence, through one, it is not possible to reason about the other." See also *S.C.G.*, I.34, n.2. "The idea of man according to Plato is called man *per se*, but this sensible man is called [man] by participation. Yet such an equivocation is not pure; but the name which is predicated by participation is said with respect to that which is predicated *per se*, which is not pure equivocation, but a multiplicity of analogy. If, however, the idea and the sensible substance were entirely equivocal by chance,

can be used as an instrument to come to know one of the signified things from knowing another of the signified things.[271] Hence, names which are rationally equivocal can be the basis for scientific reasoning.

St. Thomas typically uses the term "analogous" to refer to names that are equivocal, yet which are said of things having a rational order between them.[272] Now whenever there is a rational order among things, there must be some first thing, or principle, which is the basis of the order,[273] for order is a kind of before and after,[274] and before and after are said in reference to a first thing.[275] Thus, in every name which is applied according to a rational equivocation some element is found to be common to the account of each of them, as, for example, the notion of substance is found not only in substances, but also in the account one renders of an accident. Because terms which are equivocal by design share some common referent (so that there is some common element

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it would follow that through one, it would not be possible to know the other, just as equivocal [names] do not bring about a knowledge of each other."

[271] See *In I Sent.* D.35, q.1, a.4, c. "In those things which are purely equivocal by chance and fortune, from one, the other is not made known, as when the same name belongs to two men. Since, therefore, through our knowledge the divine knowledge is made known, it cannot be that [the name 'knowledge'] is entirely equivocal." The clear implication is that real knowledge can be had from names which are analogous rather than purely equivocal.

[272] In the strict sense, that which is predicated by an analogy is predicated based upon some proportion such as a:b::c:d. Both Aristotle and Boethius preserve this distinct usage of the term "analogous," but just as St. Thomas sometimes uses the term "proportion" to mean simply determinate relation or ratio, so also he tends to use the word "analogous" to describe any same term applied to things or concepts which bear a rational relation between them. Therefore, St. Thomas' usage of the term "analogous" extends far beyond names which are applied to things having a strict proportion to each other. In short, as mentioned above, any name which we have characterized as "equivocal by design" would be covered by St. Thomas' usage of the term "analogous." Nevertheless, what is preserved in all names which are equivocal by design is the common referent which enters into the account or definition of each of them. We shall distinguish between the various ways in which a name can be equivocal by design below.

[273] *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q.42, a.3, c. "Order is always said through comparison to some beginning."

[274] See *In I Sent*. d.20, q.1, a.3a, c. "Order, in its notion includes three things: namely the notion of before and after; hence, according to all those ways, there can be said to be an order of things, insofar as something is said to be prior to another according to place, and according to time and according to all such things."

[275] See *Summa Theologiae*, IIa-IIae, q.26, a.1, c. "Before and after is said according to relation to some beginning."

in the definition of each of them), St. Thomas describes them as being between univocal names and purely equivocal names:[276]

> Something is predicated of diverse things in many ways: sometimes according to an account (*rationem*) altogether the same, and then it is said to be predicated univocally of those things, just as animal of horse and ox. But sometimes according to accounts (*rationes*) altogether diverse; and then it is said to be predicated equivocally of them, just as dog of a star and an animal. But sometimes according to accounts (*rationes*) which are in part diverse and in part not diverse: diverse, indeed, inasmuch as they imply diverse relations, yet they are one inasmuch as these diverse relations are referred to one and the same thing. And that is said to be analogously predicated, that is, proportionally, just as each one is referred to that one thing according to its own relation.[277]

Nevertheless, as pointed out above, strictly speaking, analogous names are a kind of equivocal predication since the same name does not have the same account or definition, but only a similar account or definition.[278]

Names which are rationally equivocal can be divided into several species. We shall not provide an exhaustive division of the species of analogous names here since not all these species are relevant to the present discussion. Here we are primarily interested in names which are carried over from one thing to another thing (or other things) because of some order reason sees between (or among) them. The same name can be transferred

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[276] Another reason why St. Thomas emphasizes a three-fold division of names into univocal, analogous and equivocal is because of his concern to provide a scientific basis for the knowledge of God from creatures. To characterize analogous names as a species of equivocal names could give rise to misunderstandings about analogous names that St. Thomas is concerned to avoid.

[277] *In IV Metaph.*, lect.1. See *In XI Metaph.*, lect.3 and *Comp. Theol.* I.27.

[278] St. Thomas himself admits that analogous names can be included under equivocal names when "equivocal" is not restricted to the purely equivocal. For example, St. Thomas says: "'Animal' as said of a true animal and a painting is not said purely equivocally. But the Philosopher uses 'equivocal' broadly according as it includes analogy in itself. For, also being, which is said analogously, sometimes is said to be predicated equivocally of diverse predicaments." (*S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.10, ad4)

from one thing to another thing for many reasons, but in each case there is some common referent found in the concepts of each of the things which share the same name.[279]

One way in which the same name can be transferred from one thing to another is when a ratio or ratios[280] exist between two or more things. In this case there are three distinct possibilities. Either there is a single ratio or multiple ratios.[281] If there are multiple ratios, this is either because two things have a different ratio to the same thing, or because two things have the same ratio to different things.[282] By way of example, the name "health" is transferred from an animal to food because of a single ratio: namely the causal relation that certain types of food have to health in an animal. On the other hand, "healthy" as said of food and as said of someone's complexion are related by different ratios to the same thing: namely, the relation of food to animal health as its cause and the relation of a complexion to animal health as its sign. Finally, the name "foundation" can signify both the beginning part of the house and the beginning part of an argument, because they have the same ratio to different things, since a physical foundation is related

[279] See *inter alia*, *S.C.G.*, I.34.
[280] The term "ratio" here should not be understood as restricted to the relation between mathematical quantities, but is taken more broadly to signify any determinate and intelligible relation, that is, a relation of order of one thing to another.
[281] See *De Potentia*, q.7, a.7, c., "But there is a two-fold mode of this predication. One by which something is predicated of two things through respect to some third thing, just as being [is said] of quality and quantity through respect to substance The other way is that in which something is predicated of two things through respect of one to the other, just as being [is predicated] of substance and quantity." Also see *S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.5, c. and *S.C.G.*, I.34.
[282] See *In I Ethic.*, lect. 7, "But sometimes [the same name is predicated] according to diverse proportions to the same subject, just as quality is called a being since it is a *per se* disposition of being, that is, of substance, but quantity [is called a being] by the fact that it is its measure, *etc.* for the others. Or [the same name is predicated] according to one proportion to diverse subjects. For sight has the same proportion to the body as intellect has to the soul. Hence, just as sight is the power of a corporal organ, so also is intellect a power of the soul without the participation of the body."

to the house built upon it as the foundation of an argument is related to the argument which rests upon it.[283]

St. Thomas further distinguishes these various modes of arriving at analogous names. In those cases where two things are related to one another by a single ratio, St. Thomas distinguishes different ratios by which one thing can be related to another and reduces them to two principal kinds: ratios referred to a beginning or principle, and ratios referred to an end.[284] This is not surprising since, as we have already seen, all names which are rationally equivocal are said with respect to some order, and order can be determined according either to a starting point or an ending point. St. Thomas applies these principles to the specific case of the name "good:"

> Therefore, he [Aristotle] says that "good" is said of many things, not according to ratios utterly different, just as happens in those things which are equivocal by chance, but inasmuch as every good depends on one first principle of goodness, or insofar as they are ordered to one end. For Aristotle did not intend to say that that separated good is the idea and *ratio* of all goods, but [that it is] the beginning and the end [of them]. Or also all things are called good according to analogy, that is [according to] the same proportion, namely inasmuch as sight is the good of the body and the intellect [is the good] of the soul. And therefore, he prefers this third mode, since it is taken according to the goodness inhering in things. The first two modes, however, [are taken] according to the separated goodness, from which something is not so properly denominated.[285]

Thus, it is clear that the same name, in this case the name "good," can be moved from one thing onto another for different reasons, which vary according to the kinds of relations which reason perceives among the things so named.

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[283] G. Klubertanz offers a three-fold division of analogous names along the same lines presented here in *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy*: *A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960), p.126.
[284] See *In I Ethic.*, lect. 7.
[285] *In I Ethic.*, lect. 7.

Because we name things as we know them[286] and because human knowing often proceeds from posterior things to prior ones,[287] it often happens that the order in which we impose names differs from the order of the things in which the perfections signified by the names are found.[288]

This particular difficulty holds true with regard, for example, to the good, for the first goods which are known to us (*e.g.*, sensible pleasures, bodily goods, *etc*.) have less of the notion of goodness than the first good which, as will be shown below, is most desirable, most perfect and the cause of all other goods. In fact, for any name which can be applied to God properly, the same difficulty arises.[289] Thus, when one speaks of the primary analogate with reference to which analogous names are ordered, it is sometimes important to distinguish whether we are talking about the first imposition of the name or that in which the notion of the thing signified is most perfectly found.

V.A.2 Analogy and Metaphor

The imposition of names according to rational equivocation bears a likeness to the imposition of a name metaphorically, for a metaphor is a name "carried over"[290] from one thing to another due to some likeness. Somewhat similarly, rationally equivocal names are related because of a determinate ratio which reason sees among the things so named. This likeness between rational equivocation and metaphor often results in the

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[286] See *S.C.G.*, I.34, "The order of a name follows the order of cognition: since [a name] is a sign of an intelligible conception."
[287] See *In V Metaph.*, lect.5, "Sometimes we understand prior things from posterior ones."
[288] St. Thomas notes an example of this in Aristotle's ordering of the term "nature" in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics* (See *In V Metaph.*, lect.5).
[289] See *In I Sent.* D.25, q.1, a.2, c. Also see *S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.6, c.
[290] From the Greek: μετα φορά.

confusion of one with the other. Often enough, a name which is used metaphorically is thought to be a name used analogously.[291]

In fact, a metaphor is not a kind of rationally equivocal name. Metaphors are not imposed properly, while rationally equivocal names are. That is, when we impose a metaphor, we do not intend the proper notion, or definition, of the metaphor to be said of the subject of which it is predicated. For example, in calling a man a lion we do not intend that some definition of lion be said of that man. Instead, we only intend to indicate some likeness between the subject and the thing which is properly named by the predicate. Thus, in improper or metaphorical naming the name is imposed without the definition of the name being said of the subject.[292] On the other hand, in rationally equivocal names, we intend to apply both the name and the definition to the subject.

V.A.1 Analogous Causes

Until this point, we have concerned ourselves with analogous, or rationally equivocal, names. St. Thomas' doctrine of analogy, however, extends not only to names but to the order of things, more particularly, to the order of causes. The basis of this carrying over of terms such as "analogous," "univocal," or "equivocal" from predication to causality is the fact that both names and causes can somehow be applied to many, so that both are rightly called universal. Thus, just as a name can be called univocal, equivocal, or analogous, so also causes can be called univocal, equivocal, and analogous.

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[291] Such confusion can be the cause of significant errors as when, for example, the name body is said of the political community. This imposition is in fact metaphorical, not analogous; but if it were erroneously thought to be imposed analogously, this would give rise to errors about the relation between the good of the city in relation to the good of the citizens.

[292] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.9, c.; *In Post. Anal*. II, lect.16; and *De Potentia,* q.7, a.5, ad8.

> For we find three modes of agent cause. Namely, [there is] the equivocal agent cause, and this is when the effect does not agree with the cause either in name or in notion: just as the sun, which is not hot,[293] makes heat. Again, [there is] the univocal agent cause, when the effect agrees with a cause in name and in notion, just as a man generates a man and heat makes heat. God acts in neither of these modes. [God does not act] univocally, since nothing agrees with him univocally. [God does not act] equivocally, since an effect and a cause in some way agree in name and notion according to before and after. Just as God makes us wise by his wisdom, so that nevertheless, our wisdom always is deficient from the notion of his wisdom, as an accident from the notion of being according as [being] is in a substance. Hence, there is a third mode of an analogous agent cause. Whence, it is clear that the divine being produces the being of a creature in an imperfect likeness of itself.[294]

This text clearly asserts a three-fold distinction of agent causes:[295] those which cause univocally, equivocally, and analogously. Yet it is important to read the text carefully to correctly understand St. Thomas' position. One might be tempted, for instance, to consider this division of causes to match up with St. Thomas' division of names into univocal, equivocal, and analogous. Thus, one might expect that when an effect has the same name as the cause, and the cause and the effect are of the same nature (*i.e.*, they have the same *ratio*), then this would be a univocal cause; that when cause and effect have an utterly different nature or account, then the cause would be called equivocal; and

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[293] The modern reader need not be disturbed by St. Thomas' example which assumes an ancient cosmology in which the heavenly bodies had a matter fundamentally different from the corruptible bodies on earth. We might offer any number of examples better suited to modern cosmology. For example, gravity makes other things heavy without itself being heavy. In defense of the example St. Thomas offers it could be noted as well that the kind of "heat" one finds in the sun, that generated by nuclear fusion, seems to be not only quantitatively greater, but also qualitatively different from the heat one has experience of in fire or hot bodies on earth.

[294] *In I Sent.* D.8, q.1, a.2, c.

[295] Note that for St. Thomas, this terminology extends only to agent causality, and even then only to principal agent causes. "Univocal and non-univocal causes are properly speaking and simply divisions of that cause to which it belongs to have a likeness with its effect. But this belongs to the principal agent, and not the instrumental agent, as Alexander says, according as the Commentator reports. And, therefore, properly speaking, an instrument is neither a univocal nor an equivocal cause. Nevertheless, it can be reduced to either one according as the principal agent, in whose power the instrument acts, is a univocal or a non-univocal cause." (*In IV Sent.* d.1, q.1, a.4a, ad4).

that when cause and effect partly have the same nature or account and partly don't, then the cause would be called analogous. Yet this is not what St. Thomas says. Rather, he says that an equivocal agent cause "does not agree with the cause either *in name* or in notion." Thus, an equivocal cause is not like an equivocal name since things named equivocally share the same name, which is not true for equivocal causes. (One might even wonder why a cause of this sort would be called equivocal at all since the equivocal seems to demand, as a bare minimum, some kind of common predication).[296] The essential feature which distinguishes causes from names is that every effect shares in something of the *ratio* of its cause; for whatever the effect has, insofar as it is an effect, it has from its cause. Therefore, unlike names, there is no real possibility of a cause having nothing in common with its effect according to notion.[297] There is only the possibility of an effect agreeing perfectly with the *ratio* of its cause or imperfectly.[298]

Another important distinction between analogous names and analogous causes is the way in which they are reduced back to some beginning. We have seen how for St. Thomas every analogous name is such because of an order which reason sees among the things so named. Since every order presupposes some beginning, every analogous name is in some way reduced back to some first in the order of names (either first in the order

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[296] From its very etymology the word "equivocal" seems to signify an equal voice, that is, things having the same vocal sound. Nevertheless, it does seem possible to justify the usage of this terminology by a certain analogy which exists between universal predicates and universal causes. A sign of this is the fact that often the two orders of predication and causality are confused. This confusion is certainly due to some likeness.

[297] See *S.C.G.*, I.29, "For an effect falling away from its cause does not agree with it in either name or in notion. Yet it is necessary that there be found some likeness between them: for it is of the nature of action that the agent make something like itself, since each thing acts according as it is in act."

[298] In this regard it seems that the difference between an equivocal cause and an analogous cause is a matter of reason's consideration rather than an essential difference in the causes themselves, for if the cause and effect are related in such a way that reason sees that the same name should be given to both, then this cause is called an analogous cause, and if it happens that cause and effect do not receive the same name, then the cause is called an equivocal cause. There seems to be no hard and fast rule, however, by which one can determine how close cause and effect have to be before they receive the same name. Clearly, there is a certain arbitrariness when it comes to naming such things.

of imposition, or first according to the very notion of the thing signified).[299] In the order of causality, on the other hand, univocal causes are reduced back to equivocal ones.[300]

Nevertheless, in some sense, even equivocal causes are reduced back to something univocal, not as to a univocal mode of causality, but to one agent.[301] Notice here that "univocal" means something quite different when we speak of causes and names. The univocal cause St. Thomas is speaking about here is in fact a singular, concrete individual. A univocal name, on the other hand, is a name said of many with the same account. The reason for this difference is that a universal cause, unlike a universal predication, can be a singular thing. This manifests a significant difference between the way in which names and causes are reduced back to some beginning.

There remains, however, a significant likeness between the manner in which names and causes are reduced back to some beginning, for in some way both names and causes are reduced back to something which is analogically first.[302]

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[299] In some sense all equivocal names are reduced back to univocal ones, just as the many is reduced back to the one. See *S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.5, obj.1. "Every equivocal is reduced to a univocal, just as many to one. For if this name of 'dog' is said equivocally of a barking [animal] and a sea [animal], it would be necessary that it be said univocally of some things, namely of all barking [animals]. For otherwise, it would proceed into infinity."

[300] "It is necessary that an equivocal agent be prior to a univocal agent, since a univocal agent does not have causality over the entire species (otherwise it would be a cause of itself), but only over some individual of the species. An equivocal agent, however, has causality over the entire species; hence, it is necessary that the first agent be equivocal." (*De Potentia* q.7, a.7, ad7) From this we can infer that an equivocal cause is more truly a cause than a univocal cause since the very form of the thing caused is properly due to the equivocal cause but not to the univocal cause. Cajetan is even hesitant to call a univocal cause a cause in the strict sense of the word. He says: "Where there is univocation, there is not cause and caused formally and *per se*, but materially and *per accidens*." (*In Iam*, q.4, a.3, n.6)

[301] "Although every equivocal is reduced to the univocal, it is not, however, necessary that equivocal generation be reduced to univocal generation, but to a generating thing which is in itself univocal." (*In Boeth. De Trinitate*, q.1, a.4 ad4).

[302] "The universal cause is prior to the particular [cause]. This universal agent, although it is not univocal, nevertheless is not entirely equivocal either, since thus it would not produce its like; but it is able to be called an analogical agent, just as in predications, every univocal is reduced to one first, not univocal, but analogous [predication], which is being." (*S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.5, ad1). It is important to understand what St. Thomas is not saying here. St. Thomas is not reversing his previous teaching that every equivocal is reduced to a univocal, for even being is reduced to some first, univocal sense of being (*i.e.*, being as said of substance). Rather, he is saying that from the aspect of universality the name "being," as applied

Let this suffice for a consideration of St. Thomas' doctrine on analogy. It remains to be seen how this doctrine is applied in the concrete instances of the notions of good, whole, person, and dignity.

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analogically to all beings (substance and accidents), has a universality which is in some sense greater than that of any other predication (even more universal than the name "being" as said of substance). Thus, the most universal cause is like the most universal name in that both are analogical: the Being which is the most universal cause of all being causes other beings analogically, while the being which is the most universal name is predicated analogically of all other beings.

V.B The Notion of the Good in St. Thomas

St. Thomas left to posterity a highly developed doctrine of the good. It is the aim of this section of the thesis to examine the notion of the good as such, with St. Thomas as a guide. Below we shall examine the more specific notions of the common good (V.D) and the moral good (Chapter VI).

V.B.1 From a Nominal to an Essential Definition of the Good

Definition is speech signifying what something is. A definition can be either of a name or of a real thing. A definition of a name simply indicates what the name means and is called a nominal definition, while a definition of a thing indicates something about the thing itself.[303] A nominal definition does not indicate whether or not the there is anything in reality corresponding to the name. It simply provides a more distinct mental concept corresponding to the name defined.

On the other hand, a definition of a real thing implies that the definition corresponds to something that exists, either actually or potentially. The definition of a thing sets that thing off from all other realities either through its causes or through its effects or properties.[304] When the formal cause of a thing is expressed in a definition, then the definition is called an essential definition in the most proper sense.

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[303] To take some examples: the nominal definition of thunder is "a rumbling noise in the clouds;" the nominal definition of the soul is "the first principle of life;" the nominal definition of a lunar eclipse is "a dark spot on the moon;" the nominal definition of a mermaid is "an animal that is half-woman, half-fish."

[304] To take some examples: the essential definition of thunder is "the sound produced in the sky as a result of the rapid expansion of air superheated by a bolt of lightning;" the essential definition of a lunar eclipse is "the shadow produced on the surface of the moon due to the interposition of the earth between the sun and the moon." A definition of dog from its properties is "a four-legged animal that barks;" the definition of

Because of the nature of human knowing it often happens that we must begin with a descriptive definition or a nominal definition rather than an essential definition. A descriptive definition is one in which a collection of accidents associated with the thing to be defined is used to describe a mental boundary around that thing. Human knowledge originates in the senses. Thus, sensible accidents are typically the first things known to us about some thing we are seeking to define. Moreover, our concepts are formed by the mediation of names. Thus, it sometimes happens that the meaning of a name is better known than the meaning of the thing signified by the name. We always know that there is some meaning corresponding to a name we use, but we are not always sure whether the name itself corresponds to something in reality.[305] For these reasons, it is often necessary to begin from a descriptive definition or a nominal definition, as from something better known, in order to arrive at an essential definition.[306]

To arrive at an essential definition of the good we will begin from a nominal definition. The name "good" simply means that which is desired, or put another way, the proper object of appetite, just as the name "color" means what is seen, or the proper object of sight. That there is some object corresponding to this name is self-evident to all since in their experience all men find something desirable. Yet it is necessary to say more distinctly what this thing is which corresponds to the name and concept of "good."

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water from its properties is "a liquid which boils at 100 degrees centigrade and freezes at 0 degrees centigrade." A definition of God from his effects is "the creator of heaven and earth;" a definition of lightning from its effects is "the cause of thunder."

[305] For example, the expressions "least prime number" and "greatest prime number" have meanings immediately accessible to us, but the fact that there is some real number corresponding to the former and not to the latter is not immediately apparent.

[306] Numerous examples of this procedure are found in the works of St. Thomas. See, for example, *S.T.*, Ia, q.1, a.1-7 where he begins from a nominal definition of Sacred Doctrine and arrives at its essential definition, or *S.T.*, Ia, q.75, a.1-3, where he begins from the nominal definition of soul and arrives at an essential definition.

Is it one thing or many things? Is it the same for all or different for each thing? Is it something subjective or objective?

To answer these questions it is first necessary to appreciate that the notion of the good is analogous, that is, the one name "good" has many different accounts, or significations, which are related to one another by some order. For example, when I say that ice cream is good, and a knife is good, and a speech is good, the word "good" seems to have many different senses, even if they are related to one another.

St. Thomas holds the position that all human knowledge takes its origin from the senses. One consequence of this is that those things which are closer to the senses are better known to us, so that the first imposition of the names we use is upon sensible things. "That [part of philosophy] which concerns sensible substances is first in the order of teaching, since it is necessary to begin a discipline from the things more known to us."[307] It is the same with the good, for the first things upon which we place the name "good" are sensible pleasures and the objects which correspond to them. A sign of this is that "sensible goods are better known to the many than the goods of reason."[308] In this sense the good simply means that which is sensibly desired: a good apple, good wine, *etc*., but since there is in man not only a desire for sensible things but also for intelligible things, because "all men by nature desire to know,"[309] it happens that the name "good" is extended to apply to intelligible pleasures such as rejoicing in truth or taking pleasure in the experience of being loved. Since we desire not only those things in which we take pleasure but also those things by means of which we obtain them, the name good is

[307] *In IV Metaph*., lect.2. See *S.T.*, Ia, q.13, a.6, obj.1 and ad1; *In I Sent*. d.17, q.1, a.4. "It is natural for us to proceed from sensible things to intelligible things, from effects into causes, from posterior things into prior ones." Also, *Super Boet. de Trin.,* q.6, a.1a.
[308] *De Malo*, q.1, a.3, ad17.
[309] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.1.

extended to apply to those objects useful for obtaining pleasures. In this sense, for example, physical exercise is called good, even if it involves some discomfort. These are obviously called good in a secondary sense.[310] Since, moreover, there is a desire not only for pleasure and the things useful for pleasure but also for the very objects of our natural abilities which are obtained by the exercise of those natural abilities, the name "good" is also applied to these objects and to the human actions and operations which actualize our natural abilities.[311] Moreover, since these acts, when repeated, produce habits that render the performance of these acts easier, more intense and more stable, these habits, (*i.e.*, the virtues), are also an object of our desire so that they can be called good. Briefly stated, the good primarily signifies those things which produce pleasures and which actualize our natural abilities (together with the corresponding pleasures and actualizations themselves). In a secondary sense, the good signifies all those things that, according to some determinate relation, lead up to or follow from the good in this first sense, just as whatever is a cause or sign or effect of health can be called healthy. For example, a means useful for obtaining some pleasure can be called good. Thus, the name "good" is applied to all of these things, not in exactly the same sense but in an ordered relationship to one another.

Upon examination it can be seen that the aforesaid uses of good are analogous precisely because the account one gives for the name "desire" is analogous in each use, and since desire is for some goal or end, it happens that every good has the notion of an

[310] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.26, a.4, c. "For just as being simply is that which has *esse*, but being in some respect is that which is in another, so also the good which is converted with being simply is that which has goodness itself, while that which is the good of another is good in some respect."

[311] Above, in the section on analogy, we saw that St. Thomas distinguishes between analogous names which are first in the order of imposition (inasmuch as they are first known by us) and first according to the very notion of the thing signified. In this case, it seems that sensible pleasures and their objects receive the name "good" first but that the objects of our natural abilities and the natural activities themselves have more of a claim to the notion of the good. In this respect they are prior to sensible pleasures.

end. "Since the good is that which all things desire, and [that which is desired] has the notion of an end, it is manifest that the good carries with it the notion of an end."[312] Moreover, not only humans act for an end, but also everything that has an intrinsic principle of motion acts for an end. In short, every natural thing acts for an end.[313] Thus, this principle within each thing that inclines it to act for an end is likened to a desire for the end. "In natural things there is an impetus or inclination to some end to which corresponds the will in rational nature; whence, the natural inclination itself is called an appetite."[314] Hence it happens that the name "good" can be transferred to signify any end or object of a natural motion or inclination.[315] Here it is clear that the terms "desire" and "good" mean something quite different from the previously enumerated senses of desire and good (*i.e.*, the senses applied in reference to beings having cognition). Yet there is kept the common but analogous notion of an intrinsic inclination and its corresponding object. This extension of the name "good" is extremely important since it broadens the common notion of the good to cover, in some sense, all existing things. This is because every being, insofar as it is, has a natural inclination to maintain its own existence. In this way is manifested the excellence of the definition of the good related by Aristotle. "The good is that which *all things* desire."[316] In this definition the notion of the good as

[312] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.4, c. This is clear from the very definition of an end as the last part of a motion in the sense of that towards which a motion or inclination is directed, for every motion or inclination is in some direction, and the last thing towards which a thing tends in that direction is called the end.
[313] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.1, a.2.
[314] *In V Metaph*., lect.6. See *De Veritate* q.22, a.1, c. where St. Thomas defines appetite broadly. "To desire [*appetere*] is nothing other than to seek for something [*ad aliquid petere*] as if to tend to something ordained to itself."
[315] See *De Veritate*, q.22, a.1, c. Also see the footnote by Fr. T. McDermott on the meaning of the term "desire" in Ia, q.5, a.1 (footnote b, p.62 in vol. 2 of the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa Theologiae*: edited by T. Gilby).
[316] This does not mean that everything that is called good is desired by all things. Rather this means that whatever is desired has the nature of the good. See *S.T.*, Ia, q.6, a.2, ad2.

extended to cover all beings is expressed. In this sense the good is the object of any intrinsic inclination of a being.[317]

Now every being has an intrinsic inclination for its own completion or perfection, for a thing is said to be complete or perfect when it lacks nothing of what it should have. That, however, a thing should have something means that there is an ordination of that thing to that which it should have, and this ordination is nothing other than an intrinsic inclination. It follows that the good of a thing is its perfection and its end.[318] Since a thing is perfected when it is reduced from potency to act, it follows that the good of each thing is its actualization. For this reason St. Thomas says that the good "consists principally and *per se* in perfection and act."[319] From the foregoing we may formulate an essential definition of the good. The good is that which, as an end, is capable of perfecting a thing according to its own act.[320]

A certain ambiguity arises here since that which perfects a thing as an end can be taken as the object that perfects a thing or the act through which the object is attained. "The end is said in two ways: namely the end for which, and the end by which; that is, the thing itself in which the notion of the good is found, and the enjoyment or attainment of that thing."[321] The former is a kind of extrinsic good since it is a good existing independently of the one whose good it is. The latter is a kind of intrinsic good since it

[317] See *In Boetii de Hebdom.*, lect. 2. "An inclination sometimes follows the very essence of a thing, as the heavy desires to be down according to the notion of its essential nature. But sometimes, an [inclination] follows the nature of some superadded form, as when someone [who] has an acquired habit desires that which is agreeable to him according to that habit."
[318] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.1, c.
[319] *S.T.*, Ia, q.48, a.5, c.
[320] In his reply to Fr. Eschmann, Charles De Koninck notes that "it should be clear that the most proper and profound meaning of the term 'good' is *perfectivum alterius per modum finis*." De Koninck, DST, p.55.
[321] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.1, a.8, c.

exists in that which attains to the good, as in a subject.[322] While both are called the good of a thing, the former is more so since the latter is for the sake of the former.

> For since the good has the notion of perfection and of an end, according to the two-fold perfection and end of a creature is noted its two-fold goodness. For a certain perfection of a creature is noted according as it persists in its nature: and this is the end of generation or the fashioning of it. But its other perfection is noted as that which it obtains through its motion or operation: and this is the end of the motion or operation of it. But according to both, a creature falls short of the divine goodness: for while the form and the *esse* of a thing is its good and perfection insofar as it is considered in its nature, a composite substance is neither its own form nor its own *esse*. Moreover, a simple created substance, even if it is its own form, nevertheless, is not its own *esse*. But God is His own form and *esse*, as was shown above. Likewise, every creature obtains perfect goodness from an extrinsic end. For the perfection of goodness consists in obtaining the ultimate end. The ultimate end of any creature is outside of itself, which is the divine goodness, which indeed is not ordained to a further end.[323]

It should be appreciated that since the good has the notion of perfection and act, that is called good simply which is simply perfect and actual, and this is nothing other than the ultimate perfection and actuality. Thus, something is not called good simply until it has its full perfection and actuality, but in creatures, there is a two-fold actuality: first act, whereby a thing is what it is; and second act, which is a certain operation or

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[322] The good in this sense is a thing's own act (*i.e.*, its proper act). "Every thing is because of its proper operation. For the imperfect is always for the sake of the more perfect. Therefore, just as matter is for the sake of form, so the form which is first act is for the sake of its operation, which is second act. And thus operation is the end of a created thing." (*S.T.*, Ia, q.105, a.5, c.). Duane Berquist manifests the truth of this proposition by way of an induction (The author borrows the substance of an argument in his unpublished notes from a seminar given at his home in 1994). Plato, in Book I of his *Republic* defines the proper act of a thing as that act which it alone can do or that which it can do best. Thus, the ear's own act is to hear; the eye's own act is to see; *etc.* since these alone can hear and see. Again, a shovel's own act is to dig; a foot's own act is to walk; *etc.* since these acts are done best by a shovel and a foot respectively. When we ask what is the proper act of a knife, the answer is to cut. But what is its end? Again, to cut. The proper act of a pen is to write, and its end is to write. The proper act of a shovel is to dig, and its end is to dig. The proper act of the eye is to see, and its end is to see. The proper act of a doctor is to heal, and his end is to heal. The proper act of a teacher is to teach, and his end is to teach. So the proper act of every tool is the same as its end; the proper act of each organ is its end; and the proper act of each occupation is its end. By way of induction, therefore, it can be seen that the proper act of each thing is the same as its end, and since the end of each thing is its good, it follows that the proper act of any thing is its good.

[323] *Comp. Theol.,* I.109. See also *S.T.*, Ia, q.26, a.3, ad1.

actualization of the first act.[324] Thus, something is said to be good simply according to second act, not according to first act.

> Although a good and a being are the same according to the thing, since nevertheless they differ according to notion, something is not called good simply and a being simply in the same way. For since being properly signifies that something is in act, but act, properly taken, has an order to potency; according to this, something is simply called a being insofar as first it is discerned from that which is in potency only. And this is the substantial being of any thing. Whence, through its substantial being, any one thing is called a being simply. Through superadded acts, however, something is said to be in some respect, just as to be white signifies to be in some respect: for to be white does not take a thing out of simply potential being, since it comes upon a thing already pre-existing in act. But the good signifies the notion of the perfect (that is the desirable), and consequently it signifies the notion of the ultimate. That, therefore, which is ultimately perfect, is called good simply. That, however, which does not have the ultimate perfection that it ought to have, although it may have some perfection insofar as it is in act, is not said to be perfect simply, nor good simply, but in some respect. Therefore, according to its first being, which is substantial, something is called a being simply and a good in some respect: namely, insofar as it is a being. But according to the ultimate act, something is said to be in some respect and is called good simply.[325]

The same thing can be seen from another argument. Something is called good insofar as it stands in a certain relation with other things, and this relation to other things is established by way of certain perfections added above its substantial being.

> Any one thing is called a being inasmuch as it is considered absolutely. But something is called good according to its respect to other things, as is clear from the things said [above]. In itself, however, something is perfected so that it might subsist through its essential principles. But a thing is not perfected so that it might have itself in a due mode to all those things that are outside of it except by the mediation of accidents superadded to the essence. For the operations by which one thing is co-joined to another in a certain mode proceed from the essence by the mediation of powers superadded to the essence. Hence, it does not

[324] *Comp. Theol.,* I.109. See also, Ia, q.105, a.5, c.
[325] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.1, ad1.

> obtain goodness, simply speaking, except insofar as it is complete according to its substantial and accidental principles.[326]

It is now possible to return to the earlier questions: Is the good one or many? Since whatever has the notion of actuality and perfection can be called good, it is clear that the good is many, for many things are actual and perfect. On the other hand, we have seen that there is a single concept which can be applied, by a certain analogy, to every good, namely the object of an intrinsic inclination. In this sense there is one good (*i.e.*, one concept of the good). Yet the good in the fullest sense is that which perfects and has act in the fullest sense. If there is only one such being, this would deserve the name "good" antonomastically so that it could be truly said that the good is one, namely, the ultimate good.[327] This good, according to St. Thomas, is God,[328] for God alone is pure act and the source of all perfections.[329]

Is the good the same or different for each thing? Inasmuch as the good of each thing corresponds to its intrinsic or natural inclination and since every form (substantial or accidental) begets an inclination, it follows that for each form or nature there is a corresponding good. If a number of beings share in the same nature, then the good corresponding to that nature will be the same for all of them. Since all beings share in the common genus[330] of being itself, it follows that there is some one good that is the object of every being, namely the good of maintaining a thing's own existence. Furthermore, if there be some first cause of all being which pre-contains the perfections of all things,

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[326] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.5, c.
[327] See *In I Sent.* d.19, q.5, a.2, ad3. "there is one goodness by which, as a first, effective, exemplar principle, all things are good. Nevertheless, the goodness by which any one thing is formally good is diverse in diverse things."
[328] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.6, a.2, c.
[329] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.4, a.1&2.
[330] Here "genus" is taken broadly to signify a certain commonness according to analogy since being is not said univocally of all things.

such a thing would be the good for all beings, namely as being the ultimate object of every natural inclination. This is why St. Thomas holds that God is the good of all things, yet in different ways. God is the good of the rational creature, the animal creature, and the inanimate creature in different ways.[331]

Is the good subjective or objective? This question might be understood in two ways. One thing this question might mean is: Is that which seems good to anyone really or simply their good? To answer this it should be appreciated that not every good is perfective of the nature of another thing. This is true only for those goods that are the object of an inclination following upon the natural form of the subject. If the subject acquires some accidental form which is somehow beside,[332] or even contrary[333] to the nature of the subject, then there will be an inclination to an object corresponding to that form, which object will be a good in respect to that accidental form yet not good for the subject simply (*i.e.*, according to its nature). Simply speaking a thing is what it is by its substantial form, or nature. Thus, the good for it simply is that which is the good perfecting its nature. Because of the inclinations brought about by forms other than the natural form of a thing, the possibility arises for apparent (*i.e.*, not real) goods in beings that have knowledge (either sense or intelligence). In such cases the knower desires what is simply evil due to the presence of some accidental form that inclines the knower to an object that is contrary to the good of its nature, for the presence of the accidental form in

[331] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.6, a.1; *De Veritate*, q.22, a.2; *S.C.G.*, III.17&18.
[332] For example, when a piece of iron becomes temporarily magnetized, or a projectile acquires some inertia or impetus.
[333] For example, when a heavy object is thrown upwards, or an animal contracts illness, or a man acquires vices.

the knower serves as the basis for inclining the knower to the object in some respect.[334] Thus, the object will be good in some respect but not simply.

A second way in which this question about the subjectivity or objectivity of the good can be understood is this: Is the good in the one desiring it, as in a subject, or outside of the one desiring it (*i.e.*, as an object)? The good simply speaking can be either the object that perfects a thing or the act through which this object is attained. In this sense the good of any thing is both within and outside that thing: within it as its proper act, outside of it as the object of that act. Yet in either case this good is not simply identified with the very act of existing of a thing (God alone being excepted as a special case) since the good simply is achieved through second act, while the existence of a thing accrues from first act.

V.B.2 The Good As a Metaphysical/Transcendental Notion

The science of metaphysics has being as being for its subject.[335] Hence, those notions that can be applied to being as such rightly fall under the consideration of the metaphysician and are rightly called metaphysical. It was shown above that the notion of the good, in its broadest sense, is "that which all things desire," where "desire" is taken to signify any inclination following upon the form of a thing. Since it belongs to being as such to have form and since every form begets an inclination to some act or operation, it follows that desire and the good apply to all beings, as such. Therefore, the good taken in this sense is a metaphysical concept.

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[334] See St. Thomas, *In Boetii de Hebdom.*, lect. 2.
[335] See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV.1 and St. Thomas' commentary on the same. "The common science considers being universally according as it is being."

It is also clear that good is a transcendental, for a name is transcendental when it signifies something in multiple categories of being (*i.e.*, substance, quantity, quality, *etc.*). Since the good is found in each of these categories,[336] it is clear that good signifies something transcendental.

St. Thomas considers the notion of the good in relation to the notions of the other chief transcendental names (*i.e.*, being, the one, and the true) in a number of places.[337] According to the order of predication and understanding nothing is prior to being. That is, being enters into every concept and definition.

> The notion (*ratio*) signified through a name is that which the understanding conceives of a thing, and it signifies that through the voice: therefore, that is prior according to its notion which first falls into the conception of the understanding. Moreover, being (*ens*) falls first into the conception of the understanding: since any one thing is knowable insofar as it is in act…Hence, being is the proper object of the understanding, and this is the first intelligible, just as sound is the first audible.[338]

Since being is first in the order of understanding, it follows that the notion of being is prior to, and enters into, the notion of the good. More specifically, the good adds the notion of appetibility to the notion of being. "It is manifest that a good and a being are the same in reality, but the good signifies the notion of the appetible, which being does not signify."[339] This added notion of the appetible does not add anything real to being, but only according to reason. Yet it is not a simple negation either. Rather it is a positive relation of reason by which a being is formally considered under the aspect of

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[336] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.6, obj.1 et ad1. "For the good…is divided through the ten predicaments." See also *De Malo* q.1, a.1, ad11.
[337] *De Veritate*, q.1, a.1 and q.21, a.1-3; *In I Sent.* d.8, q.1, a.3 and d.19, q.5, a.1; *De Potentia*, q.9, a.7, ad6; *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.1&4 and q.16, a.4; *Super Ep. ad Hebr.* 11, lect.1.
[338] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.2, c.
[339] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.1, c.

desirability. "Beyond being, which is the first conception of the understanding, one adds that which is of reason only, namely negation: for one signifies a being as undivided. But the true and the good are said positively; whence they are not able to add anything except a relation which is of reason only."[340] In virtue of this relation of reason that the good adds above being, the good is not said to be something relative *secundum esse*, but rather it is said to be related *secundum dici*.[341] That is to say, the good does not signify something whose very nature consists in being referred to another (such as father and son), rather it signifies that upon which a relation immediately and necessarily follows. For example, knowledge, which in itself exists as a quality, is signified as something relative since from this quality a relation immediately follows according to our way of speaking [*secundum dici*].

> Some name is able to imply a reference in two ways. In one way so that the name is imposed for signifying the respect itself, just as this name "father" or "son" or "paternity" itself. But certain names are said to imply a respect since they signify a thing of some [other] genus, which a respect is associated with, although the name is not imposed for signifying the respect itself. Just as this name "science" is imposed for signifying a certain quality, upon which a certain respect follows, not however for signifying the respect itself. And through this mode the notion of the good implies a respect: not because the name "good" itself signifies the respect alone, but since it signifies that upon which a respect follows, together with the respect itself.[342]

Thus, it is clear that the good adds above being the notion of a positive relation of reason (as opposed to a mere negation), in virtue of which the good is said to be something relative, *secundum dici*.

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[340] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.1, c.
[341] See Aristotle, *Categories*, ch. 8.
[342] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.6, c.

According to its notion the good follows not only the notion of being but also the notion of the one and the true.

> Although the good and the true are convertible with being in the thing, nevertheless, they differ in notion. And according to this, the true simply speaking is prior to the good. This appears from two things. First from this: that the true is more closely related to being (which is first) than the good. For the true regards being itself simply and immediately, while the notion of the good follows upon the being according as it is in some manner perfect. For thus it is desirable. Second, it appears from this: that knowledge naturally precedes appetite. Whence, since the true regards knowledge, while the good regards appetite, the true will be prior to the good according to notion.[343]

Moreover, the true itself presupposes the one. "The true presupposes the one, since the notion of the true is perfected from the apprehension of the understanding. Each and every thing is intelligible, however, insofar as it is one. For he who does not understand one thing, understands nothing as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* IV."[344] From this the order among the transcendental names, considered in themselves, is apparent, for first there is understood being, then the one, then the true, then the good.[345]

V.B.3 The Good Is in Things

While the true and the good are convertible in reality with being, they differ radically as to where the primary notion of each is found. The true is found first in the understanding and only secondarily in things, while the good is found first in things

[343] *S.T.*, Ia, q.16, a.4, c.
[344] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.3, c.
[345] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.3, c. "Hence, of these transcending names, there is an order, if they are considered according to themselves, that after being is one, then true after one, and then good after true."

themselves.[346] This is because the very definition of the true has reference to intellect, but the definition of the good, as we have seen, has reference to perfection as an end. "Since the good, as was said [above] signifies an order of being to appetite, while the true signifies an order to intellect…good and evil are in things, but true and false are in the mind."[347] Put another way, that which perfects as an end is something real, not just a being of reason, for perfection as an end pertains to a thing's being and actuality, as we have already seen above. A second argument can be formulated as follows: The good, as understood here, is nothing other than the object of an intrinsic inclination, but inclination to some object implies a certain ordering to that object. Since there can be no order without distinction, it follows that the good is distinct from that which is ordered to it. Since the notion of desire implies a real inclination,[348] it follows that there must be a real distinction between the good and that which is ordered to the good. Thus, the good is in things (*i.e.*, in something that is the term of a real relation). This conclusion is verified in our experience. We first attribute truth or falsity to statements, which are obviously works of reason. On the other hand, we attribute good or evil to things. We might call a statement good or evil, but this is insofar as it signifies some reality that is desirable or undesirable for us. Again, when someone loves evil, he *is* evil, and when he loves good, he *is* good; but when someone knows good or evil, he is not made to be that which he

[346] See *In XII Metaph.*, lect. 7, n.2526. "Intelligible things in act exist according as they are in the intellect, but appetible things according as they are in things. For good and evil are in things." See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI.4, 1027b25-26.
[347] *De Veritate*, q.1, a.2, c. See also *De Veritate*, q.21, a.1, c. "The good is in things, as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* VI. Insofar as one being according to its *esse* is perfective and consummative of another being, it has the notion of an end in respect to that thing which is perfected by it."
[348] The fact that the notion of the good adds only a relation of reason to the notion of being does not prevent the notion of desire from implying a real inclination (and hence, a real relation) in the subject for which the good is an object. Just as in knowledge on the part of the object known there is only a relation of reason to the knowing power, while on the part of the knowing power there is a real relation to the object known, so also on the part of the good there is only a relation of reason to the thing for which it is a good, while on the part of that which desires the good there is a real relation to the good.

knows. This indicates that good and evil have a real power to transform things in their very existence, which is a sign that the good is in things.

Although the true is prior to the good in notion, nevertheless, if the good and the true are compared on the part of the subjects in which they are found, it happens that the good is prior to the true.[349] This is first of all because only intellectual beings are perfected by the true, while all beings are perfected by the good. Secondly, this is true because knowledge is an operation which follows existence. Since the true perfects by way of knowledge, while the good perfects all existing things, it follows that a thing must be perfected by the good before it is perfected by the true.[350]

V.B.4 The Good As a Final Cause

We have considered the good according to its notion and its proper subject. It remains to consider the good in relation to other things as a cause. A cause is that upon which something depends for its being or coming to be.[351] Moreover, everything depends upon an end for its coming to be, for nothing comes to be except through the action of an agent. "Matter does not acquire form except insofar as it is moved by an agent, for nothing reduces itself from potency to act."[352] Furthermore, every agent acts for an end. "An agent does not move [something else] except from an intention of the end. For if an agent were not determined to some effect, it would no more do this than

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[349] Here the true is taken to signify the perfection of reason by its conformance to things (truth as a being of reason), as opposed to the true which a thing is called insofar as it is conformed to the divine intellect (ontological truth).
[350] See *De Veritate*, q.21, a.3, c.
[351] See *In I Phys.*, lect. 1. "Those are called causes from which something depends according to its being or becoming."
[352] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.1, a.2, c.

that. Therefore, in order that it produce a determinate effect, it is necessary that it be determined to a certain thing, which has the notion of an end."[353] Thus, the end is a cause. The good of each thing, however, is its end since the desirable has the aspect of an end. Therefore, it follows that the good is a cause.

In relation to the other kinds of causes the good has a certain primacy. "The good, however, since it has the notion of the appetible, implies a relation of final cause, whose causality is first, since the agent does not act except on account of an end, and from the agent the matter is moved to form. Hence, it is said that the end is the cause of causes."[354] The end is not called the cause of causes insofar as it causes the other causes to be but rather as being the reason for their acting as causes. "The end, however, is the cause of the efficient [cause] not with regard to being, but with regard to the reason of the causality [of the efficient cause]. For the efficient cause is a cause insofar as it acts: moreover, it does not act except on account of the end."[355] Hence, it is more properly said that the end is the cause of the causality of the other causes.

The good can be seen as the final cause, therefore, inasmuch as it is the ultimate reason or cause of a thing. If we seek to know the ultimate reason why some effect is so, we end up at the final cause. Why is the matter such and such? For the sake of the form. Why does it have this form? Because of the agent which introduced the form. Why did the agent introduce this form rather than that? Because of the end for which it was acting. Even though, however, the end is first in causal intention, sometimes (*e.g.*, in the generation of natural things or the manufacture of artificial things) it is last in the order of coming to be. In such cases the thing aimed at by the agent only comes to exist in reality

[353] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.1, a.2, c.
[354] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.2, ad1.
[355] *In V Metaph.*, lect.2.

after the agent has acted upon the matter and brought about the form intended. Paradoxically, the end can be said to cause before it exists, for when it begins to move the agent, the final cause sometimes does not exist in act but only in intention.

The priority of the good in causality is the foundation for a certain primacy that the good has even over being. We have already seen that while the good and being are the same in extension, being is prior in notion to the good, but if we consider their relation according to the order of causality, the good is in some sense more universal than being itself.

> The good is extended to existing things and non-existing things, not according to predication, but according to causality (so that through non-existing things we understand not those things simply which utterly do not exist, but those things which are in potency and not in act). For the good has the notion of an end, in which not only those things that are in act rest, but those things also which are not in act, but are in potency only, are moved to it. Being, however, does not imply a relationship of a cause, unless as a formal cause only: whether inhering or exemplary, the causality of which does not extend itself except to those things that are already in act.[356]

According to predication being is prior to the good, since being enters into the very definition of the good as a quasi-genus. As we saw above, the good includes the notion of being and adds something further. In the order of causality, however, being cannot cause, precisely as being, except by way of formal or exemplary causality. Since that which has form is in act, it follows that the causality of being is restricted to actually

[356] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.2, ad2. See *In I Sent.* d.8, q.1, a.3, ad2; *De Veritate*, q.21, a.2, ad2. We note here that examination of the parallel texts seems to show a development of St. Thomas' thought on this point since in the earlier texts he seems to restrict the causality of being only to the notion of exemplary cause, while in this later text he seems to allow for a certain causality of being by way of an inhering formal cause as well. Nevertheless, the general point still holds. Being extends its causality only to those things in act.

existing things. To put it briefly, "nothing acts except insofar as it is in act."[357] On the other hand, the good extends its influence even over those things that exist only potentially, for before a thing exists actually, already it is drawn towards the form which is its good and its end.

St. Thomas explains in some detail the relationship between priority in predication and priority in causality in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*.

> The first division or combination of modes is that, in the same species of cause, one cause is said to be prior to another, so that we understand the prior cause to be more universal. For example, the cause of health is the doctor as a proper and posterior cause; but the one having training [is the cause of health] as a more common and prior [cause]. And this is so in the species of efficient cause. And it is similar in the species of formal cause: for the proper and posterior formal cause of the diapason is the double proportion; but the prior and more common cause is the numeral proportion, which is called multiplicity. And likewise, that which contains any cause by a commonness of its ambit, is said to be a prior cause. It should be noted, however, that the universal and proper cause, or the prior and posterior cause, is able to be taken either according to a commonness of predication (according to the example posited here about the doctor and the one having training) or according to a commonness of causality, as when we say the sun is a universal cause of heating, but fire is a proper cause [of the same]. And these two correspond to one another. For it is manifest that any power is extended to some things according as they communicate in one notion (*ratione*) of object. And the more the things to which that power is extended, the more common that notion (*ratione*) must be. And since a power is proportioned to its object according to its notion (*rationem*), it follows that the superior cause acts according to a more universal and less contracted form. And thus it can be observed in the order of things. For certain things are superior in being, to the extent that they have less contracted forms, and forms dominating more over matter, which [matter] contracts the power of the form. Whence, also, that which is prior in causing, is found to be prior, in a certain sense, under the aspect (*rationem*) of a more universal predication. As for example, if fire is the first in heating, the heavens are not just the first in heating, but the first in bringing about alteration.[358]

[357] *S.C.G.*, I.13.
[358] *In II Phys.*, lect.6.

Notice that the examples given here are all examples of causes, yet some causes are more universal in predication and others are more universal in causality. Since a doctor is a kind of person having training, "one having training" is more universal in predication than "doctor." Thus, in the very same real subject, looked at from a more or less universal aspect, there are found different notions of causality. Here there is not a real before and after in the causes, but rather there is a before and after according to the consideration of reason, which can consider the more or less universal aspect. On the other hand, a cause can be more universal precisely in the order of causality. Thus, for example, a general is a more universal cause of the movement of troops than a captain since the captain moves in virtue of the order given by the general. Or a vine is a more universal cause of the fruit than the branch. Here there is a real distinction of causes, where the influence of the first enters into the second so as to cooperate with the second to bring about the effect.

What is interesting about this text is the assertion that "that which is prior in causing, is found to be prior, in a certain sense, under the aspect of a more universal predication." The example he gives is of the heavens, which, for St. Thomas and Aristotle, are the universal cause of all motion according to quality (*i.e.*, alteration). Two things are to be noted about a more universal cause. First, it extends itself to more effects than the less universal cause; second, as regards the same effect, the more universal cause is prior in the order of causality to the less universal cause (*i.e.*, the proximate cause). For example, a vine is the cause of more grapes than its branch; moreover, the entirety of each grape is an effect of both the branch and the vine, but in an order. It is first an effect of the vine, then of the branch. Thus, according to the order of causality the more

universal cause is first. In the example given the more universal cause (the heavens) extends its influence to all alteration, while the less universal cause (fire) extends its influence only to heating. Moreover, alteration is more universal *in predication* than heating since alteration enters into the notion of heating as a genus. It follows that the more universal cause is, in a certain way, more universal even according to predication, for it extends its influence to that which is more universal in predication. The same can be seen in the example of a wise teacher who, possessing knowledge in every field, communicates this knowledge in part to one and in part to another so that from the same teacher one disciple learns logic, another natural philosophy, another moral philosophy, *etc*. Each of these disciples, in turn, teaches others but only in their limited field. The first teacher can be called a cause of science in all the disciples, while the others can be called the cause of this or that species of science in their own disciples. Here again science is more universal in predication than logic, or natural philosophy, or ethics.[359]

From this consideration, an interesting question arises: if the good is more universal according to causality than being, does it follow that the good can be called, in some respect, more universal in predication than being? This seems impossible, however, since it seems that no predicate is or can be more universal than being.[360] Recall, however, that the good as a cause extends itself not only to actual beings but even to those things which are only in potency, whereas being as a cause only extends itself to actual things. Therefore, the good can be predicated of more things than being. For this

[359] Note that this universality need not always be univocal. It suffices that it be more universal according to analogy.

[360] Fr. H. Barbour, O.Praem., comments upon this difficulty. "Now how on earth can any cause be more universal under the aspect of predication than being? Yet if the good, both as a divine name and as a transcendental property of being, is prior to being in causality, then it must be prior, *quoddamodo* in predication, according to a more universal form than that of being. This, however, seems to be impossible." From a lecture entitled "Bonum Communius Ente" delivered at Thomas Aquinas College, Santa Paula, California on March 7th, 2000.

reason St. Thomas observes that while a being which is only in potency cannot be called a being simply speaking, nevertheless it can be called good simply speaking. "Any being, whether in act or in potency, is able to be called good without qualification."[361] Now if there be some first good as the final cause of all things, its causality would extend itself not only to existing things but even to whatever is able to come to be through its activity. Therefore, this cause could be said to extend itself to a more universal predicate than being according to its "more universal and less contracted form."[362] We shall consider whether there is one final cause of all things in section V.B.8 below.

V.B.5 The Good As Diffusive of Itself

We have seen that the good is a cause, and in what sense it is a cause, as well as its relation to other kinds of causes. Here it is necessary to consider the modality of its causation. There seems to be considerable confusion on this point of St. Thomas' doctrine in recent literature.[363] It is necessary to proceed carefully in order to arrive at a proper understanding of St. Thomas' doctrine of the good as diffusive of itself.

The notion of diffusion, or pouring out, comes from sensible imagery. When water is poured out of a bucket, it is diffused onto other things. When the scent of

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[361] *De Malo* q.1, a.2, c. It should be noted that what is in potency is called good not insofar as it is in potency and imperfect but rather insofar as it has an ordination to act or form. See Ia, q.48, a.3, c. and a.6, c. See also John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, *In* q.V *Primae Partis*. (*Cursus Theologicus*, Tomi 1-4 (Paris/Turin/Rome: Typis Societatis S. Joannis Evangelistae Desclée et Sociorum, 1931-46).

[362] See *Comp. Theol.,* I, c.101. "But the form of the first agent, namely God, is not other than his goodness. Therefore, because of this, all things are made so that they might be likened to the divine goodness." We shall consider more distinctly what this "more universal predicate than being" and "more universal, less contracted form" consist in at the appropriate place below, when we consider the moral good.

[363] Beginning in 1992, with an article published by W.N. Clarke ("Person, Being and St. Thomas," *Communio* 19), a series of debates emerged on this issue, including contributions by D.L. Schindler, S.Long, G.A. Blair and B.T. Blankenhorn. For a summary of the debate see B.T. Blankenhorn, "The Good as Self-Diffusive in Thomas Aquinas" *Angelicum*, LXXIX, n.4 (2002): p.803-837.

jasmine wafts into the night air, it is said to be diffused. By a certain metaphorical carrying over of the name, due to a certain likeness, the good is said to be diffusive of itself. When something is poured out, that which was within it, or intrinsic to it, is bestowed on something outside of it. The water that was in the bucket, after it is poured out, now is shared by something outside of the bucket. Moreover, diffusion implies a transforming effect on the thing outside. According to these likenesses, therefore, an extrinsic cause can be said to diffuse itself, for an extrinsic cause at once gives some share of itself to another and transforms the other. Now both the agent cause and the final cause are extrinsic causes, but self-diffusion is first of all verified in efficient causes, which seem to more obviously give some share of themselves to their effects. Fire causes heat in the thing being heated; an animal generates an animal like itself; a teacher begets knowledge in the disciple like the knowledge which he himself possesses. In short, every agent produces its like and stands as a kind of exemplar to that which it produces. Yet, it is also true that, in some sense, the good, or the end, exerts an influence on things, which influence causes those things to share in the goodness of the end. A thing becomes like that which it loves. Thus, when discussing the notion of the self-diffusion of the good, St. Thomas says:

> While it is true that, according to the proper usage of the word, 'to diffuse' is seen to imply the operation of an efficient cause, nevertheless, broadly taken, it is able to indicate a relation of any cause, just as 'to influence' or 'to make' and other things of this kind. When, however, it is said that the good is diffusive according to its notion, diffusion is not to be understood as it implies the operation of an efficient cause, but as it implies the habitude of a final cause. And such a diffusion is not by the mediation of some superadded power. Moreover, the good signifies the diffusion of a final cause, and not of an agent cause: first since an efficient [cause], insofar as it is such, is not the measure and perfection of a thing, but rather its beginning, and then since the effect participates in the efficient cause

> according to assimilation of form only, but a thing obtains the end according to its whole being (*esse*), and the notion of the good consists in this.[364]

This reply is in response to an objection that the good adds something real to the notion of being since the diffusion of the good implies mediation through superadded powers. Here St. Thomas carefully distinguishes what is meant by the self-diffusion of the good as final cause from the self-diffusion of an efficient cause. While implying that the notion of self-diffusion is more apparent (at least *quoad nos*) in the case of efficient cause, he nevertheless denies that all self-diffusion of causes is reduced to a kind of efficient causality. More than this, he even indicates that the more profound sense of self-diffusion is attributed to the good as final cause, for the good brings the *whole* being to its *whole* perfection. This teaching is based upon what we have seen earlier about the final cause, namely that it extends even to things that are not in act. Hence, while efficient causes only assimilate things according to their formal element, the final cause even reaches to the pure potency of matter and draws it into its perfection.

Is there, however, any way in which the good can be called self-diffusive according to the modality of an efficient cause? An important text from the *Summa Contra Gentiles* seems to indicate that the good can be said to diffuse itself according to the mode of an efficient cause.

> The communication of being (*esse*) and goodness proceeds from goodness. Which indeed is clear both from the nature itself of the good, and from its notion. For naturally the good of any one thing is its act and perfection. Moreover, anything acts from this: that it is in act. Furthermore, by acting it pours out being (*esse*) and goodness into other things. Hence, also it is a sign of perfection of something that it is able to produce its like: as is clear from the Philosopher in the

[364] *De Veritate* q.21, a.1, ad4.

> fourth book of the Meteorology. But the notion of the good is from this: that it is desirable. This is the end, which also moves an agent to acting. Because of which the good is said to be diffusive of itself and of being (*esse*).[365]

In this text the good is considered under two aspects, its nature and its notion (*ratio*). According to its nature a good thing is something in act, and it therefore has the capacity to move other things from potency to act as an efficient cause. According to its notion itself, however, the good is something desirable, which, as we have already seen, is diffusive of itself in another way than by way of efficient causality. So it can be said that the good, as something in act (which every good thing is), diffuses itself by way of efficient and exemplar causality.[366] The good, however, considered precisely *as good*, diffuses itself by way of final causality.

Upon close examination it becomes apparent that these two modalities of self-diffusion of the good have a determinate order to each another. The reason for this is that final causality and efficient causality have a determinate order to each other. The final cause is the cause of the causality of the efficient cause. If the good were not diffusive, as good (*i.e.*, by way of final causality), it would not be diffusive as something actual (*i.e.*, by way of efficient causality), for the very inclination which is correlated to the good in the subject which desires the good is the principle of acting in that subject. Without this inclination, without some determinate end, the agent would have no reason to act one way rather than another, and so it would not act at all. Moreover, by being drawn closer to the end which is its good a being becomes more and more actual, and hence, more and more capable of acting upon others by way of efficient causality.

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[365] *S.C.G.*, I.37.
[366] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.19, a.2, c.

Bernard-Thomas Blankenhorn, O.P., summarizes the interrelationship between the good as final cause and the good as efficient cause.

> The good is perfective of a thing's nature. The good is act…These attributes can be predicated of efficient causality. But a being's efficient causality is not its ultimate perfection, but rather that by which it is perfected. Operation leads to perfection, and occurs through efficient causality. But efficient causality is not itself absolutely perfective of the subject, but the way to its highest perfection, its highest good. The good is perfective of the whole being, while the efficient cause is that through which the good is attained.[367]

Briefly stated, the notion of the good is found more fully in final cause than in efficient cause. So also, the good as diffusive of itself is found primarily in the good, as good (by way of final causality), and secondarily in the good as actual (by way of efficient causality).

V.B.6 The Integral Parts of the Good: Mode, Species, and Order

We have considered the good, taken universally. Here it is appropriate to consider, briefly, the parts of the good, for, like being, a complete and distinct understanding of the good can only be achieved through a descent into the more particular modes of the good. Therefore, we shall first consider the integral parts of the good, namely, mode, species, and order.[368] In the next section we will consider the subjective parts of the good.

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[367] B.T. Blankenhorn, "The Good as Self-Diffusive in Thomas Aquinas," p.825.

[368] See John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, *In* q.V *Primae Partis*. "[St. Thomas] says that the good consists in species, order, and mode, which whole pertains to the integrity of a thing." Also see A. Lépicier, *Tractatus de Deo Uno* P.I, q.V, a.5. "In the present article, he speaks about the things constituting the good, as if asking what are the integral parts of it."

We will have more to say about integral and subjective parts below. Here it suffices to give a brief account of the nature of an integral whole and how it is that the good can have integral parts. An integral whole is one in which the whole is the sum of its parts in such a way that unless all the parts be present the complete essence and power of the whole will be lacking.[369] That is, the full essence and power of the whole does not exist in any of the singular parts, but only in all of them put together. Thus, a house is an integral whole containing bricks and planks as its parts; an army is an integral whole containing soldiers; an animal is an integral whole containing diverse organs, *etc*.

With regard to the good it is clear that there are certain elements that enter into its integrity, for unless a thing have some perfection, it cannot be good. Moreover, a thing is called perfect in relation to its nature. Wings perfect a bird but not a man; reason perfects a man but not a horse. Thus, perfection presupposes some determinate nature or form, but the full essence and power of goodness does not consist only in form. Something may have a form but be lacking those things that are needed for perfection. Also necessary for perfection are things presupposed to form and following upon it. For example, presupposed to a piece of fruit receiving its form is good soil, water and sun. When these are lacking, the fruit either does not come to be at all, or it comes to be in a defective way, not achieving ripeness. Again, a fruit has a further ordination to nourishing an animal, and if it is not fit for this, it will be lacking in its perfection. St. Thomas explains:

> Each thing is called good insofar as it is perfect (for thus it is appetible, as was said above). That is said to be perfect, moreover, which is lacking nothing according to the mode of its perfection. Since, however, any thing is what it is

[369] See, *inter alia*, *S.T.*, IIIa, q.90, a.3; *In I Sent.* d.3, q.4, a.2, ad1; *In I Sent.* d.19, q.4, a.1, ad1; *In II Sent.* d.9, q.1, a.3 ad1; and *In II Sent.* d.30, q.1, a.3, c.

> through its form, and form in turn presupposes certain things, and certain things follow upon it from necessity, in order that something be perfect and good, it is necessary that it have a form and those things that are presupposed to it, and those things that are consequent to it. But a determination or commensuration of principles is presupposed to form, whether these principles are material or efficient. And this is signified through "mode." Whence it is said that the measure foreordains the mode. The form itself, however, is signified through "species," because through [its] form each thing is constituted in its species. And because of this, it is said that number supplies the species, since the definitions signifying the species are like numbers, according to the Philosopher in Book VIII of the *Metaphysics*. For just as adding or subtracting a unit varies the species of a number, so also, in definitions, the difference adjoined or subtracted [varies the species]. Upon form, moreover, there follows an inclination to an end, or to an action, or to something of this kind, since any thing acts insofar as it is in act, and tends to that which befits it according to its form. And this pertains to "weight" and "order." Hence, the notion of the good, insofar as it consists in perfection, consists also in mode, species, and order.[370]

Thus, beyond the form itself there is some inclination to the end or to action, which St. Thomas designates here as "order." Moreover, the form presupposes some commensuration with its efficient and material principles. This commensuration is a determinate relation or proportion between the form and its material and efficient causes. Thus, for example, the form of man, the rational soul, has need of a determinate matter, and when there is something deficient in the matter (as, for example, an incorrect number of chromosomes) there will not be a proper proportion between the matter and the form. This determinate commensuration or relation of the material and efficient principles with the form is designated by Saint Thomas here by "measure."

It seems that on this latter point especially (concerning the meaning of the term "measure") there has been some development in the thought of St. Thomas. Consider what he says about the same point in the *De Veritate*, written some years earlier:

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[370] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.5, c.

> The respect to something implied in the name of the good is the habitude of something perfective according as something naturally perfects not only according to the notion of the species, but also according to the *esse* which it has in things. For in this way an end perfects those things that are to the end. Since, however, creatures are not their own *esse*, it is necessary that they have received *esse*. And through this, their *esse* is finite and determinate according to the measure of that in which it is received. Thus, among these three which Augustine posits, the last, namely order, is the respect that the name of the good implies. But the other two, namely species and mode, cause that respect. For species pertains to the very notion of the species which, indeed, insofar as it has *esse* in something, is received through some determined mode, since everything which is in something, is in it through the mode of the receiver. And so, each and every good, insofar as it is perfective according to the notion of [its] species and *esse* together, has mode, species and order: species, indeed as regards the notion itself of the species, mode as regards the *esse*, order as regards the very habitude of something perfective.[371]

Here the notion of mode seems to be significantly different than that presented in the text from the *Summa Theologiae*, for the determination of the *esse* of a thing does not seem to be the same as the proportion between the form and the efficient and material principles. However, a text from his commentary on the Sentences, written close to the time that the *De Veritate* was written, provides a clearer understanding of what St. Thomas means by determinate *esse*.

> Since every perfection is poured into matter according to its capacity, the nature of the soul is poured out thus in diverse bodies, not according to the same nobility and purity: whence, in each and every body, it will have determinate being (*esse terminatum*) according to the measure of the body. However, this determinate being, although it is acquired for the soul *in* the body, is not nevertheless *from* the body, nor through a dependency on the body. Whence, when the bodies are removed, still there will remain to each and every soul its determinate being according to the affections or dispositions, which follow upon it insofar as it was the perfection of such a body…And this is able to be manifested through a sensible example. For if something one, like water, not retaining its shape, is distinguished through diverse containers, the distinct shapes will not properly

[371] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.6, c.

> remain when the containers are removed, but there will remain only one water. So it is with material forms that do not retain being (*esse*) through themselves. If, however, there be something, like wax, retaining its figure, which is distinguished according to diverse shapes through diverse instruments, even with those [instruments] removed, the distinction of figures will remain. And so it is with the soul which, after the destruction of the body, retains its being (*esse*), which in it also remains an individuated and distinct being (*esse*).[372]

Here St. Thomas more clearly identifies how the determination of *esse* comes about. "It will have determinate being according to the measure of the body." That is, the material subject in which the form is received determines the *esse* of a thing, insofar as the matter is proportioned more or less to the form (having more or less "nobility and purity"). Thus, when St. Thomas says that the mode or measure of a thing consists in the determination of its *esse* in the text of the *De Veritate*, we can interpret this as meaning substantially the same thing as the proportion that the form has with its material principles. However, where does that leave us with regard to St. Thomas' assertion in the text of the *Summa Theologiae* that the mode has reference also to the commensuration of a form with its efficient principles?

To resolve this discrepancy one should attend to the fact that St. Thomas often acknowledges that a measure can be of two kinds, intrinsic or extrinsic.[373] Thus, for example, surface area is the intrinsic measure of a body, while place is its extrinsic measure. Applied to the case at hand the commensuration between the form and its material cause or proper subject is a kind of intrinsic measure of a thing's being. On the other hand, efficient cause is a kind of extrinsic measure since the efficient cause is extrinsic to the being itself. If, therefore, we understand the text from the *De Veritate* as identifying "measure" primarily with the intrinsic measure of a form with its material

[372] *In I Sent.* d.8, q.5, a.2, ad6 (emphasis mine).
[373] See *S.T.*, IIIa, q.75, a.6, ad1; and *De Veritate*, q.1, a.5, c.

principles,[374] this would imply that, at the time he wrote the *De Veritate*, St. Thomas had not yet expressly considered that every good thing could also be said to have an *extrinsic* measure insofar as it is conformed to its efficient causes.[375] Later on, in a more concise yet mature treatment, St. Thomas would include this commensuration of a form with its efficient causes as an integral part of what it means to be good. This was not a rejection of his previous position but an addition to it. Thus, the difference between the two treatments in the *Summa Theologiae* and the *De Veritate* indicate a development and deepening of St. Thomas' thought rather than a reversal of his previous position.

It should be appreciated that the integral parts of the good - mode, species, and order - are not integral parts in the way that rocks are integral parts of a heap of rocks. Rather, there is a determinate relation and order among these three according to power. Order follows upon species, and species follows upon mode. It can even be said, in some sense, that the first virtually contains the second, and the second the third.

> All integral parts have a certain order to each other. But certain ones have an order only according to position, whether they follow one after another, as the parts of an army, or they touch one another as the parts of a heap, or they are fitted together, as the parts of a house, or they are continuous with one another, like the parts of a line. But certain parts have, in addition, an order of power, like the parts of an animal of which the first in power is the heart, and the others according to a certain order of power, depend from one another.[376]

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[374] Here we take "material principles" broadly to include those things which are a subject in any respect. Thus, for example, according to St. Thomas, the *esse* of an angel is contracted by its form as if it were received in a subject (See *De Veritate*, q.20, a.4, ad1).

[375] It should be noted that in the third *sed contra* of *De Veritate*, q.21, a.6, St. Thomas intimates that commensuration with the efficient cause can be called the measure of a thing. "According to this, that it is compared to God as to an efficient cause, it has a mode prefixed for it by God." One might also respond to the apparent discrepancy between the text in the *De Veritate* and the text in the *Summa Theologiae* as Cajetan does by simply arguing that both express substantially the same reality but under different aspects (See Cajetan's commentary on *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.6). It seems better to me to say that there is an actual development of St. Thomas' thought in this case.

[376] *S.T.*, IIIa, q.90, a.3, ad3.

It is in this latter sense of integral part that mode, species, and order are integral parts of the good (*i.e.*, by an order of power), for there is a mutual dependence among them. "One integral part can contain the whole, thought not according to essence: for a foundation, in a way, virtually contains the whole building."[377]

V.B.7 The Quasi-Subjective Parts of the Good: *Honestum*, Pleasant, and Useful

Having treated of the integral parts of the good it is necessary to consider briefly the subjective parts of the good. A subjective, or specific, part is part of a universal whole whereas a universal name is said of each subjective part and understood to be in each of them. The reason for this is that the full power and essence of the whole is present in each part. Thus, for example, a dog, a cat, and a horse each have fully what it is to be an animal, having the whole power of animality, since each has life, movement, and sensation. Again, the whole power and essence of triangleness exists in an equilateral, an isosceles, and a scalene triangle.

When the good is divided into subjective parts, this means that each part has the notion of the good and the full power of the good.[378] St. Thomas, following Aristotle, names the three subjective parts of the good the *bonum honestum*, the *bonum delectabile,* and the *bonum utile*. We shall translate these respectively as the good-in-itself,[379] the pleasing good, and the useful good.

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[377] *S.T.*, IIIa, q.90, a.3, ad2.

[378] As will be apparent below, this statement must be qualified somewhat to account for the rationally equivocal usage of the name "good" in this three-fold division.

[379] There have been various attempts to capture the notion of the *bonum honestum* with a single English equivalent such as the noble good, the virtuous good, the honest good, the integral good, the worthy or worthwhile good, *etc.* Each of these seems to capture some, though not all, of what is implied in the term

The first thing to see in this division is that the first, proper imposition of the terms "good-in-itself," "pleasing good," and "useful good" is found in human goods, and especially in sensible goods. As we argued at the beginning of our treatment of the good, the best and first known notion of the good seems to be some kind of sensible pleasure. This pleasure is, in turn, a sign by which we come to recognize, often gradually, the intrinsic goodness, the *good-in-itself*ness, of certain things. The goods that we find necessary or helpful for obtaining these other goods, because they have an essential relation to the pleasing good, and the good-in-itself, are also called good (though obviously in a secondary sense). While this division of the good first applies to human goods, nevertheless, it happens that an analogous division is able to be made at a more universal level, namely at the level of good itself. "This division properly seems to be of the human good. Nevertheless, if we consider the notion of the good in a higher and more common manner, this division is found to befit the good properly, insofar as it is good."[380]

The key to understanding this move from a division of human goods to a division of the good as such is the analogy of names. When the good is first experienced and named, it has the notion of something sensibly desirable, but when we come to understand that we have an inclination not only to things of sense but also to other things, our notion of the good expands and becomes more universal, embracing that which is the object of any human desire. When we observe in the universe a kind of inclination of all things to some term or end, this likeness between our human inclination for some end and the inclination in other things for an end becomes the basis for a further expansion of our

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bonum honestum. I have simply decided to use the expression "good-in-itself" as a way of capturing more precisely how this kind of good is set off from the other two in St. Thomas' division of the good.

[380] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.6, c.

concept of the good so that the name "good" can be applied to an even broader scope of reality, to beings as such. As those elements of our notion of the good proper to human experience are transcended, a more universal concept of the good arises which, nevertheless, shares in the essential notes of our human experience of the good.

St. Thomas' contention is that when the good is divided into the good-in-itself, the pleasing good, and the useful good, some essential elements corresponding to each of these at the human level remain at the metaphysical level. That is, the notions of the good-in-itself, the pleasing, and the useful can be carried from the level of human experience to the level of being as such without emptying these notions of anything essential to them. St. Thomas gives an account of the essential notes that remain for each of these concepts at the metaphysical level.

> For something is good insofar as it is appetible and is the term of the motion of the appetite, the term of whose movement can be considered from the consideration of the motion of a natural body. Now the motion of a natural body is terminated, simply speaking, at the last end. However, in some respect its motion is even terminated at some middle position through which it passes to the last end which terminates the motion: and so it is called a certain term of the motion insofar as it terminates some part of the motion. That, however, which is the last term of the motion can be taken in two ways: either as the thing itself to which it tends, as for example a place or form; or the rest in that thing. Therefore, in the motion of the appetite, that which is appetible, terminating the motion of the appetite in some respect, as the middle through which something tends to another, is called the useful. That, however which is desired as the last end, terminating totally the motion of the appetite, as the thing to which the appetite tends in itself (*per se*), is called *honestum*, since *honestum* signifies what is desired in itself (*per se*). That, however, which terminates the motion of the appetite as rest in the thing desired is pleasure.[381]

St. Thomas uses the more known instance of sensible motion as a means of leading the mind to the general concepts of the good-in-itself, the pleasing good, and the

[381] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.6, c.

useful good. If the concept of motion is extended to include any activity consequent upon an inclination, it is apparent how the example given by St. Thomas can be used to form concepts that divide the good as such. The good has the notion of an end, but an end can be an end simply speaking (*i.e.*, the ultimate end), or in some respect (the end of some part of the motion). The end in some respect is called the useful good insofar as it is useful to pass through the middle positions (the means) in order to arrive at the ultimate end. The ultimate end has two aspects: the object desired in itself (which is called the good-in-itself since it is desired *per se*) and the repose in this object (which is also desired, but only on account of the object possessed in this repose[382]). This repose in the end is the universal concept of pleasure, not pleasure as limited to sense experience but pleasure as signifying the repose of any kind of inclination in its object. Obviously, we are very far removed from the normal usage of the term "pleasure" in common speech here. Nevertheless, there is something of the essential note of sensible pleasure that remains in the more universal concept of pleasure formulated by St. Thomas.

It is apparent from the foregoing that the division St. Thomas makes is not a division immediately into three equal species of good. Rather, he uses two different kinds of opposition as the basis for dividing the good: the opposition of simply and some respect (which corresponds to the opposition between the whole and part or the perfect and the imperfect); and the opposition between the end and the rest in the end (which corresponds to the opposition between the *per se* and *per aliud*). When the good is

[382] St. Thomas, following Aristotle, gives a reason for the primacy of the good-in-itself over the pleasant good in his commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. "Nevertheless, operation seems to be more principal than delight. For delight is a rest of the appetite in the pleasing thing, by which something is made more capable for its operation. But someone does not desire rest in something except insofar as he deems it suitable for him. And, therefore, the operation itself, which pleases as a certain suitable thing, is seen to be desirable in the first place before delight." (Lib. X, lect. 6, n.2038). Thus, both the object and the operation by which the object is possessed are desirable before delight. See also Lib. X, lect. 4, n.2001-2003.

divided in this way, therefore, the notion of the good found in each member of the division is not univocal. Yet because there is a determinate order among the three meanings of the good, the good is not said purely equivocally of them either. Hence, it remains that the good is said analogously of the good-in-itself, the pleasant good, and the useful good. Since the notion of the good is found more fully in that which has the character of an end simply speaking and *per se*, it follows that the notion of the good is most perfectly found in the good-in-itself; then, in a less perfect way, in the pleasing good; and, finally, in the least perfect way, in the useful good (most notably the good which is useful for pleasure only). "The good is not divided into these three as something univocal, equally predicated of them, but as something analogous, which is predicated according to before and after. It is first predicated of the good-in-itself, secondarily of the pleasant, and third of the useful."[383] Notice that this order is not the same as that in which the name "good" is imposed upon each of these since the pleasant good seems to be known first *quoad nos*.

Because the good-in-itself, the pleasant, and the useful good share the name "good" according to analogy rather than according to strict univocation, it is better to call them the quasi-subjective parts of the good. They are not equal species of the good but are related to one another in an order. The case is much like the division of being into the ten categories where being stands as a quasi-genus to substance, quantity, quality, *etc.*[384]

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[383] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.6, ad3.

[384] One might ask whether it would be better to call this division of the good a division into potential parts rather than subjective parts, but this cannot be the case. In a potential part the power of the part is some part of the power of the whole so that it can be completely reduced to the power of the whole. The goodness in the pleasant and useful goods cannot, however, be completely reduced to the goodness of the good-in-itself.

One should also be attentive to the fact that this division is a division of the good formally and not just materially, for it is proper to the good to be considered as an end so that a *per se* division of ends divides the good *per se*. Thus, even though every being is good, the good, as good, is not divided *per se* into the ten categories as is being. "The good, insofar as it is the same in subject with being, is divided through the ten predicaments; but according to its proper notion, this division [into the good-in-itself, the pleasant good, and the useful good] befits it."[385] To put it simply, the division of the good into the ten predicaments is a material division, while the division of the good into these three subjective parts is formal.

V.B.8 The Cause of the Good

Aristotle notes that any comprehensive investigation of some subject requires that we investigate its causes and principles.[386] Hence, in order to complete our consideration of the good as such it is necessary to consider the cause of the good as such.

First, it is necessary to determine whether the good as such has a cause. That particular goods have a cause is evident to all. It is easy to assign a cause to this ice-cream cone, this man, or this bottle of wine, but when we ask the more universal question, for example: "What is the cause, not of *this* man, but of man?" the answer becomes more difficult to discern. Our question, then, is not whether there is a cause of this or that good, but whether there is a cause of the good as such.

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[385] *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.6, ad1.
[386] See *Physics* I.1, 184a9; *Metaphysics* XII.1, 1069a18.

One way to approach this question is to investigate whether there is anything in the notion of the good as such which seems to demand further explanation. Does the good as such explain its own existence? From a consideration of the notion and nature of the good it is apparent that there is nothing in the good which demands that it be something caused, for, as said above, a cause is that upon which something depends for its being or coming to be. The notion and nature of the good, however, do not imply a dependence of either sort, for that which is the object of a natural inclination, and the perfect and the actual, have more the notion of a cause than of something caused. Hence, it seems that there is nothing which requires us to posit that the good as such has a cause.

Nevertheless, when we turn our attention to the goods which fall under our range of experience, it is quite evident that some things are better than others; that is, some things have more of good than other things. This is true not only at the level of accidental being but also at the level of substances. Chocolate ice cream tastes better than mud; Einstein was a better physicist than my niece is; a man is better than a dog, and a dog is better than a rock. This stark fact of the diversity of goods is something which needs explaining. That is, the diversity of goods must have a cause.

There is a second consideration as well. Not only are things found to be more or less good (even things of the same nature), but good is found in things which are essentially different. A man is good; plastic is good; sweetness is good, *etc.* Yet none of these is the same as the other. If things, however, in themselves different all share in some common attribute, then they must have some common cause, "for those things which are diverse according to themselves, do not come together in some one thing

unless through some cause uniting them."[387] The diversity of things cannot explain unity, for diversity is opposed to unity. Moreover, multitude "is logically and ontologically posterior to unity."[388] Therefore, there must be something else which explains the unity found in diverse things.

St. Thomas, considering both of these elements of our experience, namely that there are certain common attributes (such as goodness) shared in by diverse things and that they are possessed in varying degrees by things, draws the conclusion that there must be some common cause which explains this manifold participation.

> If something one is found commonly in many things, this must be caused in them from some one cause. For it is not possible that the common attribute belongs to either of the things from its very self, since each one, insofar as it is itself, is distinguished from the other; and a diversity of causes produces diverse effects…A second reason is that, when something is found shared by many things in diverse ways, it is necessary that from that in which it is found most perfectly, it be attributed to all those things in which it is found more imperfectly. For those things which are said positively according to more and less, have this from their farther or nearer approach to something one: for if that positive attribute would belong to any one of them from it itself, there would not be any reason why it would be found more perfectly in one than in another. Just as we see that fire, which is at the term of hotness, is the principle of heat in all hot things.[389]

Since goodness is found in all things, even though they are diverse in their essences and notions, it must be that this goodness found in all things has some common

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[387] *S.T.*, Ia, q.3, a.7, c.
[388] R. Garrigou-LaGrange, *The One God*, tr. B. Rose (London: Herder Book Co., 1943), p.146. See St. Thomas *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 3. "It ought to be said that one implies a privation of division, not, indeed the division which is according to quantity, for this division is determined to one particular genus of being, and is not able to fall into the definition of the one. But the one which is converted with being implies the privation of formal division which is made through opposites, the first root of which is the opposition of affirmation and negation. For those things are divided against one another which so stand that this is not that. First, therefore, being itself is understood, and as a consequence, non-being. And consequently division, and consequently the one which lacks division, and consequently multitude, in the notion of which division falls, just as indivision [falls] in the notion of the one."
[389] *De Potentia*, q.3, a.5, c.

cause. Not only this, but since goodness is a positive perfection which is found more or less in things, it follows that that in which goodness is found most perfectly must pour out some share of this goodness into other things in which goodness is found less perfectly. The fact that good is said by a certain analogy of things that have goodness does not impede the conclusion from following. Even in those things which are common by a certain analogy there must be a cause of this commonness since those things which are said by analogy have some order to one another and are reduced to some first analogate.[390]

There is a third aspect of our experience of goodness in things which points to some common cause of this goodness, namely that we see that things can become more or less good. A man grows in virtue or vice; an apple goes from ripe to rotten; a movie starts out well and ends badly; *etc.* Our experience points to the fact that things do not have goodness in their very natures, for as St. Thomas points out

> what belongs to something by its very nature and not from some cause cannot be diminished or taken away. For if something essential to the nature be subtracted or added, it will already be another nature, just as also happens in numbers, in which the unit, being added or subtracted, changes the species [of the number]. If, however, with the nature or whatness of a thing remaining integral, something is found to be diminished, already it is clear that the thing diminished does not depend simply on that nature, but on something other, through whose removal it is diminished.[391]

The obvious fact of our experience that goodness can be added or taken away from things necessitates that these things do not have this goodness from their natures but from

[390] See *S.C.G.*, II.15. "But if it is said that being is not predicated univocally, nonetheless the aforesaid conclusion follows. For it is not said of many equivocally, but through analogy. And thus there must be made a reduction into one."
[391] *S.C.G.*, II.15.

something else.[392] Now if the goodness of a thing is from another, then this must be reduced back to something which is good through itself (*i.e.*, in its very nature). "That which is through another is reduced as into a cause to that which is through itself."[393] Therefore, there must be something which is essentially good that causes goodness in all those things in which goodness is found to be mutable.

St. Thomas brings together these lines of argument to demonstrate the existence of some first good which is the cause of other goods in his famous *quarta via*.

> The fourth way is taken from the degrees which are found in things. For there is found in things something more and less good, and true and noble, *etc.*, for other things of this kind. But more and less are said of diverse things insofar as they approach in different degrees to something which is to the greatest degree, just as that is more hot which more approaches to what is most hot. Therefore, there exists something which is most true, and best, and noble, and, consequently, most of all a being. For those things which are most of all true are most of all beings, as is said in the second book of the *Metaphysics*. Moreover, that which is said to be such to the greatest degree in some genus, is the cause of all those things which are of that genus, just as fire, which is most of all hot, is the cause of all hot things, as is said in the same book. Therefore, there exists something which, for all beings, is the cause of being and goodness and whatever perfection.[394]

He concludes this argument by saying that such a thing is called God. This concluding statement should not be read as asserting explicitly the existence of the one, all-knowing, all-powerful, Judeo-Christian God. If that were, in fact, what St. Thomas intended to show with this argument, it would not have been necessary to write most of the following 41 questions (3-43) of the *Prima Pars*. Rather, the argument should simply be taken at

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[392] It is true that the goodness which something has from its existence cannot be diminished or taken away, since everything, insofar as it is, is good, but, as we have pointed out above, a thing is not called good, simply speaking, on account of its *esse*, but on account of powers and operations superadded to its *esse*. Therefore, simply speaking, we say that the goodness of things increases or decreases, even while they continue to exist. Whether *esse* itself is essentially good will be examined at the appropriate place below.
[393] *De Potentia*, q.3, a.5, c.
[394] *S.T.*, Ia, q.2, a.3, c.

face value. It is an argument for some first cause of goodness, truth, *etc*.; and if such a thing exists, by all means it deserves at least the name "God." It is a question, therefore, of settling upon a nominal definition of "God." At least it is no abuse of speech to give the name "God" to a most good being which is the cause of the good in other things, whatever else may be its characteristics. Our particular interest in this argument, however, pertains to how and whether this argument rightly demonstrates that there is some first cause of the good.

This argument, as presented by St. Thomas, is actually a sequence of several parallel arguments which, because they have the same or an analogous middle term, are presented together as a single argument. The first argument concludes that there exists something which is most true; again, by a similar middle term, it concludes that there exists something which is the best of all things; and again, it concludes the same about the noble. Concerning each of these, he adds a corollary that the most true (or best or noble) is most of all a being. A second argument follows upon this first and concludes further that the most true thing is the cause of all truth, that the best thing is the cause of all goodness, *etc*. Since we are interested principally in the good, we shall leave aside the parts of his argument which pertain to the true and the noble so that the argument might be simplified to read: There exists something which is most good, but that which is most good is the cause of all other good, therefore there exists some most good thing which is the cause of all other good.

St. Thomas begins by asserting that there is found in things something more and less good. We have pointed out that this is an obvious fact of our experience. Anyone who would deny this fact would seem to be using that term "good" in a sense that has

little or nothing to do with its meaning in common speech. Moreover, from the definition of the good supplied above it is clear that there must be more or less good in things, for if the good is the object of desire, and some things are desired for the sake of others, it follows that whatever is desired for the sake of another thing is less good than that other thing.[395]

The next premise states that more and less are said of diverse things insofar as they approach in different degrees to something which is the greatest, just as that is more hot which more approaches to what is most hot. St. Thomas is not here asserting that more and less are said of diverse things *only* in reference to some greatest. Thus, he is not denying, for example, that more or less might also be said of that which is farther from the least, just as something is called more hot which is farther from absolute zero; or what is closer to the least, as the colder is what is closer to absolute zero. Both statements can be true. The fact remains that even if, in some cases, more or less can be said of diverse things insofar as they are farther from or closer to some least, it remains true that more and less are *also* said of diverse things insofar as they approach in different degrees to something which is greatest. Moreover, it is more proper to call something more or less according to some greatest when the thing predicated signifies some real and positive perfection, as does the good. Thus, it is still necessary to posit some greatest good.

St. Thomas draws the further conclusion, as a kind of corollary, that those things which are most true, and best, and noble, are beings in the fullest sense. The supporting

[395] See *In I Ethic.*, lect. 9. "And it is similar in ends. For there is something desired not because of some formal goodness existing in it, but only insofar as it is useful for something [else], just as bitter medicine. But there is something which is indeed desirable because of something which it has in itself, and yet is desired for the sake of another, just as tasty medicine, and this is more perfectly good. But the most perfect good is what is desired for its own sake, which is never desired because of another."

citation from Aristotle regards only the fact that those things which are most of all true are most of all beings. Nevertheless, from what has been said above about the good, it is clear that the same can be said of the good as of the true. The good has the notion of something perfect and actual. Therefore, whatever is good in the fullest sense is perfect and actual in the fullest sense, and this is what it means to be most of all a being.[396]

The second argument can be summarized as follows: That which is the greatest in any genus is the cause of the other things in that genus, but the good is a genus, therefore the greatest good is the cause of all other goods. When it is asserted that the good is a genus, this is to be understood broadly to include the commonness of analogy, just as St. Thomas sometimes calls being a genus.[397] Since all analogy is reduced to some first, it is clear that the same principle can be applied to a genus according to analogy as to a genus which is said univocally of its species.

The reason why the greatest in any genus is the cause of the others in that genus is that the cause is more powerful than the effect.[398] Moreover, as we have already shown, things which are like one another must be effects of a common cause. Therefore, since all things in a genus are like each other, it follows that everything in a genus is caused by some common cause. This cause, however, must be greater than its effects since nothing gives what it does not have. Therefore, the greatest in any genus must be the cause of the others in that genus.[399] Therefore, there must exist some greatest good which is the cause

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[396] See *In I Phys.*, lect.1, n.7. "Those things are more being, which are more in act."
[397] See, for example, *De Veritate*, q.8, a.6, c.; *De Ente*, cap. 6; and *In Metaph.*, proem..
[398] See *S.C.G.*, I.41. "That which is the maximum in any genus is the cause of the others which are in that genus: for the cause is more powerful than the effect."
[399] A number of objections might be brought against this principle. For example, the greatest number is not the cause of all numbers (for there is no greatest number); nor is the greatest cold the cause of all other coldness; nor is man, the most noble animal, the cause of all other animals. It is not possible to answer or even anticipate all the possible objections which one might raise here. Suffice it to say that each of these objections is based upon some principle which is proper to the instance at hand but does not apply to the

of all other goods. Notice that this argument proceeds on the supposition that goodness is some real or positive being or perfection. While it may happen that, from the standpoint of reason's consideration, a thing can be considered better which has less of evil or which is farthest from the least good, nevertheless this cannot be the explanation why there is more or less goodness in things. Since goodness is something real and a positive perfection, nothing can give goodness to another unless it have that goodness in some way, but that which has little or nothing of goodness cannot be the reason why an even greater goodness is found in something else, just as that which has little or no heat cannot be the reason for a greater hotness in something else. It follows that there must be some greatest good causing all other goods and in terms of which every lesser good is measured.[400]

It is important to understand more distinctly the relation between the goodness of this first cause and goodness as it is found in things having caused goodness. St. Thomas here speaks as if the first good which is the cause of all other goods is in the same genus as these other goods. "That which is said to be the greatest such thing in some genus, is

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good; nor do they destroy the general principle that the greatest in any genus is the cause of the others in that genus, so long as this principle is properly understood. Thus, a man is not greater than other animals, *as animal*, for a dog is as much an animal as a man is. Again, coldness, like blindness, is a privation rather than a positive perfection, but the same cannot be said of the good. Again, the likeness upon which the genus of number is based is the likeness of being measured by the unit. In this sense, no number is more of a number than any other number (*e.g.*, six does not have the notion of number more than four does, since both are measured by the unit). Hence, the likeness found among numbers can be accounted for by the unit as a common cause, which does have the notion of unity more than the numbers of which it is the cause.

[400] The argument we have provided for the existence of a cause of the good as such, though it is a demonstration, is by no means the only argument which could be given. In fact, St. Thomas himself offers several other arguments to arrive at the same conclusion. St. Thomas' preferred line of argumentation seems to have been to argue first for a first, efficient cause of being as such and then from there to argue that this cause of being as such is also the cause of the good as such. Such an argument can be found, for example, in the *De Malo*, q.1, a.1, c. We have chosen to follow a line of argumentation which more immediately departs from the nature and properties of the good as such to arrive at a first cause of the good as such.

the cause of all those things which are of that genus."[401] It would seem at first, therefore, that this first cause of the good is good in the same way that other things are good, but care must be taken to understand correctly what is meant by "genus" here. In his commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle St. Thomas distinguishes ways in which the term "genus" can be used. "Just as being is not a genus, properly speaking, so neither is the one which is converted with being, nor plurality its opposite. But it is a quasi-genus, since it has something of the notion of a genus insofar as it is common."[402] The same thing that is said here of the one which is converted with being can be applied to the good inasmuch as it is converted with being. None of these: being, one and good, are said univocally of all those things under them, yet each of them is common by way of analogy or rational equivocation.[403] Therefore, when St. Thomas says that the greatest good that is the cause of other goods is in the genus of the good, this should not be taken to mean that the first good is good in a univocal sense with the goods that it causes. Rather, the first cause of the good should be understood to be an equivocal cause not a univocal cause.

> God is the highest good simply speaking, and not only in some genus or order of things. For, as was said, good is attributed to God inasmuch as all desired perfections flow out from him, just as from a first cause. But they do not flow out from him as from a univocal agent, as is clear from the above, but as from an

[401] *S.T.*, Ia, q.2, a.3, c.
[402] *In X Metaph.*, lect. 8.
[403] See, for example, *In I Ethic.*, lect. 7. "Therefore, he says that the good is said of many, not according to notions utterly different, as happens in those things which are equivocal by chance [which is a first mode of predication]; but insofar as every good depends from one first principle of goodness, or insofar as they are ordered to one end [which is a second mode of predication]. For Aristotle does not intend to say that that separated good is the idea and notion of all goods, but the principle and the end [of them]. Or also they are called good according to analogy [a third mode of predication], that is the same proportion, insofar, namely, as sight is the good of the body and intellect the good of the soul. Therefore, he [Arstotle] prefers this third mode since it is taken according to the goodness inhering in things. But the first two modes [are taken] according to separated goodness, from which something is not so properly named."

> agent which is not homogenous with its effects, neither as to the notion of the species, nor as to the notion of the genus. The likeness, however, of an effect to its univocal cause is found uniformly, while in an equivocal cause it is found more excellently, just as heat is found in a more excellent mode in the sun than in fire. Therefore, it is necessary that since the good is in God as in a first, non-univocal cause of all, that it be in him in a most excellent mode. And because of this he is called the highest good.[404]

Thus, when we call God good, we intend to signify that goodness is found in God first and according to its most perfect notion. In this way the goodness of God can be the "primary analogate" even though God is named from creatures.[405]

We have argued that there is a first cause of the good as such and that this good is not called good according to the same sense in which the goods that it causes are called good. The foundation of this difference in meaning of the good is found in the fact that the first cause of the good is good through itself, or essentially good, while other goods are good by participation. St. Thomas identifies three distinctions between the good by participation and the good through itself which help us to understand more distinctly the roots of the difference in meaning between them.[406]

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[404] *S.T.*, Ia, q.6, a.2, c. *Cf.*, *inter alia*, *De Veritate*, q.4, a.6, c.; and *In I Meter.*, lect.5.

[405] This is a distinction we are already familiar with from the discussion of analogy above. "Names are imposed by us according as we take cognition from things. And since those things which are posterior in nature, are for the most part more known to us, it happens that frequently, according to the imposition of the name, some name is found first in one of two things, in which the other of the two signified through the name exists before [the first]; as is clear of names which are said of God and of creatures, as being and good and [names] of this kind, which were first imposed upon creatures, and from these carried over to divine predication, although to be and good are found first of all in God." (*De Veritate*, q.4, a.1, c.).

[406] In the *In Boetii de Hebdom.* St. Thomas distinguishes three modes of participating. "But to participate is as if to grasp a part and, therefore, when something particularly receives that which pertains to another, it is universally said to participate that [other]: [1] just as man is said to participate animal, since he does not have the notion of animal according to its whole community; and by the same reason, Socrates participates man; [2] Similarly, a subject participates an accident, and matter form, since the substantial or accidental form, which is of its notion more common, is determined to this or that subject; and [3] similarly an effect is said to participate its cause, and principally when it does not approach the power of its cause, for example, if I say that air participates the light of the sun, since it does not receive it in that clarity by which it is in the sun." Of these three the last mode of participation pertains to the manner of participation of the good in that which is good through its essence.

First, any being which has operations really distinct from its substance is good by participation. The reason for this is apparent from what has already been said, namely that the good, simply speaking, is that which is good according to all its perfections, both substantial and accidental, "for the operations by which one thing is co-joined to another in a certain mode proceed from the essence by the mediation of powers superadded to the essence. Hence, goodness absolutely does not accrue except according as it is complete according to its substantial and accidental principles."[407] If something needs powers and operations above its essence in order to be simply good, this means that it is not good through its essence alone. Thus, anything which has operations (*i.e.*, accidental perfections) really distinct from its substance is good through participation.

A second reason why a being is good by participation is that its being is not identical with its essence, for no matter how good a nature is in its notion, it is not simply speaking good until it exists. Thus, whatever has existence borrowed from another has goodness borrowed from another.

> Essential goodness is not noted according to the absolute consideration of the nature, but according to its being. For humanity does not have the notion of the good or goodness except insofar as it has *esse*…In a creature, however, *esse* is received or participated. Whence, given that goodness were to be said of a created thing according to its substantial *esse*, nevertheless, it would still remain that it has goodness through participation, just as it also has participated *esse*.[408]

Hence, the first cause of the good, which is good through its essence, must have an essence which is really identical with its *esse*.

[407] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.5, c.
[408] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.5, c.

The last and most fundamental reason why goodness is participated in certain things is that they are not themselves the ultimate end, for every end which is not the ultimate end has its goodness related to that end and because of it. And if it falls away from that end, no matter how excellent its being might be, it loses entirely the notion of goodness.

> Goodness has the notion of a final cause. God, however, has the notion of a final cause since he is the ultimate end of all things, just as the first principle. From which it is necessary that every other end not have a habitude or notion of an end except according to the order to the first cause. For a second cause does not flow into the thing caused unless the influx of the first cause be presupposed, as is clear in the *Book of Causes*. Hence, also, "good" which has the notion of an end cannot be said of a creature unless there be presupposed the order of the Creator to the creature. Given, therefore, that a creature were its own *esse*, as God is, still the *esse* of the creature would not have the notion of the good unless the order to the Creator be presupposed. And for this reason alone it would be called good through participation, and not absolutely in that it is.[409]

It should be noted that this argument, although in its context it is speaking about the particular case of God as Creator, does not depend upon the existence of God as Creator. The force of the argument is to demonstrate that *if* some good is not the ultimate end (whatever the nature of that end might be) *then* it has participated goodness. Moreover, St. Thomas' bold conclusion that *if* the *esse* and essence of something which is not the ultimate end were identical, *then* it would have participated goodness, holds true even though the antecedent is impossible. Truth and falsity in hypothetical statements signifies that the consequent follows necessarily from the antecedent, whether or not the

[409] *De Veritate*, q.21, a.5, c.

antecedent is true. Hence, the statement "if a man were a square, he would have four sides" is true even though the antecedent is impossible.[410]

In summary, if a thing is to be good through its essence and not merely by participation, its substance and operations must be identical, its *esse* and essence must be identical, and it must not be ordered to another as to an end.

From the foregoing it necessarily follows that not only is there a first cause of all that is good but also that there is only one such first cause.

> God alone is good through his essence. For anything is called good insofar as it is perfect. But the perfection of something is threefold. First, indeed, insofar as it is constituted in its *esse*. But the second, according as certain accidents necessary for its perfect operation are superadded. But the third perfection of something is through this: that it attains to something else as an end. As, for example, the first perfection of fire consists in the *esse* which it has through its substantial form; but its second perfection consists in hotness, lightness and dryness, and things of this kind; but its third perfection is insofar as it rests in its own place. However, this three-fold perfection befits nothing created according to its essence, but it belongs to God alone, whose essence alone is his *esse*; and in whom there are no accidents, but what is said of others accidentally befits him essentially, as to be powerful, wise and things of this kind, as is clear from the things said. He also is ordered to nothing other as to an end, but he is the ultimate end of all things. Whence, it is manifest that God alone has perfection in every way according to his essence. And therefore, he alone is good through his essence.[411]

This uniqueness of the first cause of the good is most clearly manifest from the identity of essence and *esse* in the first cause of the good, for that in which being and *esse* are identical cannot be diversified or multiplied into many instances. The reason for this is that whatever exists in many diverse instances has many diverse existences (*i.e.*,

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[410] See St. Thomas' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, VII, lect. 1, n.889. This last claim is striking, for it shows that for St. Thomas even if, *per impossibile*, something were so assimilated to God in its *esse* that its *esse* were the same as its essence, it still would have a participated, and hence, defectible goodness! This means that the indefectibility of goodness is not finally rooted in *esse* or its assimilation to the divine *esse* for St. Thomas, but in the order of goods. This will have important consequences for our later treatment of the root of personal dignity.

[411] *S.T.*, Ia, q.6, a.3, c.

esse's), but since the *esse* and the essence in the first good are the same, whatever has a different *esse* than the first good will necessarily have a different essence.[412] The essence of the first good, however, is the essence of goodness, or goodness itself. Therefore, the thing having a different *esse* will not be good through its essence.[413]

From the fact that the first cause of the good is good through its essence, it also follows that there is no finite proportion between the goodness of that which is the first cause of the good and the goodness of those things which have a caused goodness, for no matter how many participated goods are added together, they do not attain to essential goodness. Nevertheless, this does not prevent the first cause of the good from having a determinate relation to caused goods.

> Those things that are not in the same genus, if indeed they be contained in diverse genera, are in no way comparable. Concerning God, however, it is denied that he is in the same genus with other goods, yet it is not asserted that he is in some other genus, but that he is outside of a genus and the principle of every genus. And thus he is compared to other things through excess.[414]

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[412] See *In Boetii de Hebdom.* lect. 2. "But that will be truly simple which does not participate being, not inhering [being], but subsisting [being]. But this is not able to be but one thing, since if being itself has nothing other mixed with it besides that which is *esse*, as was said, it is impossible that that which is being itself be multiplied through some diversifying thing. And since it has nothing other besides itself mixed with it, consequently it is not susceptible of accidents."

[413] St. Thomas proposes this argument in *S.T.*, Ia, q.11, a.3, c. "For it is manifest that that from which some singular is a this something is in no way communicable to many. For that from which Socrates is a man can be communicated to many, but that from which he is this man is not able to be communicated but to one only. Therefore, if Socrates would be a man through the same [principle] by which he is this man, just as there cannot be many Socrates, so also there could not be many men. But this befits God : for God himself is his nature, as was shown above. Therefore, according to the same thing he is God and this God. Therefore, it is impossible that there be many Gods." He also provides a second argument which is based upon the nature of the good itself. "But second [the same can be shown] from the infinity of his perfections. For it was shown above that God comprehends in himself the whole perfection of being. If, therefore, there would be many Gods, it would be necessary that they differ. Therefore, something would belong to one which would not belong to the other. And if this would be a privation, [the first God] would not be perfect simply, but if it were a perfection, the other Gods would lack it. Therefore, it is impossible for there to be many Gods. Hence, also the ancient philosophers as if forced by the truth itself, positing infinite principles, [also] posited one single principle."

[414] *S.T.*, Ia, q.6, a.2, ad3.

This transcendent excellence of the first good will be an important factor in identifying the ultimate root of human dignity, as we shall argue below.

This concludes our investigation of the good as such. We have determined the essential notion of the good as well as its primary properties and its cause. Our investigation began with a consideration of the good as found in ordinary human experience. From there, a more universal account of the good developed which embraced not only the good as found in human things but as found in being universally. It remains to reconsider and apply these universal principles concerning the good as such to the good as common, as well as to the good which is proper to persons, namely the moral good.

V.C The Notions of Whole and Part

In order to arrive at a more distinct understanding of the common good and its relation to the private or particular good, it is necessary to consider in some detail the notions of whole and part. The reason for this is that that which is common has the notion of a whole, while that which is particular has the notion of a part.

V.C.1 The Definition of Whole and Part

Whole and part are rationally equivocal terms. A sign of this is the broadness of their use. For example, we speak of the parts of a line and the parts of a definition, a whole man, the whole ability of a student, *etc.* Therefore, while a single verbal

expression may be given to signify the notions of whole and part, it should be appreciated that such a verbal expression signifies many realities which are one only insofar as they are related by a rational order.

Whole and part seem to be among those things said relatively. A part is something of a whole,[415] and a whole, as such, is understood in reference to its parts. Thus, they are included in one another's definition as correlatives so that the existence of one necessarily implies the existence of the other.[416] Yet, whole and part signify relation concretely (in the mode of something subsisting), not abstractly (in the mode of form), for a whole is not simply a relation to a part, but whole and part signify related things. If we wished to signify the relation abstractly, we would say "wholeness" and "partness." In like manner, father signifies as something having a relation to a son, while fatherhood and sonship signify the relations abstractly.[417] It is clear, therefore, that the genus of whole and part is that which is relative.[418] Since every relation is founded upon quantity or action and passion,[419] it is necessary that the relation between whole and part be founded upon one of these. Clearly whole and part signify a relation founded upon quantity, for the whole is not active in relation to the part, or vice-versa. Moreover, the relations of greater and less, which pertain to quantity, follow immediately upon the

[415] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.58, a.5, c. "A part is that which is of a whole."
[416] *De Potentia,* q.8, a.1, obj.10. "A relative cannot be without a correlative." Although this statement appears in the objection, its truth is self evident since it follows immediately from the definition of a relative. St. Thomas does not deny or even distinguish it in his response, so we may reasonably conclude that it was also his own position.
[417] See *De Potentia,* q.9, a.4, c. "Just as [in this case] it also signifies a relation, not as relation, but as a relative thing; that is, so that it may be signified by this name 'father,' not by this name 'paternity.'"
[418] To be more specific they signify things relative *secundum dici* (See Aristotle, *Categories*, ch.7).
[419] "Every relation, according to the Philosopher, is founded either upon quantity, insofar as it is reduced to the genus of quantity, or upon action or undergoing." (*In III Sent*. d.5, q.1, a.1a, c.) See *S.T.*, Ia, q.28, a.4, c., and *S.C.G.*, IV.24.

relation of whole and part. Therefore, whole and part must be understood to signify things said relatively, which relation is founded upon quantity.

When a more specific difference is sought, the concepts of whole and part become more difficult to encompass, principally because the notions of whole and part are rationally equivocal. Therefore, it is important to begin with the notion of whole and part that is best known and, from there, to examine how the names "whole" and "part" are extended to include various realities according to some order appreciable by reason.

Since that which is closer to the senses is generally better known, we shall first consider the definitions of whole and part inasmuch as they signify something found in sensible things. The names "whole" and "part" seem to be imposed first upon things having quantitative extension, especially bodies. A pie is a whole that can be cut into slices which are its parts; a house is a whole that has bricks and lumber as its parts; a man is a whole that has hands and feet and a head, *etc*., as his parts; a line is a whole that has line segments as its parts. Such things, being continuous and extended, are at the same time one and divisible into many. In some sense the notion of a whole, as whole, is known through knowing its part so that a part is in some sense known before whole.[420] We say that anything divided off from a quantity is a part.[421] It is precisely when this division takes place, either actually or in the imagination, that a whole is recognized as such, for a whole does not simply have the notion of something one but of something one which can be divided into many. Hence, we do not call a point or a unit a whole, even though they are something one, since these are not divisible.

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[420] This is not to deny that the thing which is the whole is known before the part (See *S.T.*, Ia, q.85, a.3, ad3); it is simply to point out that it is not known precisely *as a whole* before it is seen to have parts.
[421] See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* V, ch.25 (1023b12-13). The English word "apart" preserves this notion of a part as something separated off from another.

Insofar as a whole has the notion of something one, it has the notion of completeness or perfection.[422] If some part (such as a hand or a slice of pie) is missing, that which is missing these things is not called a whole. Thus, a whole seems to signify something complete or perfect, inasmuch as it is not lacking some due part. Conversely, a part, insofar as it is lacking the completeness which its whole possesses, has the notion of something imperfect. Therefore, we can define a bodily whole, or a complete body, as one body having everything into which it could be divided, so as to be missing nothing due to it. A bodily part is a body which is divided off from a complete body.[423] As a consequence, a part also signifies that which can be united, by contact (such as bricks) or continuity (such as water), with other bodies to form a complete body. In brief, we can say that a bodily whole contains its parts and is composed of them. Therefore, the whole is larger than its parts, and, conversely, each part is smaller than the whole. The bodily whole is the sum of its parts, no more and no less.

Since the notions of composition and containment can be extended beyond extended substances, it happens that the notions of whole and part can be extended beyond sensible bodies. For example, a word is a whole composed of letters; a sentence is a whole composed of subject and predicate; a definition is a whole composed of genus and species; a man is a whole composed of soul and body, *etc*. Thus, a whole can signify any unity which is composed from many and contains the many, whether the many be formal or material parts.[424] This broader notion is called an integral whole since it is a

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[422] *In V Metaph.*, lect. 18. "For perfect and whole either are the same, or they signify nearly the same thing."

[423] Notice that these definitions imply that what is only potentially divisible has more the notion of a whole since it is more complete and one, while what is actually divided has more the notion of a part. See *In V Metaph.*, lect. 21.

[424] See *S.C.G.*, II.72.

whole that is made integral by composition of its parts.[425] In an integral whole every one of the parts into which it is divided is essential for the perfection of the whole. For example, if one letter is missing from a word, it is either a different word, or a misspelled word; or if a man loses his body (or anything integral to it, such as all of his flesh), then he is no longer called a man.

Again, there are some things which contain others and are divided into them, even though they are not composed from them. For example, triangle includes and is divided into equilateral, isosceles, and scalene; or animal contains and is divided into man and dog and horse; or man includes and is divided into James and Nancy and Leon. In general, we can say that a genus is divided into its species or a species into its individuals. In such cases even though the notion of composition is absent, reason sees a determinate ratio between integral wholes and parts, and things like genus and species which contain and are divided into many. Thus, the names "whole" and "part" are carried over and imposed upon things such as genus and species. Notice, however, that when it is said that such wholes contain their parts, the signification of the word "contain" is different in this case and in the case of a material, integral whole. Here the part is contained potentially in the signification or intelligible notion of the whole. In such a case the whole is said of each of the parts and understood to be completely in each of them.[426] This is the notion of a universal whole and its subjective parts.[427] As distinct

[425] See *In I Sent.* d.19, q.4, a.1, c. "The notion of an integral whole consists in composition;" and ad1. "Integral parts are within their whole."
[426] See *In VII Metaph.*, lect. 11. "This is the notion of the common: that it be predicated of many and that it exist in many."
[427] See *In V Metaph.*, lect. 21. "A universal [whole], and what is [said] totally (that is, what is commonly predicated), is named as if it is some one whole from the fact that it is predicated of each one, as a universal, as if containing many as parts, since it is predicated of each one. And all those are one in a universal whole, so that each and every one of them is that one whole, just as animal contains man and

from an integral whole, if one of the things contained by the whole ceases to be, the whole remains completely intact.[428] For example, when one man or one animal dies, the universal wholes "man" and "animal" are not corrupted or changed.

There are some things which contain others in the sense that they are the cause of others (for an effect is understood to be in the power of its cause). For example, something having a temperature of 200 degrees can cause a temperature of 150 degrees in something else. Something can also be said to contain another, not as its cause, but in the sense that it has the full ability, or power, of what is found in others according to some lesser ability or power. Thus, that having the fuller ability is capable of producing all the effects which can be produced by the lesser ability. For example, the ability to lift 100 pounds contains the ability to lift 50 pounds; or the sensitive soul includes the abilities of the vegetative soul (such as growth and reproduction), *etc*. In this case, the names "whole" and "part" are imposed in a different sense than the previous ones. Such wholes are called potential wholes since that which is in the power of the whole is called its part.

Thus, as a result of the extension of the names "whole" and "part," there are three fundamental kinds of whole and part. "Every whole is reduced to three genera: namely universal, integral and potential. And similarly, a three-fold part is found corresponding to the aforesaid three [genera of wholes]."[429]

If we now return to reflect upon the various senses of whole and part discussed above, it can be seen that in each of them a common notion is found, for in each case a whole is a kind of unity which has a multitude existing in it and from which nothing due

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horse and god, since all are animals, that is, since animal is predicated of each one of them." Note that according to the opinion of the Platonists the celestial bodies were ensouled beings whom they called gods.

[428] See *In V Metaph.*, lect. 21. "For a universal whole is not able to be called mutilated if one of its species is taken away."

[429] *In I Sent.*, d.33, q.3, a.1a, c.

to it is lacking. Conversely, a part is one of many which belongs to some unity and exists in it.

Because whole and part signify something different in the three genera enumerated above, it is important to understand what is proper to each so as not to confuse one kind of whole with another. St. Thomas identifies the foundational difference between each of these kinds of whole.

> It ought to be known that there is a three-fold whole. There is a universal whole, which is present to every part according to its whole essence and power. Hence, it is predicated properly of its parts, as when it is said that man is an animal. But the other is an integral whole, which is not present to any of its parts either according to its whole essence or its whole power. And therefore, it is not predicated of its part in any way (as if it were said that the wall is the house). The third is the potential whole, which is midway between these two. For it is present to its part according to its whole essence, but not according to its whole power. Hence, it has itself in a middle way as regards predication. For it is sometimes predicated of its parts, but not properly. And in this way it is sometimes said that the soul is its powers, or conversely.[430]

The obvious sign that these kinds of whole are essentially different is the different ways in which they can be predicated of their parts, but the root of these differences is the way in which the essence and the power of the whole are present to the parts. Here essence means that which is signified by the definition and power means an active ability.

In a potential whole the whole is sometimes, but not always, predicated of the part. Usually this happens with the part that most of all approaches the whole. For example, when it is said that the parliament or a monarch is the government, since these are the principal parts of a government; or the sacrament of reconciliation is called

[430] *De Spir. Creat.,* a.11, ad2. Note that this three-fold division of wholes is not exhaustive in the sense that it identifies every specific kind of whole. However, all wholes can in some way be reduced to these three, principal genera of whole.

penance or confession, which are certain principal parts of this sacrament. The parts which are not principal do not receive the name of the whole. Thus, a bailiff is not called the government.

It should be understood that if we speak of a potential whole as a cause which includes its effect, then, in the case of an equivocal cause, the essence of the cause is not found in the effect. Therefore, the effect does not receive the same name as the cause. For example, even though a builder causes a house and a joke causes laughter, a house is not called a builder, nor is laughter called a joke.

V.C.2 Unity *Per Se* and Unity of Order

Some wholes are one *per se*, such as continuous quantities, as well as plants, animals, and other natural substances.[431] Other wholes are one on account of some order, either a real order in things (such as the arrangement of a beehive) or an order of reason only (such as the plot of a science fiction novel).

In those wholes which are one *per se* the parts are simply speaking something of the whole. The part has no actuality, motion, or proper activity apart from that of the whole. Everything that the part is pertains to the whole and is determined by it. On the other hand, in those wholes which are one on account of some real order, the part is not simply speaking something of the whole but rather is something of the whole in some

[431] Generally we can say that those things are one *per se* whose matter or substance are one. See *In V Metaph.*, lect. 11. "Every mode by which something is called *per se* one can be reduced to two: of which one is insofar as those things are said to be one whose matter is one…In another way they are said to be one whose substance is one."

respect. Such parts exist actually as something apart from the whole and may have their own proper activity and motion apart from that of the whole.

> But it ought to be known that this whole, which is the civil multitude, or the domestic family, has only a unity of order, according to which it is not something simply one. And, therefore, the part of this whole is able to have an operation which is not an operation of the whole, just as a soldier in an army has an operation which is not an operation of the whole army. Nonetheless, the whole itself does have some operation which is not proper to any of its parts, but to the whole, for example, an assault of the whole army. And the pulling of a ship is an operation of the multitude pulling the ship. But there is another whole which has unity not only by order, but by composition, or binding, or even continuity, according to which unity it is something one simply. And therefore, there is no operation of the part which is not of the whole. For in continuous things, the motion of the whole and of the part is the same. And similarly in composed things, or things bound together, the operation of the part is principally of the whole.[432]

Yet it should be appreciated that, even in wholes which are one according to order, in the respect that something is a part of such a whole, its motion and activity belong to the whole in that same respect. Hence, for example, a man is a part of a city insofar as he is ruled by the public authority of that city. Thus, when he acts according to the directives of that public authority, he is acting as a member of the city. Moreover, his actions have the character of public acts only insofar as they are according to the directives of the public authority. They are wholly dependent upon the public authority for their character as public acts. If the public authority withdraws its mandate or if his acts are contrary to the directives of the public authority, his acts cease to have the character of public acts.

[432] *In I Ethic.*, lect.1.

V.C.3 The Relations of Dependence Between the Whole and the Part

It is clear from the foregoing that there is a complex interrelation of dependence between a whole and its parts which is determined by the specific kind of whole and part that is considered.

The integral whole, being composed of its parts, depends upon the parts for its very existence. "Every composite is posterior to its components and depends on them."[433] This dependence is in the line of material causality. On the other hand, the formal complement of the parts is found in the whole inasmuch as they exist for the whole as matter exists for the sake of form. "Parts are placed in the genus of material cause, but the whole in the genus of formal cause."[434] The very nature of the part is determined by what the whole is. Finally, in the order of final causality the whole is the end and good of the parts. "The whole is always better than its parts and is their end."[435] The entire reason for a part, as part, is so that it may contribute to the completion of the whole. A part is a perfect and good part to the extent that it contributes to the completion and good of the whole.

This last order of dependence (the order of final causality) implies that the good of the whole is a good belonging to the parts since the whole and its perfection is the end of the parts themselves. Because in an integral whole the whole depends upon its parts for its being and well-being, the good of the whole must be fully shared by the parts in

[433] *S.T.*, Ia, q.3, a.7, c. See *In Librum de Causis*, c.28. "Every thing composed from parts is not sufficient for itself, but needs for its subsistence the parts from which it is composed, which have themselves in the relation of a material cause to the whole."
[434] *S.T.*, IIIa, q.90, a.1, c. See *In II Phys*., lect. 5. "Every part is compared to the whole as the imperfect to the perfect, which is the comparison of matter to form." See also *In IV Phys*., lect. 4.
[435] *S.C.G.*, III.69.

order for the perfection of the whole. Thus, the good of the whole must redound to the parts not because the whole or the good of the whole is for the sake of the parts (as if the parts were the end of the whole) but because the whole depends upon the parts for its well being and perfection. "The goodness of any part is considered in proportion to its whole. Hence, Augustine says in the third book of the *Confessions*, that every part which does not befit its whole is base…Neither is the whole able to stand together in a good way unless [it is composed] from parts proportionate to it."[436]

A second conclusion which we can draw from the fact that the part is for the sake of the whole is that the good of the parts is for the sake of the good of the whole. "Every good of the part can be ordained to the good of the whole;"[437] and "the particular good is ordained to the good of the whole as to an end, as the imperfect to the perfect."[438] Since that to which something is ordained as to an end is better than the thing which is so ordained, it follows that the good of the whole is always better than the good belonging only to the part. The good of the whole is the greater good for the part than its private good.

In potential wholes, as opposed to integral wholes, the order of dependence is quite different. The parts of a potential whole are not compared to that whole as matter. In fact, a potential whole depends in no way upon its parts, for a greater ability never depends upon a lesser ability. For example, a major does not depend upon a private to exercise his own authority. Nor does a greater temperature depend upon a lesser temperature to heat.

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[436] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.92, a.1, ad3.
[437] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.58, a.5, c.
[438] *S.C.G.*, I.86.

If we speak of a potential whole in the sense of an efficient cause which contains the effect (as a part) in its power, then it is clear that the part depends for its very being upon the whole, just as the being of an effect depends upon its cause. Moreover, the agent cause of some effect is itself the good of that effect.

> Something is good insofar as it is desirable. But each and every thing desires its own perfection. Moreover, the perfection and form of an effect is a certain likeness of the agent, since every agent effects something like to itself. Hence, the agent itself is desirable, and has the notion of a good. For this is what is desired from it: that its likeness be shared.[439]

This means that the agent cause of some effect is also the end of that effect. Since the effect is considered as a part, while the cause is considered as the whole, it happens that such a potential whole is the final cause of its parts. In this respect a potential whole is like an integral whole. Yet a potential whole of this kind is the final cause of its parts for a different reason than that given for why the integral whole is the final cause of its parts.

If we speak of a potential whole in the sense of something having a complete ability which is possessed only partially by something else (as the major and the private, or the sensitive soul and the vegetative soul), it is clear that the lesser ability can exist apart from the higher ability. For example, even if all animals were destroyed, some plants could still flourish, for the relation between them is not one of real dependence in the line of efficient causality but is a relation perceived by reason. Nevertheless, if one considers the order of natural things, it is clear that the relation which reason sees between the lesser abilities and the greater abilities is not merely accidental or by chance. Thus, it is not accidental that an army or a city contains many members, some of which

[439] *S.T.*, Ia, q.6, a.1, c.

have greater powers, and others of which have lesser powers. There is a good reason why some things should have in part what others have more fully. If all things had only lesser abilities, then there would be some goods that would never be attained since they would be out of the reach of lesser abilities. On the other hand, if all things had the fullness of ability, those possessing the full ability would often be occupied in performing functions much lower than their full potential. Once again, this would detract from the attainment of the highest goods since those capable of attaining the highest goods would often be distracted and called away from these goods by looking to lesser needs. If, however, some things have the fullness of ability, while others have lesser abilities, each can be primarily occupied with exercising its full potential so that the highest goods are attained as often as possible. Thus, because the whole life of plants consists in taking nourishment, growing, and reproducing, an animal needs to take nourishment only occasionally, for the plant has gathered into itself an abundance of nutriment. From this it can be seen that that which has a lesser power is for the sake of that which has a higher power. Once again, in the order of final causality the potential part is for the sake of the potential whole.

We can even speak of a final cause as being, in some sense, a potential whole. Insofar as everything which is desired in the means is found more fully in the end, a more ultimate end contains a mediate end. The means is contained in the power of the end. For example, if exercise is desired only for health, then the good of health contains the whole good of exercise; if money is desired only for that which it can be used to purchase, then the whole good of money is contained by the good of the things which it is

used to purchase. In this sense it is clear that the part depends upon the whole precisely as upon a more ultimate final cause.

Universal wholes have as their parts those things of which they are predicated. A universal whole is not a real being common to many, but it is a being of reason which is said of many.[440] That is, it is common in predication not in being or causality. The universal whole has its origin in the abstraction from matter,[441] which reason accomplishes by considering one thing apart from another, even though they exist together in reality. A man has *this* rational soul and *this* flesh and *these* bones, but reason considers rational soul and flesh and bones in common, apart from their individual existence in this or that man. In this way, a common concept of man arises in reason which is applicable to every man, not just to this or that man. This common concept, therefore, includes every man, and so stands to every man as whole to part. In some sense a universal whole depends upon its parts for its coming to be, though not for its being, for the universal whole is abstracted from individuals. The individual things are necessary as the matter from which an abstraction is made. They contain in a concrete way what the universal whole possesses abstractly, but once the abstraction is made, the individual things need not remain for the universal whole to persist.

The parts of a universal whole do not depend upon the universal whole though they do depend upon that which is signified by the universal whole. The universal whole signifies the formal principles of its parts. That is, a universal whole signifies what a

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[440] See *In I Sent*. d.19, q.4, a.2, c. "A universal essence is not the same in number in its inferiors, but according to reason only."

[441] Though the abstraction from individual sensible matter is proper to natural philosophy, it can be said that in every science the abstraction of the whole from the part takes place insofar as what is *per se* is considered apart from what is accidental: See *Super Boet. de Trin.*, q.5, a.3, c. "[The abstraction of the universal from the particular] belongs to physics, and is common to the other sciences, since in science that which is *per accidens* is passed over and that which is *per se* is received."

thing is. Man signifies what this individual man is. Animal signifies what the species man is. Strictly speaking, therefore, the parts are not for the sake of the universal whole. The universal whole seems to be for the sake of knowing the parts, for we know something by possessing its formal principles.[442]

A general survey of the various relations of dependence between whole and part reveals that in integral wholes and potential wholes the part is for the sake of the whole, and the good of the part is ordained to the good of the whole. This is especially so when whole signifies a potential whole according to efficient causality. On the other hand, a universal whole is not the end or good of its parts. With this in mind we are now in a position to examine the nature of the good of the whole, that is, the common good.

V.D The Notions of the Common Good

The foregoing considerations of the notions of the good, and of whole and part, make it sufficiently obvious that the combined notion of the good of the whole, or the common good, will be susceptible of a great multitude of meanings. The usage of the expressions "common good" or "common goods" in the writings of St. Thomas, for example, is so varied and extensive, that it would require a thesis of its own simply to distinguish all or most of the significant senses of these expressions.[443] Here our intention is more modest, namely to distinguish those senses of the expression "common

[442] See *Super Boet. de Trin.,* q.5, a.2, c.
[443] See Gregory Froelich, "The Equivocal Status of *Bonum Commune*," *The New Scholasticism*, 63 (Winter 1989): p.38-57, especially footnotes 14 and 15, where he gives a list, together with corresponding references, of several things called "common goods" in St. Thomas. Just to name a few: money, honor, children, peace, justice, victory, the order of the universe, happiness and God, are among the things called common goods by St. Thomas.

good" which pertain essentially to human dignity or at least are likely to be confused with those common goods which pertain essentially to human dignity.

V.D.1 Divisions of the Common Good

Not every division pertains to a subject as such. For example, one might divide triangles into large and small, or blue and green. These divisions are accidental to triangle as such. In our division of the common good, therefore, it is essential to divide the common good into parts which pertain to the common as such and to the good as such. We have already seen many of these divisions above. It remains to apply them to the special case of a good which is also something common.

Because that which is common to many is a kind of whole in which there is some participation, the divisions of the common follow the divisions of the whole. Therefore, something may be common as a universal whole is common as an integral whole is common or as a potential whole is common.

V.D.1.a The Universal Whole As a Common Good

A good which is common in the sense of a universal whole can be said of many and is understood to be entirely in each of them. It is a good common in predication; that is, due to a common *ratio* which reason perceives in a number of things, the same name "good" is applied to many things. A good which is common in predication is not some thing or perfection existing in reality but a name consequent upon an activity of reason.

This means that, unlike the things which it signifies, it is not itself a good.[444] The good is in things; it is not merely a being of reason. The good common in predication is not the object of appetite or desire, nor is it the perfection of any real thing. Such a "good" obviously does not pertain essentially to human dignity. Yet, because of the human mind's propensity to confuse the order of reason with the real order, it is important to keep in mind the distinction between a good common according to predication and other kinds of common goods that do pertain essentially to human dignity.[445]

V.D.1.b The Potential Whole as a Common Good

A good which is common in the sense of a potential whole may signify various things, depending upon the kind of potential whole which is considered. Recall that a potential whole may be one in which one thing contains the whole ability of some other thing so that it can produce all the effects of that other thing. For example, a human, or rational, soul contains the whole ability of an animal soul as regards the internal and external senses. Again, a potential whole may be a whole in the sense of an efficient or final cause which contains the whole of its effect, just as fire contains the heat which it causes in boiling water, or the whole desirability of medicine is contained in the good of health. Obviously not every potential whole and its good pertain essentially to human dignity, for the common good which pertains essentially to human dignity is a good of

[444] In like manner, the concepts which the mind forms about real things are not themselves real beings, but they are rather that by which real beings are known by us.

[445] The admonition of Yves Simon is well stated. "In this world of contingency, every form or process admits of imitation; in human affairs, counterfeit is often so related to the genuine form that it appears, with disquieting frequency, precisely where the genuine form is most earnestly sought. An inquiry into the common good must involve a constant awareness that its object may, at any time, be displaced by deadly counterfeit." (Simon, *A General Theory of Authority* (Notre Dame: University Press, 1980), p.27).

the persons themselves. It follows that we are primarily interested in the good of those wholes which contain persons. The reason for this is that, as we have already seen, the good of the whole is the good (indeed the greater good) of its parts. Thus, of primary interest here are those potential wholes which contain persons as parts. Only God, the creator of persons, can be such a whole,[446] for God alone is the efficient and final cause of the whole person,[447] and in God alone is the whole being of any person contained *in virtute* (in power).[448]

If we consider God as a potential whole in the sense of an efficient cause, it is clear that, insofar as God is the first agent, God is also the ultimate end of the created person.

> The desirable has the notion of an end. But the order of ends is just as the order of agents. For to the degree that an agent is superior and universal, so much also is the good for which it acts a more universal good. For every agent acts on account of an end, and on account of something good. And this appears clearly in human affairs. For, the ruler of a city intends some particular good, which is the good of the city. But the king, who is his superior, intends the universal good, namely the peace of the whole kingdom. Since, therefore, in agent causes there can not be an infinite regress, but it is necessary to arrive at one first [agent cause], which is the universal cause of being, it is necessary that there also be some universal good to which all goods are reduced. And this cannot be anything other than the very thing that is the first and universal agent. For, since the

[446] Some care must be employed when God is called a whole since, being perfectly simple, God has no parts (See *De Veritate*, q.8, a.2, obj.1 and ad1). Moreover, God has only a relation of reason to creatures, even though creatures have a real relation to God. Thus, it is more appropriate to call creatures "parts" than to call God a "whole." Perhaps it is better simply to say that creatures stand to God as parts to a whole, rather than to say that God is a whole. Yet, so long as the proper distinctions are preserved, there seems to be no reason why God cannot be called a whole in some senses of the term.

[447] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.90, a.2, c. "The rational soul is not able to be made except through creation;" q.45, a.5, c. "To create can be the proper action of God alone." Of significant interest here is that, to my knowledge, St. Thomas was the first philosopher to provide a demonstration from reason alone that only God can create. He did not seem to be aware of such a demonstration at the time he wrote his commentary on the Sentences (See *In II Sent*. d.1, q.1, a.3, c.). This argument was made possible due to a more profound understanding of the nature of instrumental causality.

[448] It is true that some persons can contain others *in virtute*, just as higher angels contain the whole ability of lower ones (See *In II Sent.* d.9, q.1, a.3, ad1). Yet God alone contains the exemplars of all created persons.

> desirable moves the appetite, and it is necessary for the first mover to be not in motion, it is necessary that the first and universal desirable be the first and universal good, which works all things on account of the desire of itself.[449]

Note, moreover, that the order of goods corresponds to the order of agents. Since the created person is created immediately by God,[450] it follows that the created person is related immediately to God as its ultimate end, without being reduced back by means of intermediate agent causes. Nevertheless, insofar as something of the human person, such as the body, or certain qualities of soul, are produced by way of intermediate agents, it follows that, in some respect, the human person finds himself in an ordered series of goods by which he is related back to the ultimate good. For example, the parents of a human person are necessarily a good for that person inasmuch as they are principles of his coming to be.

When considered as a potential whole according to agent causality, God is the universal good *in causando*.[451] Yet, here again, a distinction needs to be made, for, as we argued above, the universal good *in causando* can mean that which is perfective of another as efficient and exemplary cause, or that which is perfective of another *per modum finis*, which is to be the universal good in the most proper sense. Both refer to the selfsame reality, and, as St. Thomas argued above, they necessitate one another; but in the first case God is considered precisely as agent and exemplary cause, while in the second case, God is considered as the object of a rational appetite.

God can also be considered as a potential whole in the sense of that being which pre-contains the perfections of each and every created person, for whatever effects can be

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[449] *De Malo*, q.1, a.1, c.
[450] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.45, a.5 (*Cf.*, *In II Sent.*, d.1, q.1, a.3).
[451] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.105, a.4.

produced by any created person can be produced immediately by God.[452] Thus, God has the full ability which is possessed in part by each and every created person. In this sense God is the universal good in being (*in essendo*). A distinction, however, also needs to be made in this case, for the expression "in being," can have several meanings which correspond to the different senses of "to be."

> In one way, *esse* signifies the whatness or nature of a thing, just as definition is speech signifying what it is to be [*esse*]. For a definition signifies the whatness of a thing. In another way, *esse* signifies the very act of the essence; just as to live, which is to be [*esse*] for living things, is the act of the soul; not second act, which is operation, but first act. In the third way, *esse* signifies the truth of a composition in propositions, according as 'is' is called a copula.[453]

Accordingly, we can speak of a threefold division of the ways in which something is said to be "in being:" namely, 1) in the very nature of a thing, 2) in the existence of a thing, and 3) in the true predication of a thing. Therefore, the universal good in being can signify that universal or common good which is good in its essence (according to the first sense of "in being");[454] or, it can signify the perfection of all being insofar as it is

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[452] See *De Rat. Fid.*, c.8. "God, who is the creator of substances and accidents, is able to conserve sensible accidents in being, even with their subjects changed into something else. For, through his omnipotence, he is able to produce and keep in being the effects of secondary causes without the secondary causes [themselves]." See also, *inter alia*, *S.T.*, Ia, q.105, a.6, c. and Ia-IIae, q.51, a.4, c.

[453] *In I Sent*., d.33, q.1, a.1, ad1. While St. Thomas is distinguishing the meanings of the Latin infinitive *esse*, the same distinctions can be seen to apply to the English infinitive "to be."

[454] This is the good *per essentiam*. The good *per essentiam* can be taken to mean good *a se*, that is good from itself, not from another by participation (See *S.T.*, Ia, q.3, a.2, c. "The first good and best, that is God, is not good through participation, since the good *per essentiam* is prior to the good through participation."). Or, the good *per essentiam* can be taken to mean the good *per se* (See *S.C.G.*, II.41. "We say that something is such *per se* which is such *per essentiam*."). The good *per se* is sometimes identified with the good *simpliciter* by St. Thomas. Compare, for example, *De Veritate,* q.21, a.5 with *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.1, ad1. To be good from oneself (*a se*) is to in no way depend upon another for one's goodness. To be good through oneself (*per se*) is to have goodness through one's own essence.

being[455] (according to the second sense of "in being"); or it can signify that good which is truly said of all or many things (according to the third sense of "in being").[456]

A careful examination of the latter two reveals that both of them refer to the same reality, for when "the universal good in being" is taken to mean that which has the perfection of universal being (that is, the perfection of every being, insofar as it has being), this is nothing other than a potential whole which pre-contains the perfection of all beings, namely God, "for anything is called perfect when nothing of those things which pertain to it is lacking…There is lacking nothing of those things which pertain to the notion of a whole to God, who is in supreme perfection. For, he pre-possesses in himself all the perfections of things, simply and excellently, as Dionysius says."[457] Moreover, only God has the perfection of all being in himself.[458] Again, when "the universal good in being" is taken to mean that universal good which is good through its own essence, this can only refer to the ultimate end which does not depend upon some further end, and which is good simply in its very being.[459] This is a potential whole in the sense of a final cause containing all desirable things within itself, but the ultimate good which has goodness identical with its very being is none other than that being which contains the perfection of all beings within itself, whom we call God.[460] To put matters simply, the goodness of God can be considered from two aspects, either as perfect in

[455] This notion of good is the sense of good which belongs to beings insofar as they are beings, without formal reference to a will (See *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.3).
[456] This is the good which is universal in predication.
[457] *De Spir. Creat.,* a.8, c.
[458] See *In Boetii de Hebdom.*, lect.4. "Goodness may be considered in things absolutely, namely just as each and every thing is called good insofar as it is perfect in being and operating. And this perfection does not belong to created goods according to the very being of their essence, but according to something superadded...but the first good has every perfection in its own being, and therefore its being is good, according to itself and absolutely."
[459] See *In Boetii de Hebdom.*, lect.4.
[460] See our discussion above in part V.B.8 on the cause of the good. See also *De Veritate,* q.21, a.5.

himself (insofar as God lacks nothing which his nature should have) or perfect insofar as he is perfective of others, as fulfilling the whole inclination of their being.

Thus, there is a threefold division in the meanings of the expression "universal good in being," in which the first refers to the universal good in predication, while the latter two signify God, the first good, under different formalities. This same division was made by Professor De Koninck in his reply to Fr. Eschmann.

> [The *bonum universale in essendo*] may bear three distinct meanings: first, it may be taken to mean *bonum universale in praedicando* which is common to all things insofar as they are good in any way; secondly, it may mean the perfection of the divine being considered in itself, without formal reference to will; thirdly, it may mean *bonum universale per essentiam*, where the good is understood in the rigorous sense of "perfectivum alterius per modum finis," and this is the divine good, for God is good *simpliciter* by His very essence, "inquantum ejus essentia est suum esse."[461]

This division of the universal, or common, good in being corresponds to three senses of whole which we discussed above: 1) the universal whole, 2) the potential whole in the sense of that having the full ability of another, and 3) the potential whole as a cause which contains its effects in its power.

It follows from this analysis that the universal good *in causando* can signify the same reality as the universal good *in essendo*, so long as *in essendo* is taken in the sense of *per essentiam*.

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[461] DST, p.57. Recall that the good *per essentiam* can be understood in two senses. The universal good *a se* signifies that common good (in the sense of a final cause) which has its goodness from itself, not from some further end. Thus, the universal good *a se* can refer only to the ultimate end. Thus, the universal good *in essendo* (in the sense of *a se*) signifies nothing other than the good of God, the ultimate end, under the specific formality of possessing that goodness from itself. The universal good *per se* signifies that common good which has its goodness simply, by its own essence. This belongs to that common good whose essence is to be good, but this can only be so for God, in whom being and essence are the same.

V.D.1.c. The Integral Whole As a Common Good

The common good in the sense of an integral whole can also have several meanings, for integral wholes can be divided into formal or material parts. Moreover, something may be common in potency or in act.

If we understand a common good in the sense of an integral whole divided into its material parts, a number of things in nature answer to this description, the common good of a beehive, or of a colony of ants, for example. Of course, we are interested in the common good of persons, and so we shall leave the discussion of such common goods aside.

There are some human goods, such as property, which may be some divisible material thing that is held in common. For example, the water in a public reservoir can be called a common good, but notice that such a good only becomes the good of this or that person when it is divided and distributed to them. It is not actually the good of this and that person until some part of it is held as a private good by each of them. Thus, such material goods which are diminished by division are called common goods because they are goods common *in potency*.[462] Thus, such goods are not, simply speaking, common but are common in some respect.[463]

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[462] Calling such things goods common in potency does not mean that such goods have a potency to change from being private goods to being common goods. Rather it means that such a good can potentially be distributed to anyone you please before it is actually divided. Similarly, a line is said to be potentially divisible to infinity, not because there is some possibility that the line will actually be divided to infinity sometime, but because the line can be divided as many times as one pleases without end.

[463] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.65, a.1, ad2. "A bodily creature, according to its nature, is good, but it is not a universal good; rather, it is some particular and contracted good." See also *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.61, a.1, ad2. "Just as a part and whole are in a certain way the same, so that which is of the whole is in a certain way of the part. Thus, when from common goods something is distributed to the singular [persons], each one in a certain way receives what is his own." It should be appreciated that in some sense a work of art, such as a statue or St. Peter's Basilica, can be considered a common good inasmuch as it is the common product of many

If we wish to talk about a common good, in the sense of the good of an integral whole, which can actually be shared equally by a number of persons, it is necessary that it be an integral whole composed of persons. Some integral wholes have persons as merely material parts. A tug-of-war team or a group of men pushing a car are acting together to achieve some goal which none of them individually could achieve, but they are merely material parts in such a group: they could easily be replaced by an animal or a machine. They are not united precisely as rational beings, nor is the good of such a whole anything more than a merely physical or material good.

In other integral wholes persons are parts principally insofar as they are rational beings. A social group, a charitable organization, a family, the state, and the universe as a whole are all examples of such integral wholes. The good at which such wholes aim is a rational good, a good appropriate to persons. Obviously each of these are examples of wholes which have a unity of order only, not wholes which are *per se* one. Indeed, because a person is a hypostasis (*i.e.*, an individual substance), a person cannot be part of a whole which is *per se* one according to substance.[464]

The most universal of the integral wholes which include persons as parts is the whole universe of created beings. This whole comprises both material beings and spiritual beings (created persons). These parts are not related equally to the whole; on the contrary, the created persons constitute the principal parts of the universe, for the material

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persons. Yet, in relation to those who made it, this is neither common nor a good in the full sense of the word. "The common good conceived as a work of art and a thing external to man is merely a corruption of the genuine common good." Y. Simon, *A General Theory of Authority*, p27.

[464] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.1, ad2. "By the name 'hypostasis' or 'first substance' there is excluded the notion of universal and of part (for we do not say that common man is a hypostasis, nor also a hand, since it is a part)." See also ad5. "The soul is a part of the human species, and therefore, although it may be separated, yet since it retains the nature of unibility, it is not able to be called an individual substance which is a hypostasis or first substance; just as neither is a hand, nor any other of the parts of a man. And thus neither the definition nor the name of person belongs to it."

beings are for the sake of the spiritual ones.[465] Thus, in relation to material beings persons are principal or formal parts of the universe, but, in relation to the whole the intellectual creatures are "as if matter of the whole."[466] This is not to say that created persons are material parts of the whole universe. Rather, it is to assert that they stand to the whole in the same or similar relation as the relation of matter to form.

In the case of human persons, who are all of one species, there is less the notion of formal parts than is found in separated substances who are each of different species, for a formal part in the strictest sense is one which contributes to the essential perfection of the whole as, for example, the various kinds of organs contribute to the essential perfection of the body or the various kinds of position contribute to the essential perfection of a sports team.[467] Human persons do not contribute in this way to the essential perfection of the universe.

> The essential perfection of the universe consists in species. But the accidental [perfection of the universe consists] in individuals. Since, therefore, the multiplication of [human] souls is not according to diverse species, but according to number only, it remains that through the fact that many souls are daily created, nothing is added to the essential perfection of the universe, but only to the accidental [perfection]. And this is not unfitting.[468]

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[465] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.65, a.2, c. "The more ignoble creatures are for the sake of the more noble ones, as creatures which are below man are for the sake of man," (See *S.C.G.*, III.78 and 81). This is to be understood not in the sense that the ultimate end intended by God in creating material beings is man or the spiritual substances, for God intends his own goodness in all creation. Rather, it should be understood to mean that in the order established by God within the universe material beings are assimilated to God by way of spiritual ones (See *In II Sent*. d.1, q.2, a.3, ad1).

[466] *S.T.*, Ia, q.65, a.2, c.

[467] For example, a football team should have a quarterback, a running back, receivers, and linemen for offense. Each of these positions has an essentially different role to play so that if a team does not have one of these positions, it will be lacking something needed for the nature of a football team.

[468] *In II Sent*. d.17, q.2, a.2, ad6.

This is not to deny or minimize the fact that human persons are willed and governed for their own sake. Human persons are principal parts of the universe, but they are not such in the same way that separated substances are,[469] for human persons do not contribute to the perfection of the whole universe in exactly the same way that separated substances do.

Insofar as created persons are parts of the integral whole which is the universe, the created person is for the sake of the whole universe, and the good of the created person is for the sake of the good of the universe, for as we have shown above, this is of the very nature of the relationship between integral parts and their whole. The ultimate good of the universe (*i.e.*, the good intrinsic to the universe which has the universe as its subject) is the very order of the universe itself. "The best [good] in created things is the perfection of the universe, which consists in the order of distinct things: for in all things, the perfection of the whole takes precedence over the perfection of the singular parts."[470] The reason for this is that, since the unity of the universe is a unity of order only, a good belonging to the whole universe, as in one subject, can only be a good pertaining to order.

> The good, insofar as it is the end of something, is twofold: for there is an end extrinsic to that which is [ordained] to the end, as when we say that a place is the end of that which is moved to that place; and there is also an intrinsic end, just as

[469] Take the example of the football team again. It may happen that one of the players in some position (*e.g.*, a lineman) is the best player who most of all helps the team to win, even though his position is not the most noble position. Thus, to say that individual human persons do not contribute to the essential perfection of the universe is not to assert that, in every respect or even simply speaking, any separated substance contributes more to the good of the universe than any human person. There might be some human persons who are ultimately more important for the good of the universe than some of the separated substances. Moreover, certainly individual human persons are more important for the good of the universe than the species of plants and other animals, which also, as species, contribute to the essential perfection of the universe.

[470] *S.C.G.*, II.44. The number of texts in St. Thomas which state this principle is quite large. Just to give a few: *S.C.G.*, I.70-71, II.44, III.39, III.64; *S.T.*, Ia, q.15, a.2, c., q.22, a.4, c., q.49, a.2, c.; *De Veritate,* q.5, a.3, c. and ad3; and *De Spir. Creat.,* a.8, c.; *De Sub. Spirit.*, a.10, c.

> form is the end of generation and of alteration, and a form already acquired is a kind of intrinsic good of the thing whose form it is. But the form of any whole which is one through the ordination of some parts is its order. Hence, it remains that [this order] is its good.[471]

It follows that, insofar as the created person is a member of the universe, the greatest good within the universe for the created person is the good of the order of the universe. Moreover, every other good belonging to the person either privately or inasmuch as the person is a member of some other whole contained by the universe, is for the sake of this greater good of the order of the universe.

Just as the principal parts of the universe do not stand to the whole in the same relation as the less noble parts of the universe, so also they do not stand in the same relation to the good of the whole universe. The principal parts of the universe, created persons, participate more fully in the good of the whole universe than do the less noble parts. "It is necessary that the superior parts of the universe share more in the good of the universe, which is [its] order."[472] Indeed, created persons are able to share in the good of the order of the universe by possessing this very order intentionally by knowledge.[473] Thus, the whole order of the universe is or can be spiritually present in each individual person.[474] This order becomes a good of that person, simply speaking, through contemplation of that order, where contemplation is taken in the sense of an act of the speculative intellect motivated by love of truth and accompanied by a certain rest or delight in that truth.[475] The reason for this is that the good is formally an object of the

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[471] *In XII Metaph.*, lect.12.
[472] *De Spir. Creat.,* a.8, c.
[473] See *De Veritate,* q.2, a.2, c.; and *In I Sent.*, d.39, q.2, a.2, c.
[474] This is one, though not the only, basis for the position that God exercises a special providence over individual human persons. For other reasons see, for example, *S.T.*, Ia, q.113, a.2, c.; *De Veritate,* q.5, a.5; and *Comp. Theol*., c.143.
[475] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.180, a.1, c.; and a.7, ad1.

will so that unless a truth is loved, it is not the good of that person. This good of the whole universe is the greater *rational* good of the created person and is a participation, imperfect though it may be, of the form which exists in the divine mind according to which the whole universe is patterned.

While the order of the universe is the greatest good *within* the universe, it is not the only good of the universe. There is also a good common to the whole universe which is outside of it, for every intrinsic order is established by an extrinsic, *per se* cause. The reason for this is that the things which are ordered cannot themselves explain or give rise to the order of which they are a part. Order is a kind of unity, and the things in that order are, of themselves, many. If things, in themselves different, all share in something common (in this case, a common order), then they must have some common cause, "for those things which are diverse according to themselves, do not come together in some one thing unless through some cause uniting them."[476] As we noted above in our treatment of the good, the diversity of things cannot explain unity, for diversity is opposed to unity. Therefore, there must be something outside the order which makes the many have a unity of order.

Moreover, the order intrinsic to some ordered thing is for the sake of its extrinsic principle of order.

> [In an army] we find a two-fold order: one by which the parts of the army are ordered to one another, another by which they are ordered to an exterior good, namely the good of the leader. And that order by which the parts of the army are ordered to one another is for the sake of that order by which the whole army is ordered to the leader. Hence, if there were not an order to the leader, there would not be an order of the parts of the army to one another. Therefore, in any

[476] *S.T.*, Ia, q.3, a.7, c.

> multitude which is ordered in itself, it is necessary that it be ordered to an exterior principle.[477]

The principle that the intrinsic order of some system is for the sake of the extrinsic principle of this order is entirely universal. For example, the order within a chair is for the sake of sitting, and the order within a car is for the sake of driving. The activities of sitting or driving are ends outside of the order or form of the chair and the car.

Since the greatest good of the part, as part, is the best good of the whole, and since the best good of the whole universe is the separated good of the universe, it follows that this separated good of the universe is the greatest good of the created person, inasmuch as the created person is a part of the universe. Moreover, from this it also follows that the created person is ordained to an end beyond the universe itself.

> If some whole is not the ultimate end, but is ordained to a further end, then the ultimate end of the part is not the whole itself, but something else. But the universe of creatures, to which man is compared as a part to a whole, is not the ultimate end, but is ordained to God as to an ultimate end. Hence, the good of the universe is not the ultimate end of man, but God himself is.[478]

The order of the universe, therefore, is not the ultimate end of the created person.

This separated good of the universe which is the cause and principle of its order must in some way possess this order since nothing gives what it does not have. However, it cannot have this order as its own form since then it would be a cause of itself. Thus, the order of the universe is possessed by that which causes the order in such a way that it

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[477] *De Veritate*, q.5, a.3, c.

[478] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.2, a.8, ad2. When it is said that the ultimate end of man is not the good of the universe but God, this is not to say that God Himself is not the good of the universe. In this context the expression "the good of the universe" is taken to mean the good of order within the universe, as is clear from the objection to which this is a response.

is not itself a partaker of this order. That is, it has this order, not as its own form, but as the form of another. To possess the form of another, as other, happens only in knowledge.[479] Therefore, the extrinsic cause of the order of the universe, namely God, must know this order.

This order, as possessed in the knowledge of God, is itself a good for the whole universe, being an archetype of the order which is found within the universe. That for the sake of which something exists is better than the thing which exists for it, but the order within the universe exists for the sake of the order in the mind and will of the one who produced this order. "The separated good which is the first mover is a better good than the good of order which is in the universe. For the whole order of the universe is on account of the first mover, so that, namely, there might be unfolded in the ordered universe that which is in the intellect and will of the first mover."[480] In the same way that a work of art is judged good by its maker insofar as it conforms to the design which the artisan intends for it to have, so also the universe is judged to be good insofar as it conforms to the exemplar in the mind of God. The order within the universe is for the sake of manifesting that archetype which is in the divine mind.[481]

In this regard, the order of the universe as it exists in the mind and will of God is also a good in which the members of the universe partake, especially persons who share in this order by reason.[482] This order of the universe as it exists in the mind and will of

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[479] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.14, a.1, c. "Knowers are distinguished from non-knowers in this: that the non-knowers have nothing but their own form only. But the nature of a knower is to have the form even of another thing, for the species of the thing known is in the knower."
[480] *In XII Metaph.*, lect.12.
[481] See *S.C.G.*, II.45.
[482] The objection naturally comes to mind here: how can something in the mind of God, something unknown to a created person, be the good in which it shares? The answer is that "those things which are of God are not able to be known by us in themselves, but nevertheless they are manifested to us in their

God can be understood in two ways. It can be understood as the pattern after which the universe is created or as the principle according to which God moves creatures to their due end. In the former case it is simply called an exemplar, or divine idea; in the latter case, it is called the eternal law.

> Just as the reason [ratio] of divine wisdom has the notion of art or of an exemplar or of an idea, insofar as through it all things are created, so the reason [ratio] of the divine wisdom moving all things to a due end acquires the notion of law. And according to this, the eternal law is nothing other than the reason [ratio] of the divine wisdom, insofar as it is directive of all acts and motions.[483]

Thus, that by which all creatures are moved to their due end is the eternal law, nor is this law anything other than the end itself to which they are ordained since it is God himself.

> Law implies order to an end actively, namely insofar as through it something is ordained to an end. But [it does not imply order passively], that is, so that the law itself be ordered to an end, except accidentally in some governor whose end is outside of himself, to which [end] it is also necessary that his law be ordained. But the end of the divine governance is God himself, nor is his law other than himself. Hence, the eternal law is not ordained to another end.[484]

The eternal law, just like everything else in God, is identical to the divine essence *in re*, even though it differs from other divine attribute *in ratione*, or notion.

This separated good of the universe is common to the whole universe, not as something inhering in it but common as an object to which many are related. Any part of the universe, in virtue of its right relation to this separated good, partakes of this good,

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effects." However, "no one is able to comprehend [them], since they cannot be totally manifested through [their] effects," (*S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.93, a.2, ad1&2). See also *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.19, a.4, ad3.

[483] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.93, a.1, c. See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.71, a.2, ad4. "The eternal law is compared to the order of human reason just as art to the artifact;" and *De Veritate,* q.5, a.1, ad6. "The eternal law is to be considered in God just as the naturally known principles of doable things are taken in us."

[484] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.91, a.1, ad3. As will be considered below in the section on the moral good, the rational creature's participation in the eternal law is called the natural law (See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.91, a.1-2).

and this right relation is in each of the well ordered parts of the universe. Hence, while the separated good is truly separate from the universe, nevertheless, it is not an alien good but truly the good of each well ordered part of the universe.

When God is called the ultimate end of the created person, a further distinction needs to be made. As the separated common good of the universe God is first of all the good of the whole universe. Since the parts partake of the good of the whole, God is also the good of the parts, precisely insofar as they are members of the whole.[485] As discussed above, however, when an integral whole is not something one *per se*, the parts are not members of the whole according to their whole being but only according to some aspect of their being. In such wholes the parts can have an operation (and hence an end) which does not belong to the whole as such. When an eagle sees and hunts, we do not say properly that the universe sees and hunts. Thus, since the universe has a unity of order only, it follows that there can be an operation of the created person which is not an operation of the whole universe. It is for this reason that there exist distinct orders of good for the created person. In relation to the whole universe there is an ultimate common good which is the greatest good of the person, *as member of the universe* (*i.e.*, insofar as the created person is part of an *integral whole* which is the universe); and this separated common good is God considered as orderer and ruler of the universe. Insofar as the person performs acts which relate him immediately to God, there is an ultimate common good distinct in its notion from the former (the good of the *potential whole* which God is in relation to the created person), which is the greatest good of the person, *as directly depending upon God for its being* (*i.e.*, as part of the potential whole which

[485] In this respect the order of the universe as it exists in the mind and will of God is formally the good in which the members of the universe partake, especially persons who share in this order by reason.

God is in relation to creatures).[486] In this latter sense the created person is not considered formally as a part of the universe nor as participating in its good. In short, God can be called the common good of a created person for two reasons according to the two distinct relationships which the created person bears towards God. Thus, the distinct orders of good are determined by considering the distinct relationships which the created person bears to the wholes of which he is a part.

The person, as an integral part of the universe sharing in its separated common good (*i.e.*, God), does not partake of this good in a manner which wholly exhausts the persons' capacities for perfection. There remain activities of the person which escape the order of the whole, and hence also the capacities for these actions are not completely fulfilled or actualized by means of this whole, but since God, considered as a potential whole which includes created persons, is the cause of their very being and every activity, it follows that there is no activity or perfection of the created person which falls outside of the influence of this whole. Thus, in respect to the good of this potential whole, the created person partakes of this good in a manner which wholly exhausts the persons' capacities for perfection. In each case God is the good in which the created person partakes, but the manner or mode of participation differs so that only in the latter case does the person obtain the whole good of which the person is capable.

Thus, the created person can, in a sense, "step outside" of the integral whole which is the universe, and attain immediately to God.

> The whole universe with its singular parts is ordained to God as to an end insofar as in them, through a certain imitation, the divine goodness is represented for the glory of God. However, rational creatures *in a special manner beyond this* have

[486] A similar distinction is made by St. Thomas in *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.21, a.4, c.

> God as an end, whom they are able to reach by their own operation, by knowing and loving [God].[487]

For this same reason, it follows that, unlike non-persons, persons do not exist solely as means or goods useful for some other creature.

> Everything from which there accrues some utility for a thing is said to be for the sake of another. But this happens in two ways: either so that that from which some utility accrues to something does not have a participation of the divine goodness except according to its order to that for which it is useful, just as parts to a whole, or accidents to a subject, which do not have absolute being [*esse*] but only in another: and such things would not be nor would they come into being, unless another thing, for which they are useful, existed. But there are certain things which have an absolute participation of the divine goodness, from which there accrues some utility for another thing: and such things would be even if that for which they are useful did not exist.[488]

Thus, non-persons are reduced back to God only through their right relation with other creatures, while persons can in some respect stand in a direct relation to God without the mediation of other creatures.[489]

To conclude, the integral whole which is the universe has a two-fold good which is common to the parts of the universe: one which is intrinsic and one which is separate, namely God. Each of these is shared by the parts of the universe precisely insofar as they are parts, but the created person is also directly related to God, and attains to him according to a special mode of participation not common to non-persons. To see more precisely the relationship among these goods notice that the rational creature's participation in the good of the order of the universe by way of the contemplation of truth

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[487] *S.T.*, Ia, q.65, a.2, c. (emphasis mine).
[488] In II Sent., d.1, q.2, a.3, c.
[489] See John of St. Thomas. "[Free acts are] able to be outside the whole universe, since they depend upon God alone." (*Cursus Theologicus*, Tom. V, Disp. 42, a.3, n.25).

in that order places the rational creature in proximate potency, as it were, to the contemplation of God as the first cause of that order. This, in turn, arouses in the created person a certain wonder concerning God not only as the cause of that order but as he is in himself. "If, then, God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder: and if in a better, this compels it yet more. And God is in a better state;"[490] "How happy would we judge that sight to be, if it could befall to one that he might look upon beauty itself, sincere, perfect, pure, simple…that he might simply look into divine beauty itself."[491]

Within the integral whole of the universe there also exist formally distinct communities of persons, some of which come to be by nature (*i.e.*, the family) and others of which come to be not by nature but by art (*i.e.*, civil communities).[492] Each of these is, in turn, an integral whole, having persons as parts and having some good which is truly common to each of its members. In our limited treatment we shall consider here only some aspects of the most complete human community, the *polis* or the state, and of its most fundamental unit, the family.

The "most complete," or "perfect," human community is that political community which has everything needed to actualize, or fulfill, man's highest natural abilities. If it did not possess these things, either there would be some other community which does

[490] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII.7, 1072b24.
[491] Plato, *Symposium*, c.29.
[492] When it is said that the civil community comes to be by art, not by nature, this is not to deny that man is naturally ordained to membership in a civil community (See *In IV Sent.*, d.26, q.1, a.1, c. "Natural reason dictates that men live together since one man is not sufficient for himself in all those things which pertain to life. For which reason man is said to be naturally political"). Indeed, just as nature has equipped animals with the various tools necessary to achieve their respective ends, nature has equipped man with reason so that by means of art man might acquire those goods which are necessary to fulfill human nature. While, however, the family is founded upon the natural act of generation, the polis is founded upon the law as an artifice of reason. "Man is more naturally a conjugal animal than a political animal." *In VIII Ethic.*, lect. 12.

possess them, and then this other community would be more perfect (and from this it would follow that there was something more perfect than the most perfect); or, no community would possess the things necessary for actualizing man's highest natural abilities, and thus nature would have endowed man with these abilities in vain. Since neither of these options is admissible, it follows that the most perfect human community is that political community which has everything needed to actualize, or fulfill, man's highest natural abilities.

Such a perfect community would not only provide the bare necessities needed for generation and survival but also those things necessary for man to live a perfect life according to reason and virtue. "The end of law and of a regime is not to dishearten [men], but to make men virtuous: and this is the end of politics."[493] This is because that which is specific to and highest in human nature is reason. The perfection of man demands that the potencies of a rational nature be actualized to the highest possible degree, but for this to take place, it is necessary that all of those human faculties ordained to the perfect exercise of reason be actualized.

> To this, indeed, all other human activities seem to be ordained as to an end. Since, for the perfection of contemplation there is required soundness of body, to which are ordained all artificial things necessary for life. There is also required rest from the disturbances of the passions, to which one arrives through the moral virtues and prudence; and rest from external disturbances, to which is ordained

[493] *In Psalm*., 44, n.5. See *In I Ethic.*, lect.14. "The best of human goods, namely happiness, is the end of politics, whose end is manifestly operation according to virtue. For the political [art] strives for this principal endeavor by making laws and applying rewards and punishments, so that it might make good citizens and doers of good works. This is to act in accordance with virtue." Here it should be noted that St. Thomas is making reference to Aristotle's teaching. However, it is clear enough from other places in St. Thomas' writings that he is in fundamental agreement with Aristotle on this point. See, for example, lectio 19 of the same book.

> the whole regimen of civil life. And so, if it be rightly considered, all human offices may be seen to serve the ones contemplating truth.[494]

When a political community is sufficiently large and well organized so as to provide the conditions and incentives necessary so that a life of reason and virtue can flourish among its citizens, then such a community is a most perfect human community.[495] To the degree that a political community is deficient in these areas, it lacks the notion of a perfect community.[496]

Not every rational good is encompassed by the good common to the perfect political community.[497] This is so, first of all, because the political community is not something *per se* one. Its members have operations which do not pertain to the community as such. Secondly, the goods common among men must be communicated by way of external, sensible manifestations, for the internal thoughts and desires of a man's heart are not common or shared with other men unless they be expressed by some sensible manifestation.[498] Therefore, the political community is not directly concerned with the things held in secret in the human heart.[499] It may be said that the dispositions

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[494] *S.C.G.*, III.37. Here again contemplation should be taken in the sense of an act of the speculative intellect, motivated by love of the truth considered and accompanied by delight in that truth.
[495] Among the organizations necessary for such a perfect community to exist would be, for example, educational institutions where human wisdom can be pursued in an orderly manner.
[496] Of course, this is not to be understood as a kind of utopian civilization where in fact every person is provided with all the means necessary to achieve personal fulfillment. It suffices that a political community have all those civil organs which are indispensable for the acquisition of the moral and intellectual virtues, even if for a given person or in a given case, the circumstances necessary for full human development are lacking. Needless to say, if a political community is to have the notion of a perfect community, it must be possible for at least some (and, ideally, as many as possible) of its citizens to arrive at the perfection of moral and intellectual virtue.
[497] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.21, a.4, ad3. "Man is not ordained to the political community according to his whole self, and according to all that is his."
[498] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.91, a.4, c. "The judgment of a man cannot be about interior motions which lie hidden, but only about exterior acts, which appear."
[499] See *Super Ep. ad Rom.*, V, lect.6. "The human law is referred to human judgment, which is about exterior acts. But the divine law is referred to the divine judgment, which is about the interior motions of the heart." See also *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.98, a.1,c. "The end of human law is the temporal tranquility of the city,

and thoughts of the heart are the concern of the political community indirectly, but this is to the degree that such things are principles or effects of external actions or communications.[500] Thus, the legislator is interested in leading men to virtue principally because virtuous men tend to act and communicate with other men in such a way as to benefit the common good, while vicious men tend to do the opposite.[501] Therefore, when it is said that the aim of the political art is to make men virtuous, it should be understood that this is for the sake of a further end, namely the right order which virtuous men tend to establish in a community by their mutual interactions and communications. This right ordering of the community is nothing other than the concord of human society, which is the common good proper to the perfect political community.[502] This concord of human society is an order that removes the external impediments to the complete development and fulfillment of the human person.[503] More than this, it also provides needed incentives for the same. The reason for this is that since higher goods are less known to most men, it is natural for man to need certain enticements to pursue these higher goods. Such enticements are lower goods which are more proportioned, and so more attractive, to the one being enticed. In this way the political art imitates nature in which, for example, pleasure in eating is an enticement for achieving the greater good of nutrition

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to which end the law arrives by restraining exterior acts with regard to those evils which can disturb the peaceful state of the city."

[500] See Ia-IIae, q.92, a.1, ad1; and Ia-IIae, q.99, a.3, c.

[501] This is not to say that the legislator ought to be morally indifferent to whether men are actually virtuous. Even if, hypothetically, the identical external results could be obtained without making men virtuous, the legislator should choose that course which would produce real virtue since every man ought to be interested in the moral goodness of his fellow man.

[502] See *S.C.G.*, III.146.

[503] Such "external" impediments should not be understood to refer merely to impediments external to the community but rather external to the members of the community; besides invasion by foreign powers it would include, for example, internal civil strife or crime, extreme poverty, *etc*.

and sexual pleasure is used as an enticement to bring about the greater good of the propagation of the species.

Although the human person is not ordained to the good of the political community according to all that he is or has, nevertheless this does not mean that the whole person is not ordained to the good of the political community. "The whole man is ordained, as to an end, to the whole community of which he is a part."[504] The reason for this is that the good of the political community is a good for the whole person and a good realized by the whole person[505] even though it is not a good which completely exhausts (in the sense of fully actualizing) the natural potencies of the human person. Every part of a man (*i.e.*, soul and body, and even the parts of the body) shares in the good of the political community, and every part of a man can be used for the building up of this common good. Thus, a man cannot dismember himself or take harmful drugs since he is not exclusively his own possession. When a man cuts off his hand, that hand can no longer be used to work for feeding and housing his family, or to combat foreign invaders in war. Because that part of him is no longer usable, others must suffer harm to their good since it is the common good that is compromised. That hand, and every part of a man, needs to be at the disposition of the political community of which a human person is a part.

Nevertheless, each part of a man need not be at the disposal of the political community at every time or in every respect. Sometimes, a man might use his hands simply to bring about a private good. Writing his diary, carving a piece of wood into a pipe, and other such things are ordained to his private good. More importantly, a person need not direct all his thoughts or choices to the good of the political community. Indeed,

[504] IIa-IIae, q.65, a.1.
[505] Indeed, this is true for every good which perfects human nature as such.

if he were to do so, he would fail to actualize his highest natural abilities. His perfection would be compromised, for the good common to the perfect human community is not itself the realization of all the natural abilities of the human person, nor is it the object by which they might be realized. It is rather the foundation and condition for exercising the highest of these abilities. This good makes other, higher goods possible, or even easier to attain;[506] but it does not, of itself, render them actual.[507]

Supreme among the activities to which man is ordained is the very act of contemplating truth. As we saw above, this is the actualization of man's highest natural ability. A person directs himself in this activity without being subject to the directives of the authority of the political community.[508] The simple reason for this is that the political authority does not have the capability to realize this kind of a good. "The highest good of man is not [achieved] in secular power."[509] The state is utterly powerless to bring about the good of the contemplation of truth in a human soul, and so it does not belong to its competency to give directives in such matters. Put another way, the causality of the common good of the political community (as a final cause) is not capable of drawing

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[506] In this respect we must disagree with certain positions proposed by M. Novak in which he seems to assert that political society has no positive role to play in the development of the human person in virtue as a preparation for the contemplation of truth and God (See *Free Persons and the Common Good* (New York: Madison Books, 1989) p.4 and p.98). A view of political society which sees the role of the society as merely not obstructing the individual person's freedom for contemplation and for God is radically insufficient. The common good of political society is itself an end which falls within the order of ends natural to man, and therefore it is not merely neutral but it is positively ordained to the ultimate end.

[507] See J.Schall. "Political philosophy is in a sense necessary in order that we might have a polity that allows us to philosophize in the first place, a polity that recognizes its own incompleteness;" and a little later he states: "For St. Thomas, dealing with political things, with the law, with the regime, even with the best regime, is the first step to the freedom for confronting the divine things." From "Political Philosophy: Remarks on its Relation to Metaphysics and Theology," *Angelicum* 70, (1993), p.504. For a more extended treatment of this relationship, see J. Pieper, *Liesure, the Basis of Culture*.

[508] See J. Maritain, *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, p.17. "The community is entitled to expect the mathematician to serve the social group by *teaching* mathematics…But the community will never have the right to require the mathematician *to hold as true* some one mathematical system rather than any other, or to teach such mathematics as is deemed to be more in conformity with the law of the social group."

[509] *S.C.G.*, III.31.

forth or actualizing the activity of the contemplation of truth. For this, a common good of a higher order is necessary. The end of the speculative intellect is a good higher than the good which can be achieved in the political or any practical order.

> Someone, from the fact that he is speculating, is himself directed singularly unto the end of speculation. However, the end itself of the speculative intellect exceeds the good of the practical intellect as much as its singular attainment exceeds the common attainment of the good of the practical intellect. And therefore, the most perfect beatitude consists in [the act of] the speculative intellect.[510]

This is nothing other than to say that the political community is ordained to an end beyond itself. This end beyond the good of the political community is not the singular activity of contemplation of the individual persons but rather the common object of contemplation shared by the members of the community.[511] This common object is the natural order (or some part of it), and the cause of this order, namely God.[512]

From the foregoing, therefore, it can be readily seen that the good of the perfect political community is a good which brings the members of that community into a state of proximate potency to the contemplation of truth. "The active life is a disposition for the contemplative life."[513] That is, full participation in the common good of the perfect human community prepares the human person to enter more fully into the common good of the whole universe. Joseph Pieper sums this up well.

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[510] *In IV Sent*., d.49, q.1, a.1c, ad1.
[511] See De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.61. "The practical happiness of the community is not, through itself, ordained to the speculative happiness of the singular person, but to the speculative happiness of the person insofar as he is a member of the community." See *In VII Politic*., lect.2 (P. de Alvernia complevit).
[512] If the term "contemplation" is used in the strictest sense, it applies to the consideration of God in himself, while the inspection of divine things in and by created things is called speculation (See *In III Sent*., d.35, q.1, a.2c, c.).
[513] *In III Sent*., d.35, q.1, a.3c, c. See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae; and q.181, a.1, ad3.

> All practical activity, from the practice of the ethical virtues to gaining a means of livelihood, serves something other than itself. And this other thing is not practical activity. It is having what is sought after, while we rest content in the results of our active efforts. Precisely that is the meaning of the old adage that the *vita activa* is fulfilled in the *vita contemplativa*. To be sure, the active life contains a felicity of its own; it lies, says Thomas, in the practice of prudence, in the perfect art of the conduct of life. But the ultimate repose cannot be found in this kind of felicity. *Vita activa est dispositio ad vita contemplativa*; the ultimate meaning of the active life is to make possible the happiness of contemplation.[514]

The political community which we have outlined above is itself composed of smaller communities of persons, of which the most fundamental and important is the natural family. Like the other integral wholes which we have already considered, the family has a unity of order only. Therefore, its intrinsic good will likewise be the order and peace of the family.

Peace and order are established in a family when justice is observed among its members. Justice, however, concerns what is due to each. Since the members of a family are unequal (as, for example, parent and child), it follows that the just for each is not the same.[515] It is not our intention here to provide a detailed explanation of the various communications and actions which establish right order in a family. Indeed, this would merit a thesis of its own.[516] Here we simply intend to identify the principal good common to the family as such and the chief acts and means by which it is promoted and preserved.

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[514] "The Purpose of Politics," in *Joseph Pieper: An Anthology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), p.121.
[515] See *Tabula Libri Ethica*, cap.1.
[516] For a survey of the principal kinds of relationships and common goods involved in the family unit see *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII.12.

A first observation is that the common goods upon which a family is based pertain to the necessities of life, such as generation and nutrition.[517] It is a fact of human experience that families come together most often for these reasons. For example, meals are nearly always at the center of family gatherings, and parents frequently come to visit their children, even those who are far away, to help care for a newborn child. Such goods are not among the most noble goods, but they are the most fundamental, and a large part, if not the greater part, of human life is often spent attending to these necessities. For example, a husband may work through the day to provide food, shelter, and clothing for the family; a wife may attend to the maintenance of the house, the preparation of meals, and the care of the children. Moreover, since the most immediate needs of life are acquired through external possessions, it happens that one of the principal proximate aims of family life is the acquisition and maintenance of goods[518] which are used as instruments to achieving peace and a well ordered life in the family.[519]

Since the human child needs more than nutrition to come to full maturity, it is also necessary that the basic elements of a moral and intellectual formation be communicated to the children by the parents. "Nature does not intend only the generation [of the child], but the support and upbringing to the perfect state of a man, as man, which is the state of virtue. Hence, according to the Philosopher, we have three things from parents: namely being, nutrition, and education."[520] Children learn to speak and to recognize the first elements of rational discourse in the family. Through the discipline, instruction, and

[517] See *In VIII Ethic.*, lect.12. "Domestic society is ordered to the acts necessary for life, namely generation and nutrition."
[518] See *De Reg. Prin.* I.15.
[519] See *Super Prim. Ep. ad Tim.*, III, lect.2. "The good administration [of a family] is not only the acquisition of riches, since these are not the end of household administration, but the instruments. Yet its end is a rectified life: Sir. 44:6, 'making peace within his family.'" As an old adage says: "When there's no hay, the donkeys fight."
[520] *In IV Sent*., d.26, q.1, a.1, c.

example of their parents and older siblings they receive their first formation in moral character. So foundational is this first moral formation that it caused Aristotle to remark that "it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference."[521]

Children on their part chiefly owe honor, obedience, and gratitude to their parents: honor since the parents are a principle of their coming to be and of their sustenance, especially in the first years of life, and honor is nothing other than a recognition of superiority and excellence in another;[522] obedience since the parents have care of the common good of the family, in which the children cannot share without being subject to the will of those who have care of this good;[523] and gratitude since it is clearly contrary to reason to be ungrateful for having received such great goods.[524]

Briefly, these are the kinds of acts and communications by which order is established, fostered, and preserved within family society. When family members, to the degree that they are able, render to one another what is due in these areas, the family remains at peace. When any of these is lacking to a large degree, the family order is disrupted, especially when the disorder pertains to the most fundamental of these acts, the act of generation, which is at the center of the relation between husband and wife as well as parents and children.

The communication of the kinds of goods we have outlined above depends heavily upon the bonds of natural love which are established by the act of generation that

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[521] *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.1, 1103b25.
[522] See *In VIII Ethic*., lect.11. "For since the father is superior, it follows that parents are honored by their children. For honor is due to a superior."
[523] See *Super Ep. ad Eph.* VI, lect.1. "Fathers are naturally obliged to instruct their children in morality, but children, when they are instructed by their parents, are naturally obliged to obey them, just as the sick ought to obey a doctor. Hence, obedience is proper to children."
[524] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.106, a.1.

is so central to family life.[525] Indeed, in virtue of this act the persons themselves become the common good of the other members of the family. The children are the common good of both parents;[526] each parent is a good common to all of their children.[527] This natural love is not merely based upon choice (even though it may be perfected by choice) but is founded in the natural relation established between parents and offspring.[528] There is a certain sense in which parents cannot do otherwise than love their children, and children cannot do otherwise than love their parents. Experience shows that the need to love and be loved by family members goes far beyond the need to love and be loved by those who are our friends by choice. Without this foundation of natural love the unity and order of the family life is compromised.

In relation to the common good of political society as a whole it is obvious that the goods provided by the family society are necessary foundations of and stepping stones to the good which the political community intends to realize. The first formation in moral and intellectual virtue provided by the family is presupposed to the integration of persons into the larger civic community. Precisely because of its natural bonds and limited size the family unit is better able to inculcate moral virtue and establish the foundations of intellectual virtue.[529] One need only imagine a scenario where the state

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[525] See *De Virtutibus,* q.2, a.7, c.
[526] See *In VIII Ethic.*, lect.12. "Children are the common good of both, namely of the husband and the wife, whose conjunction is for the sake of offspring." See also *In IV Sent.*, d.33, q.2, a.1, c.
[527] See *In VIII Ethic.*, lect.12. "Children have friendship for parents as for a kind of superexcellent good."
[528] See *In VIII Ethic.*, lect.12. "Parents love their children for the reason that they are something of them. For children are procreated from the seed of their parents. Hence, a son is in a certain way a part of the father separated from him. Thus, this friendship is closest to that love by which someone loves himself, from which all friendship is derived, as is said in the ninth book [of the Nicomachean Ethics]. Reasonably, therefore, is paternal friendship put down as the principle. But children love their parents insofar as they have being from them, just as a separated part would love the whole from which it is separated."
[529] "The family constitutes, much more than a mere juridical, social or economic unit, a community of love and solidarity, which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual, and religious values." Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Charter of Rights of the Family*, preamble (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1983).

was responsible for the care of all persons immediately from birth to see clearly how necessary the family unit is as the foundation of political society. Even when such institutions as orphanages become necessary due to circumstances in some cases, the aim of such institutions is to provide transitional care for children until they can be adopted by families. The family is simply a better instrument which is more proportioned to the individual person for realizing, in all their concrete detail, these more foundational goods.[530] Thus, for example, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, according to which that which can be done well or better through a lesser authority should be left to that lesser authority, parents have the obligation and right to be the first educators of their children. It is only when parents fail gravely in this obligation that the state has the right and duty to intervene. An insightful passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle reveals the importance of the natural bonds of familial love to the well being of the political community. "For as in cities, laws and prevailing types of character have force, so in households do the injunctions and the habits of the father; and these have even more, because of the tie of blood and the benefits he confers: for the children start with a natural affection and disposition to obey."[531] St. Thomas comments:

> A paternal precept does not have the full coercive force of the precept of a king, as was said above. But, consequently, he shows that, in some respect, this [supervision] befits a private person more than a public one, due to kinship and benefits, on account of which children love their parents, and obey from a natural facility of friendship, which exists between children and their father. Therefore,

[530] "The first instrument for the education in the meaning of the common good in all its dimensions is certainly always the family." V. Bachelet, "L'educazione al Bene Commune," in *Atti della XXXVI Settimana Sociale dei Cattolici d'Italia* (Rome: Scuola Typografica Don Orione, 1965), p.223.
[531] *Ethics*, X.9, 1180b5. The entire ninth chapter of book ten includes a number of insightful observations on the principle of subsidiarity. Consider, for example, the following passage taken from the same chapter: "A boxer presumably does not prescribe the same style of fighting for all his pupils. It would seem then that the detail is worked out with more precision if the control is private; for each person is more likely to get what suits his case."

> although the precept of the king may be more powerful by way of fear, nevertheless, the paternal precept is more powerful through the way of love, which way is more efficacious in those who are not completely ill disposed.[532]

At the same time, it must be recognized that the larger political society is necessary for the well being[533] of the family. "The proper good of any single person cannot exist without *economia*, that is, the right disposition of the family, nor without civic prudence, that is, the right disposition of the city, just as the good of the part is not able to exist without the good of the whole."[534] Thus, for example, the family needs assistance in the correction of the criminally malicious through the coercive power of the state. Or again, there is need for defense from outside aggressors by means of a national defense. Not only this, but the perfections of higher education and the acquisition of all of the things necessary for living well would be impossible to a solitary family, or even a small group of families. As a result of this, even the limited education and provisions made for children according to the proper scope of the family would be significantly compromised if the family itself did not live within a larger, self-sufficient, political community. The family and civil society have a complementary role in realizing the common good of the human person.[535]

In relation to the larger whole of the entire universe the family also provides remote preparation for sharing in the good common to the whole universe, for that soundness of body which is necessary to engage in the contemplative life depends largely upon the proper nutrition obtained in the family environment. Moreover, it is principally

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[532] *In X Ethic*., lect.15.
[533] Here we make reference to the classic distinction between *necessitas ad esse*, and *necessitas ad bene esse*, found in *Metaphysics*, V.5. See *inter alia*, *In IV Sent*., d.7, q.1, a.1b, c.
[534] *In VI Ethic*., lect.7. See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.47, a.10, ad2.
[535] "The family and society, which are mutually linked by vital and organic bonds, have a complementary function in the defense and advancement of the good of every person and of humanity." From the preamble to *The Charter of Rights of the Family*.

in the family that the moral virtues which free a person from excessive internal disturbances of the passions are planted and developed. These virtues, in turn, together with the elementary intellectual virtues that have their origin in the family, make a person better disposed for the contemplation of that universal order, according to which created persons most fully partake of the good common to the whole universe.

Because of its foundation in nature and its natural ordination to a good beyond even the good of the perfect human community, namely the good of the entire human race,[536] it follows that a number of significant aspects of the family society are not wholly subject to the positive laws of the political community.[537] This is simply to recognize that the family, as a kind of work of nature, has a fundamental structure and essential properties determined by the order which reason discovers in nature, an order we have briefly sketched above. Laws which, though they seem to be expedient for a given state at a given time, do not respect this natural order of the family society are in fact not laws at all[538] since they do not accord with right reason, nor can they genuinely contribute, *per se*, to the welfare of the state. It must be stressed that if there is anything in the family which escapes the competence of the larger whole which is the perfect human community, it is only because it pertains immediately to a higher order of goods, either the intrinsic common good or separated common good of the universe. The primacy of the common good has universal validity.

It is clear from the foregoing that the common good of the family provides a disposition for and is ordered to the common good of the whole political community, for

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[536] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.154, a.2, c. "Sexual union is ordained to the good of the whole human race."
[537] "The family, a natural society, exists prior to the state or to any other community, and possesses inherent rights which are inalienable." From the preamble to *The Charter of Rights of the Family*.
[538] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.92, a.1, ad4. "A tyrannical law, since it is not according to reason, is not simply speaking a law, but is rather a certain perversion of law."

the benefits which accrue from a well ordered family life place a person in proximate potency to enter into political society, by preparing the person to receive more fully its benefits and to contribute more effectively to realizing its good.

V.D.2 Conclusion

Looking back over our survey of the distinction and order among wholes and parts as well as their respective common goods in relation to one another, a clear pattern emerges wherein the common goods of lesser wholes serve to place the persons who are their members into a proximate potency for receiving and contributing to the common goods of the greater wholes. In relation to higher common goods the political community and the family are not a social net or a chain restraining the person but a ladder by which the created person can ascend to higher goods. The intermediate communities, and their respective common goods, which stand between the individual person and his ultimate common good, are truly necessary steps and helps without which the ultimate goods cannot ordinarily be reached.

There is an analogy here between the order of goods and the order of natural forms, an order which St. Thomas describes in a text of his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

> Not just anything is generated from anything, but diverse things come to be from diverse materials. For every generable thing has a determinate matter from which it comes to be, since it is necessary for the form to be proportionate to the matter. For, although prime matter is in potency to all forms, nevertheless it receives them in a certain order. For first of all, it is in potency to the elementary forms, and by the mediation of these according to diverse proportions of the things

> commixed, it is in potency to diverse forms. Hence, not just anything can come to be from anything, except, perhaps, by resolution into prime matter.[539]

In order to draw out the full implications of this truth in relation to personal dignity it remains for us to examine both the concepts of the person and of dignity, as well as the moral good, which is that good proper to persons.

[539] *In XII Metaph.*, lect.2.

Chapter VI: The Notion of the Moral Good in St. Thomas

VI.A The Meaning of the Term "Moral"

The moral good is the kind of good that is proper to persons, that is, those having choice.[540] The English word "moral" derives from the Latin *moralis*, which is the adjective form of *mos*. According to St. Thomas the word *mos* first of all signifies human customs or manners and, secondly, a natural or quasi-natural inclination.

> *Mos* signifies two things. For sometimes it signifies custom [*consuetudinem*] just as it is said in Acts 15: "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you will not be able to be saved." But sometimes, it signifies a natural or quasi-natural inclination to do some action, whence also some *mores* are even said of brute animals.[541]

It is apparent that there is a relation which reason can perceive between these two senses so that the word *mos* can be taken as an analogous term. Custom or habituation begets an inclination in the soul which is likened to a "second nature." When one speaks of moral goods or moral virtues, the word "moral" is taken in the second sense, namely as a quasi-natural inclination.

> Moral virtue is named from *more*, insofar as *mos* signifies a certain natural or quasi-natural inclination to do some action. And the other signification [of *mos*], according to which it signifies custom, is near to this signification of moral: for custom is in a certain way turned into nature, and produces an inclination like to a natural inclination. Moreover, it is manifest that inclination to act properly

[540] *In II Sent.* d.27, q.1, a.2, ad2. "Although good is converted with being, yet in a special manner it is found in animate things and those having choice [*electionem*]." See *In IV Sent.*d.38, q.2, a.3a, c.; *S.T.*, Ia, q.48, a.5, c.; and *De Malo*, q.1, a.4, c.
[541] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.58, a.1, c.

> belongs to the appetitive virtue, to which it belongs to move all the powers to acting.[542]

Moral goodness, like other kinds of goodness, implies reference to an end. However, the end implied in moral goodness is the end of the person as person. Thus, the end implied in moral goodness is the end of an individual of a rational nature as such. Since the rational creature is capable of attaining to its end in a special manner or mode the moral good is distinguished from the physical good, that is, the good of nature. "Since good is said from the notion of an end, it follows that although [the good] is found in all things in which there is an end, nevertheless, more especially it is found in those who propose the end to themselves, and know the intention of the end."[543] The good of nature is found both in first act (namely substantial form) and in second act (namely operation). Moral good, however, is not found at the level of first act. Rather, it is principally found in operation.[544] More precisely, moral good is found only in those operations proceeding from an agent that knows the very notion of the end and which proposes this end for itself.

However, not every act done by a rational agent is a moral act. In man, who is a composite of form and matter, there are acts which do not proceed from the rational power, (for example, digestion and respiration). Such acts are acts of a man but not properly human acts. Rather, those acts are properly human which proceed from a man insofar as he is a man (*i.e.*, insofar as he is rational).

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[542] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.58, a.1, c.
[543] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.58, a.1, c.
[544] See *In II Sent*. d.35. q.1, a.1, c.

> Of the actions that are done by a man, those alone are properly called human which are proper to man insofar as he is man. However, man differs from irrational creatures in this: that he is the master of his own acts. Whence, those actions alone are properly called human of which man is the master. But a man is the master of his own acts through reason and will, hence also free decision [*arbitrium*] is said to be the faculty of will and reason. Therefore, those actions are properly called human which proceed from a deliberate will.[545]

Therefore, only those acts that proceed from choice, that is, a deliberate act of the will,[546] are properly called human or personal.[547] Thus, human or personal acts are by their nature moral acts.

Because certain habits are produced in the soul as a consequence of deliberate choices and because these habits render one well or ill disposed for moral operation, it happens that these habits also share in the character of moral goodness or evil. Thus, the term "moral" can be applied not only to human acts but also to the habits that incline to such acts, namely the virtues or vices of the appetitive power.[548] In virtue of possessing moral virtues the subject of these virtues (namely, the rational creature) can also be called morally good, simply speaking.[549] Thus, the notion of the moral good can be applied to acts,[550] habits, and persons; but the ultimate foundation for calling the latter two morally

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[545] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae q.1, a.1, c.
[546] Choice can be defined more specifically as an act of the will, which has as its proper object the possible means by which a person might attain to the ultimate end (See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.13, a.1-5). Hence, choice is the term of a deliberation in which a person proportions himself to the ultimate end by an act which he can do in the here and now. Since every choice has regard to the ultimate end, at least implicitly, every choice has moral content as either leading the person towards or away from the ultimate good for the person.
[547] I distinguish "human" from the broader term "personal" here in order to allow for the possibility of moral goodness in angels, according to an analogous sense of moral goodness (insofar as choice in angels does not proceed from deliberation).
[548] Since act and habit fall under different genera, for St. Thomas even moral goodness is a rationally equivocal, or analogous, expression. See *De Veritate* q.17, a.1, c.
[549] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.56, a.3, c.
[550] By "act" we intend to include both the external act and the interior act of the will, with the understanding that the exterior act has moral content only to the degree that it is moved by the will and shares in the moral content of the interior act of the will.

good is found in the goodness of the act. The notion of moral goodness is found first of all in personal acts.

A personal act is morally good when it has everything that is required for its perfection, namely, its fullness of being. "The good and evil of an action, just as of other things, is noted from the fullness of being or from the lack of it."[551] What was said above about the good, as such, can be applied to the particular case of moral goodness. Since moral good is not found in first act (substantial form), it follows that it has a mode of existence proper to accidental being.[552] Moreover, because human acts proceed from reason, the moral good touches upon the realm of the intentions of reason or intentional being (as opposed to real being). Yet neither accidental being nor intentional being is first understood by us. Rather it is real substances that are first understood by us. Thus, in a certain respect, the goodness of real substances is the primary analogate in terms of which the notion of the moral good must be understood. That is, it is necessary to move from an understanding of goodness as applied to real substances to an understanding of goodness as applied to accidental and intentional beings. This extension and application of the notion of the good of substances to moral goodness requires careful consideration.

As discussed above in our treatment of the good as such, in order for a substance to be simply speaking good, it is necessary that it have not only the perfection of its substantial being (*i.e.*, substantial form), but also the accidents which give it perfection or fullness of being (*i.e.*, those powers and operations which express and are due to the very nature of the substance). Moreover, goodness in created substances is not found merely in what the substance is absolutely (either by its substantial form, or those accidents

[551] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.18, a.2, c.
[552] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.85, a.4.

which are said absolutely of substance, such as quantity and quality) but also according to what a substance is relative to its causes, especially its ultimate final cause. Thus, the goodness of a substance also depends upon the right relation and due proportion to its end. The right relation and due proportion to its end are mediated by, and effected through, its powers, habits, and operations.[553] In the same way for a human act to be simply speaking good, it must have not only being as a specific kind of act but also all those circumstances or conditions which are due to and express the nature of the act, and which place it in right relation with its end.

Since the object of any act is what makes the specific nature of that act known, it follows that the first goodness which belongs to an act is noted from the object of the act. This goodness corresponds to the goodness that belongs to a substance in virtue of its substantial form. "Just as a natural thing has species from its form, so an action has species from its object; just as motion from its terminus. Therefore, just as the first goodness of a natural thing is noted from its form, which gives species to it, so also the first goodness of a moral act is noted from a fitting object."[554] This goodness is not called first because it is better than the other modes of goodness which may belong to an act or because it is prior to them in time, but rather, it is called first because it is first in nature since the other modes of goodness presuppose the existence of this most fundamental kind of goodness.

Again, just as a substance has accidents which are said of it absolutely, and which add to or detract from its perfection, so also a personal act has circumstances which stand around the act and add to or detract from its perfection. There is the same ratio or

[553] See *De Veritate*, q.21, a.5, c.
[554] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.18, a.2, c.

relation between a substance and its accidents as there is between an act and its circumstances. For example, as a large quantity is to a substance, so is forcefulness to a blow, or intensity to an act of love. Thus, the moral goodness of a personal act is also discerned from its circumstances.

> In natural things there is not found the whole fullness of perfection which is due to a thing from its substantial form, which gives the species. But much is superadded from the supervening accidents, just as in man [much good is added] from shape, from color, and things of this kind. And if any one of these be lacking for fittingness, evil results. So also it is in action. For the fullness of its goodness does not entirely consist in its species; but something is added from those things which enter in as certain accidents.[555]

Thus, the goodness of an action can be considered both from its object and from its circumstances, where a circumstance is taken to mean a characteristic, besides the very species, which is said of an action absolutely.

Finally, just as the notion of goodness for substances depends upon its relation to its end, so also the notion of goodness in personal acts depends upon the relation of those acts to their end. "Just as the being of a thing depends on the agent and the form, so the goodness of a thing depends on the end….Human actions, and other things whose goodness depends on another, have the notion of goodness from the end on which they depend besides the absolute goodness which exists in them."[556] This notion of goodness which is found in human actions is, therefore, not said absolutely of the action but relative to another, namely the end of the action. It is important not to misunderstand St. Thomas here. He is not saying that this goodness is something extrinsic to the act itself. Rather, he is saying that the goodness *in* the act is conceived as belonging to it in virtue

[555] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.18, a.3, c.
[556] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.18, a.4, c.

of its relation to its end. In the second objection of the relevant article of the *Summa Theologiae* the objector argues that since goodness is something intrinsic to a thing and the end is something extrinsic, the goodness of a thing cannot be from its end. In his response St. Thomas teaches: "Although the end is an extrinsic cause, nevertheless, the due proportion to the end and the relation toward it inheres in the action."[557] This response presupposes St. Thomas' doctrine of a two-fold mode of being in relation, *esse in* and *esse ad.*[558] Relation, although its very nature is to be toward another, exists in such a way that it inheres in its subject. This is not a contradiction; it is simply to distinguish the nature or essence of a thing from its mode of existing. Thus, when St. Thomas divides being into the ten predicaments, he includes *ad aliquid* among those things which are predicated on account of something inhering or existing *in* their subject (together with quantity and quality), as distinct from those accidents which are predicated of their subject due to something extrinsic to the subject (such as the predicaments of position, or when, or where). In his commentary on the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*, after considering the predicament of substance which signifies the very what-it-is of a subject, St. Thomas goes on to distinguish the modes of predication and being which belong to accidents.

> In a second mode, [something can be said of something] so that the thing predicated is taken according to something in the subject. Which predicate either is in [the subject] through itself and absolutely, as following upon matter, and thus it is quantity; or as following upon form, and thus it is quality: or it is in [the subject] not absolutely, but in respect to another, and thus it is "toward another"

[557] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.18, a.4, ad2.
[558] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.28, a.2.

> [*ad aliquid*]. In a third mode, so that the thing predicated is taken from that which is outside the subject…[559]

Hence, one can say that the goodness which is taken from the end is a goodness that belongs to the action itself inasmuch as the relation and proportion to that end is something inhering or existing in the action.

From what has been said it can be seen that the goodness of an action can be discerned from a four-fold consideration. An action is good inasmuch as it is an existing act, inasmuch as it is an act of such and such a kind, inasmuch as it has its due circumstances, and inasmuch as it is in right relation and proportion to its end.

> In human action, a four-fold goodness can be considered. One according to genus, namely insofar as it is an action, since as much as it has of action and being, so much does it have of goodness, as was said. But another [goodness can be considered] according to species, which is taken according to a fitting object; third, according to circumstances, as if according to certain accidents; fourth, moreover, according to the end, as if according to the relation to the cause of goodness.[560]

It should be appreciated that not all of these ways according to which the goodness of a personal act can be considered stand equally to the goodness of that act. In fact, there is an order among these four modes according to which goodness can be considered. The first are more fundamental in the sense that the latter modes of goodness depend upon the presence of the former (*e.g.*, if there is no act, there is no goodness of any kind); while the latter have more the notion of perfect goodness since the ultimate

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[559] *In V Metaph.*, lect. 9. It is interesting to compare St. Thomas' division of the ten predicaments with the division given by his teacher, St. Albert. St. Albert places the predicament of *ad aliquid* with those accidents that are predicated as existing extrinsic to the subject. St. Thomas' correction of this position permits him to preserve the thesis that the good taken from the end of an action is the good of that action. It also has significant consequences for his doctrine on the Trinity.

[560] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.18, a.4, c.

actuality has the notion of goodness, simply speaking.[561] Thus, the goodness from the end most of all has the notion of goodness; and right relation to the ultimate end has the notion of goodness most perfectly.[562] For this reason St. Thomas says that "the perfection of goodness consists in the obtaining of the ultimate end"[563] and that "moral good consists principally in conversion to God."[564]

So much does the notion of the good consist in proper proportion to the ultimate end that, no matter what disorder a personal act seems to have in relation to other things, if it retains the right order to the ultimate end, it is still judged to be good simply speaking.

> The good in things arises from a two-fold order, of which the first order is of all things to the ultimate end, who is God. The second order is of one thing to another thing. And the first order is the cause of the second, since the second order is for the sake of the first. For from this, that things are ordered to one another, they mutually assist one another so that they might be ordained rightly to the ultimate end. Hence, with the goodness subtracted which is from the order of one thing to another thing, nevertheless, that goodness which is from the order of a thing to the ultimate end is able to remain, since the first does not depend on the second, in the way that the second depends on the first.[565]

This is not to assert that the goodness which is noted from the object or the circumstances need not be present for an act to be good. Rather, it is simply to judge the object and circumstances from the more fundamental or universal perspective of the divine will.

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[561] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.5, a.1, ad1.
[562] On the other hand, it should be appreciated that the notion of evil consists more in the privation of the more fundamental modes of goodness, for the corruption of that which is more fundamental is worse than the corruption of that which is in itself more perfect. For example, the corruption of the sensitive power is worse than a corruption of the rational power since if the sensitive power is corrupted, so is the rational, but not *vice-versa*. Again, a defect in the will, which moves all the other powers to their acts, is worse than a corruption in some more specific power or habit (See *De Malo*, q.1, a.5, c.).
[563] *Comp. Theol.,* I.109.
[564] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.19, a.2, ad2.
[565] *In I Sent.* d.47, q.1, a.4, c.

Even if the object and circumstances do not proportion an act to other creatures in the right order insofar as reason judges them according to their natural being, nonetheless the possibility that they might stand in correct relation to the ultimate end still exists. While such a hypothetical case does not fall under the range of philosophical consideration,[566] still the fact that such a situation is possible is philosophically knowable and manifests to the philosopher the radical dependence of the moral goodness of a personal act upon the ultimate end.[567] Right proportion to the ultimate end has, of itself, the full notion of goodness.[568]

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[566] See *De Potentia,* q.1, a.4, c. "The effect of secondary causes…according to the judgment of theologian, are called possible or impossible according to superior causes. But according to the judgment of the philosopher, they are called possible or impossible according to inferior causes."

[567] Apart from a divine revelation, it would not be possible to judge the right ordination of a personal act to the ultimate end except through its right ordination to the intermediate ends according to the order discovered by reason in nature. Thus, while the philosopher can see that it is possible for a personal act which is discordant with the natural order to be good due to a special revelation, the philosopher cannot judge according to some other order than the natural order. See *In I Sent.* d.47, q.1, a.4, c.: 'Any sin names a deordination of one thing to another thing, such as homicide, fraternal hatred, disobedience to a prelate, and things of this kind. Hence, if such things are able to retain that goodness which is from the order to the ultimate end, beyond doubt they would be good, and the will would be able to acquiesce to them. But this cannot happen except by divine power, through which the order in things was instituted. For just as it cannot happen, except by the miraculous operation of the divine power, that what receives being from the first agent by the mediation of some second cause have being, while the second cause is destroyed or taken away (as when an accident is without its subject, just as in the Sacrament of the altar): so also it cannot happen, except through a miracle of divine virtue that that which is naturally apt to receive goodness from its order to the ultimate end by means of an order to some [created] thing, have goodness when the order which was to that [created] thing is taken away. Hence, that act which is to kill the innocent, or to resist a prelate cannot be good except by divine precept or authority."

[568] This seems to be opposed to what St. Thomas says in *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.18, a.4, ad3. "Nothing prohibits an action having one of the aforesaid goodnesses from lacking another. And according to this it happens that an action which is good according to its species or according to circumstances, is ordered to a bad end or vice-versa. Nevertheless, an action is not good simply speaking, unless all of the goodnesses come together, since any single defect causes evil; good, however is caused from an integral cause." Thus, it seems that even if the ultimate end is intended, but the object or circumstance is defective, then the act is not morally good. In response, it should be said that when it is said that an act is proportioned to the ultimate end, this does not simply mean that the ultimate end is intended by the agent (for in some sense, every personal act intends the ultimate end), but that the act itself is such that it rightly proportions the agent to the ultimate end. Yet if "to intend the ultimate end" is taken to signify that the object of the interior act of the will is, in fact, the ultimate end, or is some object rightly referred by the agent to the ultimate end, then it is true that this alone makes a personal act to be good. Thus, St. Thomas says in another place (*S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.19, a.2, c.). "The goodness of the will depends on that one thing alone, which through itself produces goodness in an act, namely from the object, and not on the circumstances, which are certain accidents of the act."

Since the notion of goodness consists principally in right relation with the ultimate end, no matter how noble and good something is, it cannot be chosen to the prejudice or exclusion of the ultimate end. Moreover, those acts which have a greater disproportion to the ultimate end are judged to be worse,[569] while those which are more proportioned to the ultimate end are judged to be better.[570]

Some personal acts pertain immediately to the ultimate end, such as loving the ultimate end itself, but others do not bear an immediate relation to the ultimate end. Instead they are related and proportioned to the ultimate end through intermediate ends which, as such, have the character of means. For example, to love one's own children is related to the ultimate end through the intermediate end of the common good of the human species and the order of the universe, for reason judges that if parents do not love their own children, the human species will perish. The existence of the human species is, however, necessary for the good order of the universe. If the human species did not exist, the material order would not be united to the first cause and ultimate end through explicit knowledge and love.[571] Thus, it would be contrary to the good of the order of the universe, and hence contrary to the will of the one who established that order,[572] for the human species to perish. Thus, it is contrary to the ultimate end for parents not to love their children.

Since not every act pertains immediately to the ultimate end, it follows that the relation and proportion of some acts to the ultimate end must be judged according to their relation to the intermediate ends. Reason judges the relation of an act to the ultimate end

[569] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.34, a.2.
[570] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.23, a.6.
[571] See *S.C.G.*, II.46.
[572] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.154, a.12, ad1.

according to its relation to intermediate ends. For example, to determine if a business transaction is good reason must first judge whether each party has been given its due by an equal exchange, and that each has profited from the exchange since this is the proximate end intended in a business transaction. Hence, it is clear that unless an act is rightly ordered to each of its intermediate ends, reason judges that it is not rightly ordered to the ultimate end. Since reason judges order according to what is *per se*, not accidental or by chance, it follows that for a personal act to be judged morally good, it must be *per se* ordered to the ultimate end and all of the intermediate ends.[573] This judgment is based upon the *per se* relations to other creatures which are established and mediated through personal acts according to the object and the circumstances of such an act.[574]

VI.B The Ultimate End of the Person

We have argued that the ultimate end of the person is that to which a personal act must be *per se* proportioned to possess complete goodness. "The good for man, simply speaking, is his ultimate end."[575] The expression "ultimate end" of the person can be understood in many ways.

First of all, we must recall the distinction already made above. "The end is said in two ways: namely the end for which, and the end by which; that is, the thing itself in

[573] Thus, a given act may bear a *per accidens* relation to a more ultimate end even though it has a *per se* disordered relation to a more proximate end. For example, in order to save her city, a woman might be asked to commit fornication with the enemy general laying siege to the city. In every such case, the fallacy of the accident comes into play. Thus, in this example, the salvation of the city is *per se* dependent upon the will of the general, which is only accidentally related to the act of fornication of the woman. In fact, insofar as every will incurs a defect from a disordered act, the will of the general would be *per se* inclined through the act of fornication to act in a manner contrary to the true good.
[574] See *De Veritate*, q.21, a.5, c.
[575] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.114, a.10, c.

which the notion of the good is found, and the use or acquisition of that thing."[576] The notion of an ultimate end is that for the sake of which everything else is done and that which is not done for the sake of anything else. This is also the perfect notion of happiness since one who is perfectly happy has nothing further to desire. Therefore, whatever can be ordered to some other end cannot be man's ultimate end. If we consider the notion of an end as the thing itself in which the notion of the good is found, the expression "ultimate end" can be taken to mean the ultimate thing in which the notion of the good is found. Above, in the section on the good as such, we argued that there exists some ultimate good thing which is the cause of goodness in all other things and which is itself not ordered to anything else. Therefore, this ultimate good must be the ultimate end not only of the person but of every thing, whether actual or potential. "If we speak of the ultimate end of man with regard to the thing itself which is the end, thus all other things agree in the ultimate end of man, since God is the ultimate end of man and of all other things."[577] Yet, if we speak of the ultimate end of the person with regard to the use or acquisition of the thing itself in which the notion of the good is found, it is clear that the person acquires and uses things in a way different from non-rational beings.

In our section on the good as such we already manifested through an induction the truth that the end of any thing is its own, or proper, act. That is, the act which it alone can do, or at least the act which it does best. Thus, the end of the person is the act which the person alone can do, or which the person can do best, but since the term person is an analogous term, and since we are principally interested in human persons here, we will first consider what is the end proper to the human person. The human person is an

[576] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.1, a.8, c.
[577] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.1, a.8, c.

animal with reason. Therefore, the act proper to the human person is the activity with reason.[578] Thus, the proper end of the human person is the activity with reason. For example, a father playing ball with his son as an expression of paternal affection is an activity done with reason; composing a sonata is an activity done with reason; contemplating God is an activity done with reason. In this sense the proper end of the human person is not some one thing but rather, a number of things which share in the same property: being done according to the rule of reason. It is much different in the angelic person, for the angelic person has no activity other than knowledge and love. Thus, the end of the angelic person can be simply expressed as to know and love.

We are now in a position to examine what is the ultimate end of man. If the end of man is the activity done with reason, it follows that the ultimate end of man is that activity which is not done for the sake of anything else and for the sake of which all other activities according to reason are to be done. Now human acts can concern either external goods, or goods of the body, or goods of the soul, but external goods and the goods of the body (*i.e.*, sensible goods) can all be ordered to something else. Therefore, the activities concerning them cannot be the ultimate end of man. Moreover, among the goods of the soul the moral virtues, and the intellectual virtues concerning action (art and prudence) can all be ordained to some further end. Therefore, the acts of these virtues do not have the character of the ultimate end for man.

Moreover, the pleasing good cannot be the ultimate end, since as shown above, pleasure is nothing other than that which terminates the motion of the appetite as rest in the thing desired. If the ultimate end were the resting itself of the appetite, then there

[578] Since man is more than an intellect, his proper act should not be characterized simply as "reasoning," but rather as acting with or according to reason. Many of his actions are bodily actions which, insofar as they are human, proceed from reason.

would no reason for motion to begin, or for anything to be desired save resting of the appetite.

> Delight seems to be nothing other than a resting of the will in some fitting good, just as desire is an inclination of the will towards some good to be obtained. But, just as man is inclined through his will to the end and is put to rest in it, so natural bodies have natural inclinations towards their proper ends, which inclinations are put to rest when the end is already possessed. However, it is ridiculous to say that the end of the motion of a heavy body is not to be in its proper place, but rather [that its end is] the resting of the inclination by which it tends towards this [place]. For if nature had principally intended this, that the inclination be put to rest, it would not have given it [*i.e.*, the inclination]. But [nature] gives it so that through this [inclination] it might tend to its proper place. When this [place] has been obtained, as an end, the resting of the inclination follows. And thus, such a resting is not the end, but concomitant with the end. Nor, therefore, is delight the ultimate end, but something concomitant with it.[579]

Though delight has the character of being something ultimate, it does not have the character of the ultimate thing or activity for the sake of which other activities are done, for it is ultimate as something concomitant with the last end, not as the end itself.

Since, therefore, neither human activities concerning external goods, nor the goods of the body, nor the goods of the moral virtues and practical intellectual virtues, nor pleasure as such has the character of the ultimate end, it remains that the ultimate end for man consists in the activities of the speculative intellectual virtues according to which man contemplates truth.[580] This activity seems to match the definition of the ultimate end we gave before since all other human activities can be directed to it.

> To this, indeed, all other human activities seem to be ordained as to an end. For the perfection of contemplation there is required soundness of body, to which are ordained all artificial things necessary for life. There is also required rest from

[579] *S.C.G.*, III.26.
[580] See *S.C.G.*, III.37.

> the disturbances of the passions, to which one arrives through the moral virtues and prudence; and rest from external disturbances, to which is ordained the whole regimen of civil life. And so, if it be rightly considered, all human offices may be seen to serve the ones contemplating truth.[581]

Since not all truths are of equal worth and nobility, it follows that the ultimate end of man must consist in the contemplation of the best and most noble truth, which is nothing other than the first truth, which is also the first being and the first good, namely God. Thus, by way of this inductive argument, it can be said that the ultimate end of man, as that by which, is the use and acquisition of God through the activity of contemplation. The same can be seen by way of deductive argumentation.

> The proper operation of anything is its end: for it is its second perfection. Hence, that which holds itself well to its proper operation is called virtuous and good. But to understand is the proper operation of an intellectual substance. This is therefore its end. Thus, that which is most perfect in this operation is the ultimate end: and especially in operations which are not ordained to some products, just as to understand and to sense [are operations of this kind]. However, since operations of this kind receive their species from their objects, through which they are known, it is necessary that any of these operations be more perfect to the degree that its object is more perfect. And thus, to understand the most perfect intelligible, which is God, is the most perfect in the genus of this operation which is to understand. Therefore, to know God by understanding is the ultimate end of any intellectual substance.[582]

From this deductive argument we can also conclude that to know God is the ultimate end of the person.

It can be said that the ultimate end of the person as regards the thing itself is God, considered as the first good; and as regards the use and acquisition of the thing, the ultimate end is the contemplation of God, considered as the first truth. If we must say

[581] *S.C.G.*, III.37.
[582] *S.C.G.*, III.25.

which of these most of all has the notion of the ultimate end, it must be said that God, in himself, having the notion of the first good is, simply speaking, the ultimate end of the person, for the end by which is a participation of the end for which (*i.e.*, the thing itself which has the notion of the good). "Beatitude, as regards its object, is the highest good simply speaking, but with regard to the act, in the beatified creatures, it is the highest good, not simply, but in the genus of goods able to be shared by creatures."[583] We conclude that the notion of moral goodness is most perfectly found in those personal acts which, according to their objects and circumstances, proportion the person rightly to God considered as the first good.

VI.C The Rule of Reason As the Measure of Personal Acts

Since moral goodness requires that a personal act be ordained to God considered as the ultimate good, it follows that moral goodness requires that a personal act be conformed to the will of God. The will of God has the supreme good as its proper object, so that it is the first measure of right ordination to the supreme good.

> For the goodness of the human will, it is required that it be ordered to the supreme good, which is God. But, this good is first of all and *per se* compared to the divine will as its proper object. That, however, which is the first in any genus, is the measure and reason for all things which are of that genus. Moreover, each thing is right and good inasmuch as it attains to its proper measure. Therefore, in order that the will of man be good, it is required that it be conformed to the divine will.[584]

[583] *S.T.*, Ia, q.26, a.3, ad1.
[584] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.19, a.9, c.

Thus, the full notion of moral goodness is found in those personal acts which are conformed to the divine will.

Nevertheless, since reason unaided by divine assistance cannot reach to a complete and perfect knowledge of the divine will, the goodness of a personal act is not to be judged so much from the actual conformity of an act to the actual will of God as from the conformity which an act has to the rule of reason.[585] For a creature unaided by divine revelation the rule of reason is the will of God,[586] for the will of God is made known to creatures through his effects, namely the natural order. This natural order, inasmuch as it is apprehended by reason as an indication of the divine will for the good of creation, is the primary rule of reason. "The first rule of reason is the law of nature."[587] Nevertheless, it must always be borne in mind that the rule of reason is an imperfect rule in comparison to the divine will since reason sometimes fails and also since a cause is perceived only imperfectly through its effects.[588]

The rule of reason first of all respects the order of ends which reason perceives in the natural order, for the end is the first cause and the ground of intelligibility of the other causes by which reason judges. Moreover, as we have already seen, the ends which are more remote and universal are closer to the ultimate end, which is the ultimate ground for goodness in personal acts. Something is judged to be contrary to the rule of reason, simply speaking, when it ruptures the ordination to the ultimate end, but something is

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[585] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.71, a.6, ad5; and *De Malo*, q.2, a.1, c.
[586] For example, see *In II Sent*., d.39, q.3, a.3, ad3. "Conscience obliges not by its own power, but in virtue of the divine precept. For conscience does not dictate that something be done because it seems good to it, but because it is a precept from God. Hence, it obliges accidentally from the virtue of the divine precept, in as much as it dictates this as a precept from God. And therefore, the dictate of conscience more obliges than the divine precept, in whose virtue it binds." Also see, *De Veritate,* q.17, a.5, c.
[587] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.95, a.2, c. See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.74, a.7, c. "It is manifest that human acts can be regulated from the rule of human reason, which is taken from created things which man naturally knows."
[588] The moral philosopher should therefore remain open minded to the possibility of human acts done in accordance with a measure higher than the rule of reason.

said to be contrary to the rule of reason in some respect when it takes away some due proportion to a means to the end but does not altogether remove an ordination to the ultimate end.

> The reason of man is [his] nature; thus, whatever is contrary to reason is contrary to the nature of man. Therefore, to dissipate oneself in pleasures is contrary to the nature of man insofar as it transgresses the rule of reason, either by taking away the order to the end, which is to be against reason simply, or by taking away the order of those things which are to the end, which is to be contrary to reason in some respect, or rather, to be outside of reason.[589]

It should be appreciated that the order to the ultimate end can be taken away either because the intention of the agent is contrary to the ultimate end or because the act is of such a nature as to be incapable of being *per se* ordained to the ultimate end. The latter takes place when the act is contrary to the first principles of the order of nature[590] or contrary to some order which is necessarily and *per se* derived from the first principles of the order of nature.[591] In each of these latter cases the disorder pertains immediately to a secondary end, which is nothing other than a common good established in the natural order by means of which an act is proportioned and reduced back to the ultimate end. For example, to universally hate one's fellow man is immediately contrary to the common good of the human race as a whole. It should be appreciated that for the proper relation to the ultimate end to be ruptured, it is not necessary that there be an explicit rejection of the ultimate end. It is sufficient that the order itself be rejected. Just as one who is opposed to the order seen in some artifact is, by that very fact, opposed to the art in the

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[589] *De Malo*, q.14, a.2, ad8.
[590] For example, the principle that a man should love his fellow men is a first principle established according to the order of nature.
[591] For example, that a man should not injure his fellow man is a principle derived *per se* from the aforesaid principle. See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.95, a.2.

mind of the artist according to which it was made, so also one who rejects the moral order reason discovers in things rejects the principle of that order. "Whatever is contrary to the notion of the artifact, is also contrary to the nature of the art, by which the artifact was produced. But the eternal law is compared to the order of human reason just as art to the artifact. Hence, vice and sin are contrary to the order of reason and against the eternal law for the same reason."[592] One need not expressly know the cause of an order to perceive the order itself. Nevertheless, in acting contrary to the order one acts contrary to that according to which the order was established.[593] More particularly, in the order of ends one who acts contrary to this order necessarily sets himself against the ultimate end according to which the intermediate ends were established. In each of the aforesaid ways an act is judged to be contrary to the rule of reason, simply speaking, since the ordination to the ultimate end is taken away. In brief, the rational creature is united to God through the rule of reason.[594]

On the other hand, when a disorder pertains only to the means yet does not altogether remove the order of the means to the ultimate end, this is beside or apart from but not properly contrary to the rule of reason. Thus, for example, to utter a joke in bad taste takes away the order of speech to pleasing conversation, which is a means to social unity, but it does not remove the order to the end since such an act, even if performed frequently, is not of such a nature as to totally corrupt the social order which ought to exist among men.

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[592] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.71, a.2, ad4.
[593] A consequence of this is that one need not expressly know or believe in God in order to accept a rational moral order which is binding in conscience. Indeed, it is more proper to philosophy to consider good and bad acts from the perspective of the order that reason sees in things than as an offense against the divine being. See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.71, a.6, ad5. "Sin is considered by theologians principally insofar as it is an offense against God, but by the moral philosopher insofar as it is contrary to reason."
[594] See *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.73, a.7, ad3. "The aversion from the rule of reason follows from the aversion from God, to whom man ought to be united through the rule of right reason."

Now reason is capable of judging the order of an act to its ends first of all through its own intention, as when a man intends the good of his family or when a man intends to be praised by others, *etc.* Secondly, reason is capable of judging the order of an act to its end in virtue of its object, as for example, reason judges that to achieve the end of arriving in New York from Los Angeles on the same day, a plane flight is the proportionate act, while driving a car is not. Thirdly, reason is capable of judging the order of an act to its end in virtue of its circumstances, as for example, reason judges that correcting a confrere in public rather than in private is less likely to result in the reform of the confrere, which is the end to which that act is ordained. Therefore, it is apparent that the intention, the object and the circumstances are all taken into consideration by reason when judging a personal act since each of these may contribute to or diminish the ordination of the act to the end established by nature and apprehended by reason.

VI.D The Good As More Universal Than Being

We are now in a position to return to the question which we raised earlier concerning the universality of the good in relation to being. Recall that it was established that the more universal cause acts according to a more universal and less contracted form. Moreover, it was shown that the good is more universal than being in the order of causality. Hence, the good considered as a cause must have, in some respect, a more universal and less contracted form than being as a cause; and this serves as the basis for a more universal predication than being. What is this more universal predication than

being; and how does it pertain to the primacy of the common good as the root of personal dignity?

To answer the first question, it is necessary to understand that predication is the joining of some word to a subject. However, the sensible exterior word is a sign of the interior word of the heart. Hence, predication can be used analogously to signify the act of uniting or applying an interior word to some subject. A more universal predicate in this sense is that interior word, or concept, which can be applied to more things as its subject.

In the order of human knowledge there is no predicate more universal than being, either as a sensible word, or an interior word or concept. Nevertheless, it can be demonstrated that intelligible forms do exist in separated substances which extend beyond the concept of being according as it is conceived in the human intellect. Such intelligible forms which, as discussed above, are universal *in repraesentando* extend beyond the human concept of being for two reasons: first, because they embrace realities which are incapable of being represented by some likeness to sensible substances (and all human knowledge arises from the senses); second, because what falls under accidental being according to a human mode of knowing is embraced in the concept of being *per se* by higher intelligences.[595] Therefore, since "being *per accidens* is not truly called

[595] See *In VI Metaph.*, lect.3. "The higher a cause is, the more its causality extends itself to many things. For a higher cause has a higher proper caused thing, which is more common and found in many. Just as in things done by art, it is clear that the political art, which is above the military, extends itself to the whole state of the community; but the military [art extends itself] only to those things which are contained in the military order. But the ordination which is in effects from some cause extends itself only as far as the causality of that cause. For every *per se* cause has determinate effects, which it produces according to some order. Therefore, it is manifest that the effects related to some inferior cause are seen to have no order, but coincide with one another *per accidens*, which, if they are referred to a superior common cause are found to be ordered, and not co-joined *per accidens*, but are produced together by one *per se* cause."

being,"[596] the concept of being embraced by the higher intelligible forms include certain things which fall under the scope of non-being according to the human concept of being. In this way, we can speak of the interior word of higher intelligences as a more universal predicate than being (*i.e.*, the human concept of being *per se*) or, perhaps more precisely, the form which serves as the basis for a more universal predication than being.[597]

Now we come to the second question: how does this more universal predicate than being pertain to the primacy of the common good as the root of personal dignity? Since the human intellect is limited in its apprehension of being, its apprehension of the good is limited, for, the concept of the good follows upon the concept of being, as we have already shown above. This means that the good to which the human will is borne is more limited and less common in comparison to the good apprehended by higher natures. "Since the will follows the apprehension of reason or of intellect, according as the notion of the apprehended good is more common, according to this, the will is borne towards a more common good."[598] On the other hand, the ultimate common good of the universe, the divine goodness itself which is the ultimate end of the person, is the proper object of the divine will. This, however, means that it cannot be the natural, proper good of any created person.

> The good of the whole universe is that which is apprehended by God, who is the maker and governor of the universe. Hence, whatever he wills, he wills under the notion of the common good (that is, his goodness), which is the good of the whole

[596] *In VI Metaph.*, lect.2. See *In XI Metaph.*, lect. 8. "Plato did not speak wrongly when he said that [sophistics] considers non-being, since it considers being *per accidens*;" and *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.95, a.5, c. "That which is done *per accidens* is neither a being properly nor something one."
[597] From the standpoint of human speech, such a concept would be strictly ineffable, since the first imposition of all words is made upon sensible things.
[598] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.19, a.10, c.

> universe. But the apprehension of a creature, according to its nature, is of some particular good proportionate to its nature.[599]

Nevertheless, it is possible for the created person in some way to participate in the good which is the proper object of the divine will, insofar as the created will, without knowing concretely the very thing which the divine will wills, still conforms itself to this will formally, namely by willing in a universal way whatever God wills as the formal motive for willing its own particular object.

> The will of some man willing some particular good is not right unless he refer that [particular good] to the common good as to an end, since the natural appetite of any part is ordered to the common good of the whole. From the end, moreover, is taken as it were the formal reason of willing that which is ordained to the end. Hence, for this, that someone will some particular good with a right will, it is necessary that that particular good be willed materially, but that the divine common good be willed formally. Therefore the human will is bound to be conformed to the divine will as regards the thing willed formally (for he is bound to will the divine and common good), but not materially.[600]

Because of the greater universality of the notion of the good as conceived by the divine mind the will, by way of assent, can participate in a good which is greater than the limited good proper to its own nature. Such an assent of the will is distinguished from the act of faith: first of all, because it is formally an act of the will embracing some good, rather than an act of the intellect; secondly, since it is not an assent to some determinate object or truth considered as revealed by God or some higher being. Rather, it is an acceptance of the primacy of the divine will, prompted by a disposition of submissiveness

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[599] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.19, a.10, c.
[600] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.19, a.10, c. Yves Simon in his essay *A General Theory of Authority* uses this same distinction to explain how the good citizen wills the common good of the political community as distinct from the way in which the public authority wills the common good.

and docility to divine providence, without specific regard or judgment as to the actual, concrete content which constitutes the object of that will.[601]

It is important to appreciate that the will's assent in this way is essentially a moral act, proceeding as it does from choice. This means that the created person's participation in a higher order of good depends essentially upon his moral acts. The moral good is by its nature a participation in a good higher than the good commensurate with human nature.[602]

From these considerations we can draw two important conclusions at the end of our consideration of the moral good. First, the greater universality which the good, in some respect, has over being even in the order of predication, can serve as the foundation for the created person's participation in a higher good, and hence a higher dignity.[603] Second, there is a sound philosophical basis for the position that faith, far from denigrating human dignity, can sometimes be a vehicle for an expansion of human dignity. This warrants a philosophically open attitude toward faith.

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[601] Nevertheless, this line of reasoning manifests the possibility of a further participation in the divine and common good by way of faith, for if some determinate truth above the human mode of knowing is revealed, and the will assents to this truth, it follows that the will participates in a good that is more extensive than the good which is proper to human nature (since such truths extend outside of the human concept of being). This is the more so as the truth is higher and pertains to a notion of a more universal good. This manifests the legitimacy of belief as a means of attaining to a good which extends outside of the unaided human intellect's concept of being *per se*. In fact, many philosophers have introduced belief into their ethical discourse as a means of extending the good in which man is able to participate. For example, certain myths of Plato seem to be an instance of this, as well as Kant's "pure practical faith" which extends itself to things in themselves, outside the bounds of theoretic human reason (*Cf.*, Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*).

[602] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.124, a.5, ad3. "The human good is able to be made divine, as when it is referred to God." We are not asserting that every moral good is supernatural. Rather, we are pointing out that the moral good places man in communication with an order of good which cannot be wholly exhausted or circumscribed by human nature.

[603] See H. Barbour. "The Divine essence is (or takes the place of) that *ratio universalioris praedicationis* which is the concrete and deeper reason for the priority of the good over being *ratione universalioris causalitatis*." (From a lecture entitled "Bonum Communius Ente" delivered at Thomas Aquinas College, Santa Paula, California on March 7th, 2000).

Chapter VII: The Concepts of Person and Dignity

Above the thesis considered the concept of the good, including the various kinds of common good and the moral good. To complete the scientific treatment of the question whether the primacy of the common good is the root of personal dignity, it is necessary to consider the concepts of person and dignity.

VII.A The Concept of Person

We turn now to the concept of person. Because the literature in this area is so large and hotly debated, it seems good to me to set out from the beginning what I am not attempting to do in this modest section. This section of the thesis does not attempt to resolve all of the significant difficulties surrounding the definition of person raised over the long course of the history of philosophy. Nor does it aim to set out and compare or critique the various definitions which have been proposed by notable philosophers. Certainly both the consideration of various proposals and the resolution of significant difficulties will be necessary in this section of our thesis but only to a limited extent. It should also be appreciated that there are many kinds of definitions: essential definitions, definitions from effects or properties, nominal definitions, definitions from accidents, *etc.* Indeed, there might be a large number of fundamentally valid definitions of person depending upon the kind of definition which is sought. This section of the thesis does not intend to examine or determine all of the kinds of definitions which might validly be given for the term "person;" it simply aims to arrive at a valid and fundamentally

essential definition of person, which is, at the same time, relevant and well suited for establishing the root of personal dignity.

However, before we begin to seek a definition of person which answers to the above description, it is important to ask whether or not a definition can be given at all of a term such as "person." Some philosophers have taken the position that "person" is a fundamentally irreducible term, incapable of being defined or analyzed into more fundamental concepts.[604] It is clear, however, to anyone rightly considering the matter that whatever person signifies, it does not signify something which is first and irreducible in our understanding. If this were the case there would be no principle by which we could correctly deny it of some beings and affirm it of others. A person is a being *of some determinate kind* so that it must include the notion of being *and some other notion* in order to be understood.

There remains a further objection to the definability of the term "person." The fundamental difficulty is this: We do not define singulars, such as Socrates or Aristotle. Rather, we define universals, but person seems to signify something singular not something universal.[605] Therefore, it seems that person cannot be defined. St. Thomas gives a response to this difficulty. "Although this or that singular is not able to be defined, nevertheless, that which pertains to the common notion of singularity can be defined. And in this way, the Philosopher defines first substance."[606] While the thing which has the name "person" cannot be defined, still the fact that the same name is applied to many different singular persons means that the name itself has some common

[604] See, for example, A.J. Ayer, *The Concept of a Person and Other Essays* (New York: St. Martin's Press,1968), p.85; and P.F. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London: Methuen, 1959), p.102.
[605] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.1, obj.1. "For no singular is defined. But person signifies a certain singular."
[606] *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.1, ad1.

notion that makes it applicable to many, and it is this common notion which we seek to define in arriving at a definition of person. Indeed, without some vague concept of this common notion there would be no way to tell if the name person were correctly or incorrectly applied to a given subject, such as Peter or this rock. Thus, in defining the term "person" we are not attempting to define this or that person but whatever it is in the notion of the term "person" which makes it applicable to some subjects and not to others.

VII.A.1 The Definition of the Term "Person"

The first, vague notion that we have of most things often comes in the form of a nominal definition, a definition which simply indicates what the name means without immediately indicating whether or not there is any actually existing thing corresponding to the name itself. In arriving at a nominal definition of person, it is helpful to consider briefly the etymology of the term.[607] A brief treatment of the etymology of a word can serve as a *manuductio* towards a more precise understanding of the definition and concept of the term "person." While the etymology of a word should in no wise be confused with its definition,[608] nevertheless tracing back the meaning of a word to its first, sensible imposition serves to ground the concept in something better known. Such a method helps to ensure that there are real and concrete concepts corresponding to our words, for all human knowledge arises from the senses so that unless some sensible

[607] A concise summary of the etymology of the word "person" can be found, for example, in K. Schmitz, "The Geography of the Human Person," *Communio* 13 (Spring, 1986): p.21-48.
[608] See *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.92, a.1, ad2. "The etymology of a name is one thing, and its signification is another. For, the etymology is noted according to that thing from which the name is taken for the sake of signifying. But the signification of a name is noted according to that thing to be signified upon which the name is imposed." It follows that even faulty etymologies need not result in false definitions. See also *De Potentia,* q.9, a.3, ad1.

imposition of a term be known, there will be little or no content to our concept of that term.

It is generally acknowledged today that the term "person" took its origin from the Etruscan term "*phersu*," which is rendered in Greek as *prosopon*,[609] and later entered the English language via the Latin term "*persona*." The *phersu* was a mask or the wearer of a mask, used at festivals in honor of Phersephone. The Latin term "*persona*" was applied to the actor who used a mask on stage or to the role or character which the actor portrayed. From there its meaning was extended to cover one who was the subject of legal rights.[610] Later, it was used simply to indicate "this particular one," namely this particular human being.[611]

The key shift in meaning for the term "person" seems to have occurred when the term was imposed to signify someone of importance. "Since in comedies and tragedies some famous men were represented, this name 'person' was imposed for signifying those having dignity. Hence, they used to call those who had some dignity in ecclesiastical matters persons."[612] We might say, then, that according to a broad nominal definition the term "person" can be taken to mean that which is of the greatest importance or dignity, or a most dignified thing.[613] Arguing that the name "person" is aptly applied to God St. Thomas uses a similar nominal definition of person.

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[609] See *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. C.T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.671.
[610] See *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. C.T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.671.
[611] See H.U. von Balthazar, "On the Concept of Person," *Communio* 13 (Spring, 1986): p.20. See also Hans Rheinfelder, *Das Wort "Persona"..., Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie,* Beiheft 77 (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1928), pp.6-17.
[612] *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.3, ad2. *Cf.*, St. Albert, *S.T.*, I, tr.10, q.44, c.2, sol. Indeed, the English word "parson" seems to be a derivative of this usage of the term "*persona*" for important members of the Church (See *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, p.671). In modern English usage we still speak of famous or important people as "personalities," or "personages," using the term antonomastically of them.
[613] See S.A. Hipp, *"Person" in Christian Tradition and in the Conception of Saint Albert the Great* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2001), p.363.

> Person signifies that which is most perfect in all nature, namely a subsisting thing in a rational nature. Hence, since all that which pertains to perfection ought to be attributed to God (since his essence contains in itself every perfection) it is fitting that this name person be said of God: yet not in the same way that it is said of creatures, but in a more excellent way.[614]

That which is most perfect in all nature is the most important thing or the thing of the highest dignity. Since nothing can be more perfect, or more important, or of greater dignity than God, this name, according to its nominal definition, is applied first and foremost to God. Again, this is not to say that in the order of time the name was first imposed upon God. It simply means that, given the nominal definition he has proposed, the thing that most of all fits the definition is God. This nominal definition is not arbitrary but is derived from the natural development of the term. There is something natural about moving the word from famous or important characters to the most important thing or things.

If dignity or importance is the principle property to which one attends when ascertaining whether the term "person" should be attributed to this or that subject, it is immediately apparent that persons should be independently existing things since to exist in one's own right is of greater dignity than to exist in another or to depend upon another for existence.[615] From this it is immediately apparent that "person" will not signify something which exists in or through another but rather will signify that which exists in a complete manner, through itself. Thus, "person" will not signify that which exists in the mode of an accident, nor will it signify that which has incomplete existence since either it has not received perfect act or because it forms part of a larger whole which is *per se* one.

[614] *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.3, c.
[615] See *S.T.*, IIIa, q.2, a.2, ad2.

The highest dignity demands the most perfect mode of existing, existing *per se* so as not to be completed by another.

The above description corresponds, more or less, to the notion of a hypostasis, or first substance. Such beings are beings in the highest sense, yet this complete possession of being is only necessary, but not yet sufficient, to establish something as a person. Among hypostases there are some of greater and less dignity, while only those of the highest dignity merit the name "person." The concept of person, therefore, not only includes reference to the mode of existing but also to the nature or essence which exists in this mode, for both the essence and the mode of existence of a thing determine its dignity.[616] Therefore, the determinate being which answers to the nominal definition of person as that which has the highest dignity will be found when the nature of the greatest dignity is united with the mode of existence of the greatest dignity. This happens when a rational, or intellectual,[617] nature is found to exist *per se* and completely.

> "Person," as was said, signifies a certain nature with a certain mode of existing. But the nature which person includes in its signification, is the most dignified of all natures: namely an intellectual nature according to its genus. Likewise, the mode of existing which person implies is most dignified, so that, namely, it is something *per se* existing.[618]

In short, a person is nothing other than a hypostasis of a rational nature. From the nominal definition of person, therefore, we have arrived at a definition which is

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[616] As a clear indication of this take the example of a human being existing in the knowledge of some intellectual creature. The reason why the real human being is of higher dignity is on account of its mode of existence. On the other hand, if we compare one science to another, the science about man is of greater dignity than the science about plants, not because of their differing modes of existing (since both exist in knowledge), but on account of the different natures of the things known.

[617] Here we use the term "rational" broadly to signify capable of knowing order as such; and in this sense, even God and angels might be called rational.

[618] *De Potentia,* q.9, a.3, c.

substantially that given by Boethius. Person is an individual substance (*i.e.*, hypostasis or first substance) of a rational nature. St. Thomas follows the same procedure, in abbreviated fashion.

> Since in comedies and tragedies some famous men were represented, this name "person" was imposed for signifying those having dignity. Hence, they used to call those who had some dignity in ecclesiastical matters persons. On account of this, certain ones have defined person, saying that a person is a hypostasis distinct by a property pertaining to dignity. And since it is of great dignity to subsist in a rational nature, therefore every individual of a rational nature is called a person.[619]

St. Thomas begins with the imposition of the name to signify the character represented and then accounts for its extension to those having dignity (the famous or important) by the fact that it was usually famous characters who were represented. Since the name was used to signify those having dignity, a general definition of person was formulated as a hypostasis distinct from other hypostases in virtue of some property pertaining to dignity. Given this general notion of person it happened that the name "person" was further extended to all things subsisting in a rational nature since among all hypostases those of a rational nature have the highest dignity. Thus, the vague notion of "a property pertaining to dignity" was understood in the particular sense of the rational nature since having a rational nature was a property which especially pertained to dignity. In this way St. Thomas bridges the gap between the first imposition of the name "person" to the imposition of this name according to the classic definition of Boethius, for in place of "hypostasis" Boethius has "individual substance," and in place of "a property pertaining to dignity" Boethius has "rational nature."

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[619] *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.3, ad2.

It should be further observed that the notion of hypostasis or individual substance contains in its notion the property of incommunicability. The reason for this is that a hypostasis is an ultimate subject.[620] Indeed, if it were not, something else would stand under it, and so the hypostasis would no longer have the notion of that which stands on its own under other things.[621] An ultimate subject, however, cannot be communicated to others, for it would stand to those others as something in them which is completed or brought to a term by them. In other words, those others to which a hypostasis is communicated would be a subject of the hypostasis. Thus, an ultimate subject would not be an ultimate subject, a communicable hypostasis is simply a contradiction in terms.

It behooves us to examine whether our definition of person (*i.e.*, "that singular which exists *per se* and completely in rational nature" or, equivalently, "a hypostasis of a rational nature") is an essential definition, or a definition of some other kind. At first glance our definition seems to be a definition from properties or effects rather than an essential definition, for the term "rational" seems to signify some property or effect since it means nothing other than the principle of rational acts such as understanding and reasoning, which are effects of the soul. This principle of rational acts is itself a power of the soul not its essence, "for the powers of the soul are called its parts. But there are only three parts of the soul commonly assigned by all: namely, the vegetable soul, the sensible

[620] A hypostasis considered as an ultimate subject is very close to the notion of a supposit. St. Thomas seems to understand supposit as the ultimate subject of a predication (See *De Nat. Gen.* 6: "For the ultimate thing of which substance is predicated in the predicamental line will be some supposit;" and *S.T.*, IIIa, q.2, a.3, c.; and *Contra Err. Graec.* I.20). Also see John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, Tom. IV, Disp. 34, a.1, n.3&12.

[621] A hypostasis can be understood as that in which other things are as in a subject but which is never in another as in a subject. It is the real basis for the intention of reason which we call a supposit. See *In III Sent*. d.5, q.1, a.2, c. In *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.2, c., St. Thomas mentions that the term "supposit" is a name signifying an intention as opposed to a thing (*rem*). This sometimes overlooked account of the meaning of the term "supposit" reveals the analogous position which the terms "supposit" and "hypostasis" hold in the predicamental order and real order respectively.

soul and the rational soul. Therefore, there are three kinds of powers of the soul."[622] Thus, it seems to follow that when person is defined by the term "rational," this is a definition from effects or properties and not an essential definition, but a distinction needs to be made between a definition from effects and a definition which uses the names of effects. It is typical in human knowing, which takes its origin from the senses, that we know effects before causes. "It is natural for us to proceed from sensible things to intelligible things, from effects to causes, from posterior things to prior things."[623] Therefore, since we name things as they are first known by us, it happens that we often use the names of sensible effects to signify the causes which we know through the effects, but notice that it is a different thing to define a thing as that which *has* a certain property or effect and to define something *by means* of the name of some property or proper effect.

> According to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* VIII, since the substantial differences of things are unknown to us, in the meanwhile in their place defining accidents are used, according as these designate or make known the essence, as the proper effects make the cause known: whence *sensible*, insofar as it is a constitutive difference of animal, is not taken from *sense* insofar as it names a power, but insofar as it names the very essence of the soul, from which such a power flows. And similarly it is so about rational.[624]

In this regard, the term "rational" in the definition of person is taken to signify the very essential principle by which a rational nature is what it is. True, we do not know this essential principle through itself, but this does not mean that we do not know essentially what it is. It is possible for the essence of one thing to be known through another thing,

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[622] *S.T.*, Ia, q.78, a.1, obj.1.
[623] *In I Sent.*, d.17, q.1, a.4, c.
[624] *De Veritate,* q.10, a.1, ad6. See *S.T.*, Ia, q.77, a.1, ad7; and *De Spir. Creat.* A.11, ad3.

just as it is possible to reason to the definition of a triangle from some property such as "having interior angles equal to two right angles." Something similar can be said about the use of the term "individual" in the definition of Boethius, for while "individual" first of all signifies an intention of reason, in the definition of person it stands in the place of an essential principle which is made known to us by the very mode of existing consequent upon this essential principle.

> Since substantial differences are not known by us, or at least they are not named [by us], it is necessary in the meanwhile to use accidental differences in the place of substantial ones. For example, someone might say fire is a simple, hot and dry body: for proper accidents are effects of substantial forms, and manifest them. And, likewise, the names of intentions can be received for defining a thing, according as they are taken for some names of things which are not imposed. And thus, this name "individual" is put in the definition of person for designating the mode of subsistence which befits particular substances.[625]

It follows from this that our definition of person is truly an essential definition, signifying the very formal principles by which a person is what it is. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that these essential principles are not known through themselves but through other things which are better known to us and necessarily related to the essential principles.

VII.A.2 The Analogy of the Term "Person"

Even from the perspective of our initial, nominal definition of person it is obvious that the name "person" is imposed analogously, for, taken in its strictest sense, "the most important thing" signifies God alone. If person is taken to signify, more broadly, the

[625] *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.1, ad3.

most important thing according to *genus*, the name "person" can be properly applied to men and angels.

The analogy of the name "person" becomes even more apparent when one examines the essential definition we have given above, for in the verbal expression "that which exists *per se* and completely in rational nature" many of the terms must be understood analogously of men and spiritual substances. For example, rational as applied to man implies a motion in knowledge from one truth to another, while in an angel it implies a simple intuitive knowledge by the mediation of certain operations, and in God it signifies a knowledge which is altogether identical *in re* with his essence and is in no way mediated through a habit or a power. Something similar is verified when the terms "nature" and "exists" are considered in each.

We wish to concentrate more particularly upon the notion of existing *per se* and completely in the kinds of persons which we have identified. Perhaps the most striking difference in the way the notion of "existing *per se* and completely" is understood of man, angels, and God is the diverse reason for this special mode of existence in each. If one were to ask what is the intrinsic reason why a human person exists *per se*, in a complete way, the answer cannot be found in the very form of humanity, for the human form is something that is communicable to many individuals. This means that, of itself, it is not the ultimate complement of its being. Something other than the form must account for its mode of existing as a "this something." Instead, the answer must be sought in the material principle of the human person. What makes one human person to be this person as opposed to that person? The natural response is that they have different bodies.[626]

[626] Someone could object to this on the basis that Siamese twins share a body yet are two persons. One might give a provisional response to this objection by saying that,so long as the matter or organs which are

The human person exists *per se* and completely when he is individuated by this flesh and these bones and this soul, in short, when he is individuated by matter standing under determinate dimensions.

> "Person," generically taken, signifies an individual substance of a rational nature, as was said. An individual, however, is what is in itself indistinct, yet distinct from others. Therefore, "person," in whatever nature, signifies what is distinct in that nature: just as in human nature it signifies this flesh and these bones and this soul, which are the principles individuating man. Which, indeed, although they are not of the signification of person, are nevertheless, of the signification of human person.[627]

In virtue of this individuation a person's being is made determinate so that he becomes the ultimate subject of a nature. Yet it should be carefully noted that matter is not here considered as an active principle or cause of the determinate being (*esse terminatum*) of a human person, but rather as that in which determinate being is acquired. "Determinate being, although it is acquired for the soul in the body, is not therefore from the body, nor through a dependency on the body."[628] In fact, the determinate being of a human person is from an agent capable of communicating this positive perfection. "The being of a soul comes from God as from an active principle, and is in its body as in matter."[629] The mode of the existence of a human person is determined by matter, but the existence itself

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common to both twins are not necessary for the integrity of human nature (namely, some part which is necessary to make rationality possible), there is nothing to prevent there being two persons. For example, we say that a man lacking a hand is still a person, but if he lacks a head, he is not. Similarly, if Siamese twins shared a single head or brain, we would not consider the two bodies to be different persons, but if they shared a kidney, for example, they would be considered two persons, since someone without one kidney, or even both kidneys, still remains a person (*Cf.*, *Super Boet. de Trin.,* q.5, a.3, c.).

[627] *S.T.*, Ia, q.29, a.4, c. See *De Potentia,* q.9, a.4, c. "Since there is nothing distinct subsisting in human nature except something individuated and diverse from others through individual matter, therefore it is necessary that this is signified materially, when human person is said."

[628] *In I Sent*., d.8, q.5, a.2, ad6. Determinate *esse* should be carefully distinguished from individuality. The former is a perfection which actualizes the human essence. The latter is that on account of which a human being is distinct from others of the same kind so as to be numerable.

[629] *Q.D. De Anima*, a.1, ad2.

is not from matter as from a cause or a principle. Matter is not responsible for the fact that a human person exists, but it is responsible for the fact that a human person exists in the way that it does. Yet not only the existence of a thing enters into the notion of person but also the very mode of existence. For this reason, the human person includes matter in its very notion. Person, as said of the human person, signifies something individuated by matter.

It is quite different when we consider the mode of existence of separated substances.[630] The reason why they exist in a certain way, namely as singular beings, is due to their very form or nature.[631] Since, by definition, separated substances have forms not destined to be received in matter, their singular mode of existence cannot be due to matter or any relation to matter. Rather, each separated substance is individuated and subsists *per se* in virtue of its form.[632] Thus, while angels and men share a common mode of existence, the principle of this mode of existence is diverse for each.

In God, as opposed to creatures, essence and existence are identical.[633] This necessarily implies that the mode of existence which God enjoys has a different basis than in creatures. Indeed, in creatures, there is before and after so that one thing can be a cause or principle of the mode of existing found in creatures, but there is no cause of God's mode of existing. It is, so to speak, self-explanatory, not needing a further

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[630] The present thesis does not aim to demonstrate the existence of separated substances or angels; nor is it necessary to rely upon such a demonstration for the purpose of arriving at a more refined notion of person. It is enough to see that it is possible for there to be such a thing as a substance separated from matter and that if such things were to exist, they would rightly be called persons for the reasons already given, but if they can be called persons, they are called persons in a different sense than human persons.
[631] See *De Unit. Int*., c.5. "Therefore, separated substances are individuated and singular. But they are not individuated from matter, but from the very fact that their nature is not to be in another, and consequently, neither to be participated in by many."
[632] See *De Unione Verbi*, a.1, c. "If there is some thing in which there is nothing other than the essence of the species, the essence itself of the species will be *per se* subsisting individually."
[633] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.3, a.4.

reason.[634] Thus, the notion of person as found in God will not include reference to matter nor even to some particular quiddity or nature which causes God's existence to be determined to a singular mode of existence.[635] These considerations manifest the fact that the term "person" must be used analogously as applied to men, angels, and God and that one must be particularly attentive to this analogy as regards the basis for the mode of existence in each of these kinds of persons.

VII.A.3 Person As Distinguished from Nature

In the history of thought the concepts of person and intellectual nature are often confused with one another. For the sake of more perfectly understanding what is included in the signification of the term "person" that is not included in the expression "intellectual nature" we do well to compare the two.

The distinction between intellectual nature and person, though it has been more clearly identified as a result of theological reflection, is a properly philosophical distinction. The clearest indication of this is the fact that human beings sharing an identical intellectual nature are yet different persons. If the term "person" signified only that which pertains to the essence of a thing, then all human beings would be one person since human beings do not differ in essential properties. The term "person," therefore,

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[634] This, of course, does not mean that it is obvious or self-evident to us why God's mode of being is uncaused. It simply acknowledges the fact that were we to know what God is essentially, there would be no reason to seek for a further cause for God's existing in the way that he does. We can know this much simply from knowing that nothing is caused in God.

[635] A further consideration which manifests the difference in the way in which God and creatures are said to exist *per se* is the fact that God exists *per se* inasmuch as his existence is not dependent upon some extrinsic agent cause. This is not true of any creature.

encompasses not only the singular essence or nature of a thing but also other things which do not pertain to the nature as such.

> "Person" signifies something other than nature. For, nature signifies the essence of a species which the definition signifies. And if, indeed, nothing other could be found adjoined to these things which pertain to the notion of the species, there would be no necessity of distinguishing nature from the supposit of a nature, which is the individual subsisting in that nature, since each and every individual subsisting in some nature would be entirely the same as its nature. But it happens in certain subsisting things that something is found which does not pertain to the notion of the species: namely accidents and individuating principles, as is most of all apparent in these things which are composed from matter and form. And therefore, in such things, nature and supposit differ in reality: not as if they were entirely separated, but since in the supposit the nature itself of the species is included, and certain other things are superadded which are beside the notion of the species. Hence, supposit is signified as a whole having a nature as a formal part perfective of it. And because of this, in things composed from matter and form, the nature is not predicated of the supposit. For, we do not say that this man is his humanity. But if there is a thing in which there is nothing other besides the notion of its species or nature, as in God, in this case the supposit and the nature are not other in reality, but only according to the notion of understanding: since that which is a certain essence is called a nature, while the same thing is called a supposit insofar as it is something subsisting. And that which is said of the supposit, is to be understood of the person in a rational or intellectual creature, since a person is nothing other than an individual substance of a rational nature, according to Boethius.[636]

Accordingly, in human persons, person and nature are distinct in reality, while in a separated substance having no accidents outside of the essence, namely God, person and nature are distinct in reason only, insofar as they are different concepts and have different definitions.

Notice that St. Thomas takes the way in which the nature is predicated as a sign of the real distinction of nature from supposit in things composed of matter and form. We do not say that an individual man is his nature (*e.g.*, Socrates is humanity). Indeed, St.

[636] *S.T.*, IIIa, q.2, a.2, c. See *In III Sent.*, d.5, q.1, a.3; *S.C.G.*, IV.41; and *De Unione Verbi*, a.1.

Thomas throughout his works frequently uses to his advantage the proportion which exists among the mode of signifying, the mode of understanding and the mode of being. He does not confuse them with one another, but he does see the real and important likeness which exists between them as a way of pointing out and refining key distinctions. In a text from his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* comparing the way in which humanity and man are predicated of an individual man St. Thomas uses this proportion between the mode of signifying and the mode of being to more clearly indicate that in which the notion of person consists.

> Since "humanity" does not include in its signification the whole which is in the thing subsisting in the nature (since it is as if it were a part), it is not predicated. And since only that which is composite subsists, and a part is had from its whole, therefore, the soul does not subsist, but Socrates, and he is someone having humanity. But "man" signifies both the essential things as well as the individuating things, but in diverse modes: for "man" signifies the essential things determinately, but the individuating things indeterminately, as this or that. And therefore "man," since it is a whole, can be predicated of Socrates, and he is said to be one having humanity. But since to be an indistinct thing is to be an incomplete thing, as if a being in potency, therefore, man does not subsist, but *this* man, to whom befits the notion of person. Therefore, the notion of person is that which is subsisting, distinct and including all those things which are in the thing.[637]

The name "man" as opposed to "humanity" signifies the nature concretely instead of abstractly. Yet it still signifies the nature and not the supposit or the person. The reason is that "man" signifies the individuating elements in an indeterminate mode. This indeterminate mode of signifying is proportional to the indeterminate mode of existing which "man" signifies as opposed to "this man." Since a person must be something which exists in a wholly complete and actual way, that which is signified by "man" does

[637] *In III Sent*., d.5, q.1, a.3, c.

not correspond to the notion of person. Only when the mode of signifying the individual elements is rendered distinct by the addition of the term "this" can a person be signified. Notice that by adding the term "this" what is determined is the mode of signifying the individuating elements. The expression "this man" still remains a whole which contains both essential and individuating elements. Thus, it can be predicated of the individual, as when we say that Socrates is this man.

Insofar as our mode of signifying things is better known to us, it can be used as a means to understand more clearly the mode of being which the signified things have. Indeed, because of the fact that sometimes names signifying intentions of reason are better known to us, we can use them as a means of understanding things in themselves, as when the term "individual" is used in place of an essential principle, or we come to understand things about hypostasis through our understanding of supposit.

VII.A.4 Other Attempts to Define Person

Before we complete our consideration of the concept of person, it is important to consider, at least briefly, some alternative definitions of person which have enjoyed widespread acceptance. First, we shall consider some definitions of person which posit that a person is an accident or something existing in an accidental mode. Second, we shall consider some definitions of person which posit that a person is something substantial or subsisting.

Since the ascendancy of subjectivist philosophical systems (that is, systems which start from the principle that our thoughts and sense perceptions are better known to us

than things outside of us), it has been popular to define person in terms of consciousness or thought.[638] Among these some identify the person with the subject of this consciousness,[639] while others identify the person with the conscious perceptions themselves.[640] In an attempt to identify the unifying principle according to which a person persists as one being throughout a series of conscious perceptions, a number of thinkers have posited memory as the key faculty by which the person is constituted as a persisting individual, for by way of memory several conscious experiences are united and experienced as belonging together.

One obvious difficulty with identifying personhood with perceptions or states of consciousness or memory is that experience tells us that we *have* perceptions, and awareness and memory,[641] not that we *are* these things. All of these are activities or powers *of* something else. If someone were to hold, contrary to experience, that perceptions and states of consciousness are not in another as in a subject, he has not taken the position that a person is not a subsisting thing. Rather, he has affirmed that perceptions and states of consciousness exist *per se*, which is simply to say that they exist in a substantial mode, for substance is that which exists *per se*. The position, therefore,

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[638] Representatives of this position include J. Locke, D. Hume, Berkley, and, more recently, P. Singer, J. Harris, and M. Tooley.

[639] Locke seems to take this position when he defines a person as "a thinking, intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself, as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places," *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1975), p.107.

[640] Such seems to be the position of Hume. "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I can never catch myself at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible to myself, and may truly be said not to exist," *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) p.252. Clearly, Hume's assertion that when someone is not actually perceiving something he does not exist reveals a logical error, for it does not follow that I do not exist when I am not perceiving but only that I am not *aware* that I exist.

[641] The appeal to memory as a basis for personal unity and identity involves a special difficulty: every memory is experienced as past, but a person is often aware of his personality as present.

returns to something like the definition we have given above (with the exception that it involves an inner contradiction in asserting that an accident is a substance).

Another definition of person which has recently gained some acceptance asserts that a person is essentially constituted by relation.[642] Among the proponents of this position the motivation for asserting this position seems to be primarily theological. Indeed, there seems to be very little which recommends this position from a philosophical perspective,[643] for among the various predicates of being that which is relative seems to have the least being and hence is of least dignity as regards its mode of existence. Moreover, even that which is said to be relative in a manner which is not restricted to the predicament of *ad aliquid*[644] presupposes in its notion some prior subject in which it has being. However, as we have already shown, a person must be an ultimate subject. Those who define person as something which is essentially relative to another go so far as to claim that a solitary individual of a rational nature would not be a person.[645] It is not difficult to see that this does violence to the way in which the word "person" is used in ordinary speech. It may be true that every created person must necessarily be a subject of

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[642] The adherents of this position include J. Galot, D. de Rougemont, H.U. Von Balthazar, W. N. Clarke, and D. Schindler.

[643] The argument for this position runs something like this: In God person signifies relation, but every perfection found in God is found there according to its most perfect notion. Therefore, since personality is a perfection, person, understood in its perfect sense, signifies relation (See, for example, J. Galot, "La Définition de la Personne, relation et sujet," *Gregorianum*, 75, n.2 (1994): p.282, 288-289). The first premise is taken from Christian theology, which falls outside the scope of this thesis to judge. However, let us assume that it is true hypothetically. Even then, the argument would not follow since the mode of existence which things have in God differs from the mode of existence which things have in creatures. Therefore, assuming person signifies relation in God, there is no reason to suppose that person signifies something existing as a relation in creatures. S. Hipp argues similarly. "While it is true that whatever is formal to personality as such must be equally verifiable in both divine and created persons, it is simply incorrect to affirm that the modality according to which that formality is realized must be the same in both." (*"Person" in Christian Tradition and in the Conception of Saint Albert the Great,* p.502).

[644] Sometimes called a transcendental relation.

[645] For example, Von Balthazar writes: "There simply cannot be a single person, existing within himself, but that existence as a person comes about only in the relationship between the I and the Thou." ("On the Concept of Person," p.24).

relation, but this does not mean that every person is essentially constituted by relation. To identify the two would be a fallacy of the accident.

Among those who place the ultimate ground of personhood in something accidental, special interest is due to Duns Scotus, who seems to indicate that the ultimate basis of personhood is a double negation superadded to the individual intellectual nature: the denial that such a nature is communicated to another and the denial that it is apt or destined to be communicated to another.[646] If one were to interpret this strictly, it would mean that the negations themselves are the basis of personhood. In other words, personality is an absence, something founded upon a pure being of reason. From this it would follow either that a person is a being of reason or at least that the distinction between person and nature is only a distinction of reason. Neither of these is an acceptable position for the reasons we have given above.[647] Moreover, such a concept of person does not add any positive perfection above the concept of intellectual nature, but to be established as a possessor of a nature (*i.e.*, the person), as opposed to being the nature possessed, necessarily implies some positive perfection insofar as it is more perfect to possess than to be possessed, just as a whole which possesses its parts is more perfect than the part which is possessed by its whole. A less strict, and perhaps more reasonable, interpretation of Scotus sees the definition of person in terms of a double negation merely as a provisional definition that does not intend to signify the essence of person or to identify the very essence of person with these negations but merely uses

[646] See Duns Scotus, *Op. Ox.*, III, d.1, q.1; d.5, q.2, n.4-5; d.6, q.1; *Quodl.* XIX, a.3.
[647] Briefly, a person is not a being of reason since to exist as a being of reason is of much less dignity than to exist *per se* so that the very notion as something pertaining to dignity is missing in a being of reason. Moreover, according to ordinary speech, when we call something a person, we intend to signify some real thing not just a being of reason. On the other hand, the distinction between person and nature is not only a distinction of reason since then it would follow that human persons were not of the same nature, and so they would be called human equivocally.

them as a basis for setting off the concept of person from other things.[648] Such a definition would be legitimate, but not particularly relevant for resolving the question about the root of personal dignity.

Another group of proposed definitions starts from the fact that a person is something substantial or subsisting.[649] Following St. Thomas this is our position as well, as is clear from the foregoing. As we stated at the outset, there may be a number of valid definitions of person (*e.g.*, descriptive, essential, *etc*.) which, as verbal expressions, accurately circumscribe and attain to the reality signified by the term "person." For example, we have argued above for the substantial equivalence of our definition with that of Boethius. Nevertheless, it is important to set down some fundamental criteria which distinguish our definition from those which are not fundamentally compatible with it. First of all, if person is defined as a kind of substance, this can be compatible with our definition only if the term "substance" is not used to signify essence, for both essence and nature are distinguished from person, as we have argued above. Secondly, for a definition of person to be compatible with ours, it is not sufficient that it posit the very constitution of a person to be existence, for beyond this a particular mode of existence is necessary to establish some existent as a person. *Esse* itself is not a wholly sufficient basis for bringing about personhood. Finally, our definition of person presupposes that it is impossible for something to exist without being determined to this or that mode of existence. The mode of existence is not something really distinct from existence which

[648] Such a definition would be the same kind of definition of man proposed by Socrates: a featherless biped. It is something provisional which serves a purpose, but it is not very helpful for understanding the essence of the thing under discussion.

[649] Besides St. Thomas and Boethius representatives of this group include most of the Scholastics, among whom some of the most notable are Richard of St. Victor, P. Lombard, St. Albert, St. Bonaventure, Capreolus, Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, and F. Suárez.

can be superadded to or really separated from an already existing being, as Suárez postulates.[650] To actually exist, but not in any particular way, is simply a contradiction, for it is contrary to the notion of act that it be undetermined.

VII.A.5 Conclusion

To conclude, we have set forth an essential definition of person which is at once consistent, consonant with the present usage of the term and continuous with its origins, and relevant for the purposes of identifying the root of personal dignity. Person is that singular which exists *per se* and completely in rational nature, where the mode of existing *per se* and completely is understood to be necessarily united to the existence itself. With this having been established we are now in a position to examine more carefully the concept of personal dignity.

VII.B The Concept of Dignity

As is apparent from the foregoing, the notion of dignity is part of our fundamental understanding of person. This section of our thesis aims to provide a definition of personal dignity and to identify the principal kinds of personal dignity.

[650] See *Disp. Met.*, disp. 34, s.4, n.15; *De Incarnatione*, disp. 11, s.3.

VII.B.1 The Definition of Dignity

All agree that dignity is a certain good. Moreover, it is not a trifling good or a good of little account but a great good. Above we distinguished the good-in-itself from pleasure and the useful good. Among these it seems that dignity signifies some kind of good-in-itself (*bonum honestum*) since both the pleasant good and the useful good are ultimately desirable on account of the good-in-itself. Moreover, we do not say that dignity itself is a kind of pleasure or enjoyment but rather that we take pleasure *in* or rejoice *about* dignity. Dignity is the object of delight not the delight itself. Furthermore, that which has dignity is opposed to the base, but often useful and pleasant goods and those who love them for their own sake are called base. The good-in-itself is never called base. Thus, dignity will signify the good of something for its own sake not a good which is merely for the sake of another. "Dignity signifies the goodness of something on account of itself, but utility on account of another thing."[651]

Dignity does not signify simply any good-in-itself. Like the word "person" the word "dignity" entered the English language from Latin. The word "dignitas" in Latin is a substantive form of the word "dignus," meaning worthy. Thus, dignity is that in virtue of which someone is called *dignus*, or worthy. The word "dignus" apparently is derived from "decnos," a term which meant fitting or suitable.[652] Thus, we say that someone is worthy when there is a fittingness or suitability that they possess some good.[653] On the other hand, if there is nothing in them which makes it fitting or suitable that they acquire or possess some good, then they are called unworthy of that good. For example, a good

[651] *In III Sent.*, d.35, q.1, a.4a, c.
[652] See *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, pp.267-268.
[653] See *In IV Sent.*, d.18, q.1, a.1c, c.; *De Veritate,* q.29, a.7, c.; *S.T.*, IIIa, q.42, a.3, c.

man is said to be worthy of a good wife, or a just and prudent person is said to be worthy of holding political office. Now that in virtue of which someone is made suitable to have or enjoy some good must be something intrinsic to that person, for suitability is a kind of relation, and all relation is based upon something intrinsic to the things related. For example, the relation of being taller is founded upon the intrinsic property of having some height. Thus, dignity signifies the foundation of this relation of suitability rather than the relation itself.[654] Dignity is something inhering, something intrinsic, not something relative. "Dignity is something absolute."[655] On the other hand, dignity is also something possessed by some subject. It is not the very subject itself. We do not say that such and such a thing *is* its dignity but that it *has* dignity.[656] This means that dignity does not signify a supposit or hypostasis but rather something inhering in a hypostasis or said of a supposit.

Now sometimes the suitability for some good is so perfect that we say that someone has a right to have or enjoy it. For example, when one has worked well for an agreed and just wage, we say that he is worthy of that wage in the sense that he has a right to receive that wage. At other times the suitability is less perfect so that we say that it is fitting or congruous that someone have or enjoy some good. For example, an employee who voluntarily contributes to the good of a business beyond the requirements of his job is worthy of a bonus, inasmuch as it is fitting for him to receive a bonus as opposed to another who only does his job. "Someone can be worthy of something in two ways: either so that he has the right of having it…or so that there be in him some

[654] See *Super Prim. Ep. ad Cor.,* cap.3, lect.1 (n.134 in Marietti).
[655] *S.T.*, Ia, q.42, a.4, ad2. See *In I Sent*., d.7, q.2, a.2a, ad4; and d.9, q.2, a.1, ad4.
[656] This linguistic distinction points to some reality found in the meaning of the term "dignity," namely that it signifies as something that modifies a subject. Thus, it does not belong to the notion of dignity to constitute a subject but to be something of the subject.

congruity for that which is given to him."[657] To this two-fold mode of worthiness there corresponds a two-fold dignity: dignity in the full and perfect sense of a foundation for a strictly just claim to some good; and dignity in an imperfect sense of a foundation which makes it fitting that some good be had or enjoyed.

Thus, we can define dignity, in the strict and proper sense, as some good-in-itself, which is a property inhering in something in virtue of which it is strictly just that this thing receive or enjoy some good. From this definition it is immediately apparent that dignity is correlated to some good. Dignity is understood in relation to the good for which it serves as the foundation of suitability. This means that the relation of some dignity to the good for which it makes its subject suitable is like the relation of a habit to its object. Consequently, to different kinds of good there will correspond different kinds of dignity. Moreover, since dignity signifies something inhering in a subject, it happens that if there are different kinds of things inhering in a subject that make the subject suitable for some good, there will be diverse dignities according to the diverse inhering things. Thus, the species of dignity can be distinguished either on the basis of their distinct objects or on the basis of distinctions within the subject.[658]

VII.B.2 Personal Dignity

Personal dignity is that dignity which is proper to persons. Since dignity can be distinguished according to distinctions within the subject as well as distinct objects, we shall first consider personal dignity as distinguished according to the distinctions within

[657] *In IV Sent*., d.18, q.1, a.1b, ad3.
[658] See *In III Sent*., d.23, q.1, a.4c, ad4. "habits are distinguished not only on the basis of [their] subjects, but also on the basis of [their] objects."

the subject of personal dignity, namely the person; and secondly, we shall distinguish personal dignity according to the good which is its object.

VII.B.2.a Personal Dignity Considered According to Its Subject

Insofar as our definition of person includes reference not only to rational nature but also to existence and a determinate mode of existence, each of these can in some way contribute to personal dignity.

First of all, since rational nature is something inhering in a person which makes the person suitable for rational goods, there is a dignity corresponding to rational nature. This dignity of rational nature is not the dignity of a person unless it is actualized by the mode of existence proper to persons, for the being and mode of being of a person make the person such that it can act and be acted upon. Therefore, the being and mode of being proper to a person make the person suitable for the good of personal acts or operations (*i.e.*, second act). The incommunicability entailed by this mode of being is not itself a personal dignity, for although it is of greater dignity to exist *per se*, this mode of being and the consequent incommunicability can also belong to non-persons. Rather, the incommunicability makes it possible for the nature to open itself to higher orders of good so as to realize its own dignity.

> The incommunicability of the person itself does not have the very notion of a term, as if the person existed for its own incommunicability. On the contrary, far from being a "being-for-self," in this incommunicability, it is this very

> [incommunicability] which opens the nature to communication – actions are of supposits.[659]

The combination of a rational nature with this particular mode of being produces something which at once is the possessor of its own nature and master over its own actions,

> for [intellectual and rational creatures] excel other creatures both in perfection of nature and in dignity of [their] end. In the perfection of nature, since only the rational creature has dominion over its own acts, freely moving itself to act. But other creatures are more moved, rather than move [themselves] to their proper acts.[660]

Such a being is the kind of being which can give its very self, "for someone can also, from love, give himself to someone as a friend."[661] This kind of personal dignity, founded as it is on something which is inseparable from the person, is itself inseparable from the person. It is an inalienable dignity.

This inalienable dignity which belongs to the person in virtue of its actualized nature is also shared by the soul and the body of the human person since the dignity of the whole, being itself a good common to the whole, is also shared by its parts. Thus, the human body, insofar as it is an instrument united in the very supposit of the human person, takes its dignity from the dignity of the person itself.[662]

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[659] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun* , p.40-41. "L'incommunicabilité de la personne elle-même n'a pas raison de terme comme si la personne existait pour son incommunicabilité; au contraire, loin d'être un 'pour soi' dans cette incommunicabilité, celle-ci ouvre la nature à la communication – *actiones sunt suppositorum*."
[660] *S.C.G.*, III.111.
[661] *In I Sent.*, d.15, q.3, a.1, c.
[662] See *S.T.*, IIIa, q.57, a.5, c. "The body of Christ, although considering the condition of its bodily nature is below the spiritual substances, nevertheless, considering the dignity of union by which it is personally conjoined to God it excels the dignity of every spiritual substance." *Cf.*, *S.T.*, IIIa, q.25, a.2. Indeed, in some respect, the dignity of the body remains even after death since the essential elements of the body

Besides the nature and being of a person there are also certain accidents which inhere in a person. Insofar as any of these can serve as a foundation for making the person, as such, suitable for some good, they also establish certain dignities that can rightly be called personal. For example, the virtues and corresponding operations by which a person is made proportionate to his end can be considered personal dignities. Such dignities, insofar as they comprise certain accidents which can be or not be in a person, are not inalienable dignities but can be acquired, increased, decreased or lost.

VII.B.2.b Personal Dignity Considered According to Its Object

Since personal dignity, as we have said, is a dignity proper to persons and since each kind of dignity is determined by its proper object, it follows that personal dignity will be that which makes a person suitable for a good object proper to persons, namely the rational good which is the object of personal, or moral, acts. Above, we identified a number of such goods: the good of the order of the family, the good of the order of the political community, the good of the order of the universe, and the separated good of the universe. Now some of these goods are more noble than others so that the dignity by which a person is suitable for a lower good is not the same as the dignity by which one is suitable for a higher good. For example, a man may, in virtue of his obedience to his parents, be suitable to partake of the common good of the family; yet if he lacks piety for his fatherland and, though able, refuses to serve in the just defense of his country, he is not suitable to partake of the common good of his country. Thus, there is a different

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retain an order of unibility with the person from whom they are separated. See In III Sent., d.2, q.2, a.1c, ad3.

basis or foundation for a person's suitability to share in common goods of different grades. To be worthy to partake of a higher good a correspondingly higher dignity is necessary.

That dignity is called personal simply speaking which makes a person suitable for the good of the person simply speaking. The good of the person, simply speaking, is that end to which the person is principally ordained, the greatest and ultimate good of the person: namely God, the separated common good of the universe,

> for [intellectual and rational natures] excel other creatures both in perfection of nature and in dignity of [their] end…In dignity of [their] end, since only the intellectual creature attains to the ultimate end of the universe itself by its own operation, namely by knowing and loving God. But other creatures are not able to attain to the ultimate end, except through some participation of his likeness.[663]

Now a person is made suitable for this good in the strictest sense when he is disposed to possess and enjoy God through acts of knowledge of God and love of God, in short, when a person is rightly disposed for contemplation of God. Thus, personal dignity, in the fullest sense, consists in the right disposition for the contemplation of God.[664] Also, however, all those things which are necessary prerequisites for this right disposition for contemplation and are ordered to it as to an end partake in the notion of this personal dignity since the dignity of that which is to the end is taken from the end. "The dignity of those things which are to the end is principally considered from the end."[665] Thus, a person's existence and rational nature, insofar as they are for the sake of the person's

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[663] *S.C.G.*, III.111.
[664] See De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.38. "[Rational creatures] draw their dignity from the end to which they can and must attain. This dignity consists in this: that they can attain to the end of the universe…" See also: *S.C.G.*, III.111.
[665] *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.174, a.2, c.

operation and a prerequisite for the disposition to contemplation of God,[666] have their dignity from this ultimate end. Moreover, the various perfections within a person that render him suitable to partake in the common good of the family, the state, *etc*., insofar as these are stepping stones which place someone in more proximate potency to receive the ultimate common good, also share in the dignity of the ultimate end. Thus, so long as each of the lesser perfections or dignities is ordained to the ultimate dignity, they share in that ultimate dignity so that they are but further actualizations of one personal dignity which embraces all of the dignities belonging to the person.[667] In this sense, personal dignity can be considered as something realizable and perfectible.[668]

The dignity of non-persons is something wholly determined by their nature and mode of being. On the other hand, created persons are capable through their own acts of rendering themselves fit or unfit to partake of some good. Thus, in some respect, personal dignity is something self-realized in the created person. Yet even before a human person has the capacity for moral action, his nature has a positive ordination towards the ultimate common good. Even before moral action, therefore, the human person shares, though imperfectly, in the dignity which disposes one to receive and enjoy

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[666] "The sheer fact of existing is neither the supreme good nor any one of the absolute goods to which the person as such is ordained. It is, however, the first prerequisite condition of the person's ordination to these goods." Maritain, PCG, p.56-57.

[667] We can speak of one personal dignity insofar as all the dignities ordained to the ultimate dignity of the person have a unity of order. Again, since the ultimate good contains, as a kind of potential whole, the various grades of lesser goods, it can also be said that the dignity which makes one suitable for the ultimate good is a potential whole which contains the other lesser dignities, *i.e.*, the various dignities that make a person suitable to participate in the various grades of common goods leading up to, and necessary for participation in the ultimate common good.

[668] See De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.2. "The dignity of the created person is not without ties; and our liberty is not for the purpose of breaking these ties, but to free us in reinforcing them. These ties are the principal cause of our dignity." *Cf.*, Maritain. "Man is a political animal because he is a rational animal, because reason requires development through character training, education and the cooperation of other men, and because society is thus indispensable to the accomplishment of human dignity," (PCG, p.38-39); and J.F. Crosby. "Moral worthiness in a person seems in a way to *actualize* his or her ontological value as a person," (Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, p.240).

the ultimate common good. Yet it is possible that through a morally bad choice someone render himself unfit for participation in some good, even the good of enjoying God in contemplation.

> Man, by sinning, departs from the order of reason, and therefore he falls away from human dignity: namely, insofar as man is naturally free and existing for himself. And he falls, in a certain way, into the servitude of the beasts, so that, namely, things are ordained concerning him according as he is useful for others.[669]

If such a deformity intervenes, the remote disposition present in nature no longer suffices for one to share in the ultimate common good. Nevertheless, the rational nature never loses its natural capacity for God so that some remnant of the previous dignity remains: either insofar as, by repentance, a person can be made fit again to actually partake of the ultimate common good[670] or, at least, inasmuch as the nature always retains this intrinsic orientation to and natural capacity for that higher end and always has a more perfect likeness to God than non-rational natures.[671]

We have said that personal dignity is that in virtue of which a person is made suitable to partake in a rational good; and in the fullest and most perfect sense it is that disposition for contemplating God who is the ultimate common good. We should determine more precisely what is the nature of this principle of suitability, this disposition. In fact, there might be a number of things which serve as a basis for

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[669] S.T, IIa-IIae, q.64, a.2, ad3. See *In Job*, c.40. "And just as man through sin falls from the dignity of reason, and acting against reason is compared to an irrational agent, so also the devil through sin, turning himself away from the highest and most intelligible goods, while he desired rulership over inferior and earthly things, is compared to the brute animals;" and *In III Sent*., q.2, q.1, a.2c, ad2. "It is not unfitting that someone lose something from the dignity of his person from his own fault." See also: *Super Ep. ad Rom*., cap.12, lect.1; *Quodl.* V, q.9, a.2, c.; *In IV Sent*., d.15, q.3, a.1b, ad3; *S.T.*, IIa-IIae, q.147, a.1, ad2.
[670] See *S.T.*, IIIa, q.89, a.3, c.
[671] See In IV Sent., d.48, q.2, a.4, ad3; and *S.C.G.*, III.111. This dignity corresponds to the inalienable dignity of the person which we considered above.

suitability to receive and enjoy some rational good: for example, moral virtue, intelligence, *etc.*, but all of these in one way or another must be reduced to a certain form within the will according to which the will is made to correspond to the rational good, for the good is the proper object of the will. Moreover, a thing is said to be fitting when the two can be united so as to be conformed to one another, just as a piece of a puzzle fits when its form corresponds to the shape of the pieces around it. Now the form in the will according to which the will is made conformable or proportioned to some good is nothing other than love. "The very aptitude or proportion of the appetite to the good is love, which is nothing other than a complacency in the good."[672] Thus, the ultimate criterion according to which someone is judged to be suitable for some good is whether or not that person loves that good. For one is more suited to partake of the good of the political community who more loves that good.[673] One is more suited to partake of the ultimate common good which is God who loves God more,[674] but this love is not a blind love which does not regard the true nature of the good loved. Indeed, in order to be an authentic love for that good, it must be informed by a right understanding concerning the very good loved. Otherwise, it will not be that good which is loved but some counterfeit good. Thus, this informed love will presuppose proportionate knowledge of the good to be loved. Moreover, the good must be loved in the right way.

> To love the good of some city happens in two ways: in one way, so that it might be held [for oneself]; in another way so that it might be conserved. But to love the good of some city so that it might be held and possessed, does not make a

[672] *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q.25, a.2, c.
[673] See *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.2, c. "If a man is admitted so far as to share the good of some city, and is made a citizen of that city, it is fitting that he possess certain virtues for doing those things which are of the citizen and for loving the good of the city."
[674] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.12, a.6, c.

> good political man; since thus also a tyrant loves the good of some city so that he might lord over it, which is to love himself more than the city. For he desires this good for himself, not for the city. But to love the good of the city so that it might be conserved and defended, this is to love the city truly, which does make a good political man: insofar as some men expose themselves to the dangers of death and neglect their private good for the sake of conserving and increasing the good of the city.[675]

Personal dignity, therefore, is found principally in right love for God, the ultimate good, and in all those things inseparably bound up with this right love, such as a correct notion of God. This is the foundation in a person by virtue of which he is rendered suitable to be united to God.[676]

VII.B.2.c. Dignity of Nature and Dignity of Finality

Of the kinds of personal dignity which we have considered it can be said that there are fundamentally two kinds of personal dignity: one which is inalienable and stable and another which is alienable yet capable of development and actualization.[677] The question is, which of these should be called personal dignity, simply speaking? On the one hand, the enduring and inalienable nature of the former dignity recommends it as being a superior kind of dignity. On the other hand, the nobility of the good to which we

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[675] *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.2, c.

[676] In view of the observations we made above in our treatment of the moral good it is appropriate to note here that just as there is a real possibility of participating in a good beyond that knowable by reason alone, so also there is the possibility of a dignity which exceeds the dignity of the human person knowable by reason alone.

[677] Various authors have attempted to identify these two dignities by various names. J.F. Crosby calls the former "ontological value" and the latter "moral value" in order to emphasize the enduring nature of the former (See *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, p.240). J. Maritain seems to designate these two dignities by the names "initial liberty" and "terminal liberty." (See *Du Régime Temporel et de la Liberté*, p.35). M. Novak speaks of two parts of a single dignity, of which one is an "unalienable responsibility" and the other a "final destination." (See *Free Persons and the Common Good*, p.31). C. De Koninck, using the vocabulary of St. Thomas, refers to "dignity of nature" as opposed to "dignity of end" or "finality." (See *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.37-40).

are united by the latter recommends it as being a superior kind of dignity. To resolve this question we must return to a principle which we identified at the beginning of this section. In creatures, that which exists, simply speaking, is only good in some respect. The good, simply speaking, is found in that which has all the perfections of which it is capable. The dignity which belongs to a person in virtue of his nature and being is itself an incomplete dignity that is ordained to a further end. This end is reached through the latter dignity (*i.e.*, the dignity of finality), just as a substance is perfected by its habits and operations. Thus, the dignity of nature is for the sake of the dignity of finality. This means that personal dignity, simply speaking, is found in the dignity of finality for the created person.

The truth of the matter is that our dignity is radically dependent upon an extrinsic source. We are not our own ultimate dignity, nor do we possess the greater part of our dignity in an inalienable way. To possess the whole of one's dignity inalienably is proper to God alone.[678]

VII.B.2.d The Primacy of the Common Good As the Root of Personal Dignity

Since, as we have seen, other dignities (*i.e.*, those related to the various common goods that are dispositions for the ultimate common good) are gathered together into one personal dignity (insofar as all the dignities ordained to the ultimate dignity of the person have a unity of order) and since each of these dignities is also constituted by love for the respective good, it follows that personal dignity, in the fullest sense, is found in the order of love according to which more particular goods are loved for the sake of more common

[678] See *S.C.G.*, III.109.

goods and all goods for the sake of the ultimate common good.[679] Indeed, one who loves the ultimate good rightly necessarily loves with a right order in respect to the lesser goods.[680] For example, for God to be loved rightly he is to be loved above creatures, and creatures are to be loved only for God's sake since the whole notion of goodness in them comes from God. Thus, love of the ultimate good implies a right order of love, but the root cause for the right order of love is the order of the goods loved to one another.[681] In this way the primacy of the common good, which establishes the order among goods to be loved, is the root of personal dignity.

VII.B.2.e Consequences of Personal Dignity in Regard to Human Action

The fact that the ultimate good is a common good is an indication of its super-abounding goodness, insofar as it is a good incapable of being exhausted or fully possessed by a single person. Its incommensurability is a sign of its exceeding goodness. Yet, as we have seen, the imperfect participation in this higher, common good is better than the perfect possession of any good of a lower order which can be fully circumscribed by a created person. Since the separate common good of the universe, God, exceeds the intrinsic good of any creature or even the whole order of creatures, this implies that no other good can possibly be more perfective of the person, nor ought any other good be preferred to it. Thus, a person never acts in accord with his dignity when he prefers any good to the ultimate common good. Indeed, it is impossible for one to

[679] See *Quodl*. XI, q.10, a.1, c. "The common good takes precedence in the order of charity."
[680] See *In III Sent*., d. 32, q.1, a.4, sc.3.
[681] See *In III Sent*., d.13, q.2, a.2b, ad1. "The root of an operation is properly the object itself from which it draws its species." *Cf.*, *In II Sent*., d.29, q.1, a.1, c.

augment or act in accordance with personal dignity, as we have defined it, while preferring some lesser, more particular good to the ultimate common good. Not only this, but any time a more particular good is preferred to a more common good, this introduces a deformity in the will of the person which either diminishes or wholly takes away that order of love in which personal dignity lies. In short, every human act which is contrary to the order of reason is opposed to personal dignity. No created good is a sufficient motive or excuse for preferring something to the ultimate common good or for acting contrary to the order established by the ultimate common good.

A further consequence of personal dignity as we have defined it is that a person should never be acted upon by other persons in certain ways. First, a person should never be forced or persuaded to prefer some good to the ultimate common good, or to act against the order of reason. This is clearly contrary to his dignity. Furthermore, an innocent person who has not lost his dignity of finality as regards some good should never be intentionally and directly deprived of the means necessary to obtain that good. For example, an innocent person should never be put to death, deprived of an education, deprived of a natural family, *etc*. Even in the case of a person who, due to some defect, such as retardation or physical handicap, is incapable of fully participating in some good, the very ordination of his nature to that good suffices as a basis for personal dignity. In such cases the person should be provided with those helps necessary to participate in the good to the extent that he is able, even if this means merely the good of existence as a rational being.

Even in the case of persons who, through morally bad choices, have forfeited their dignity of finality in some respect, it is still necessary that they not be acted upon

contrary to the dignity which remains to them. Certainly, it is within the competence of the legitimate authority to deny participation in the common good of the community to one who has rendered himself unfit for this good. For example, the father of a family can deny a share in the good of the family to a child who rejects the authority of the parents; the ruler of a political community can deny a share of the good of the political community to one who rejects the just laws of the political community. This authority, however, extends only to those goods over which the authority has care. As regards those goods which pertain to a person's direct relationship to God, such as legitimate worship (*i.e.*, worship not contrary to reason or the authentic common good of the political community), no human authority is competent to deprive a person of such goods since they are not goods which fall under the scope of human authority. The state, as we have already remarked, is simply not capable of rendering these goods actual. The best it can do is provide the positive conditions for such goods to flourish. Therefore, neither is the state competent to deny such goods.[682] Even if it can be reasonably surmised that a person has forfeited the dignity pertaining to his ultimate end, by the possibility of repentance the person retains a certain dignity and so should not be denied those helps which might restore him to right relationship with God.

This concludes our scientific treatment of the common good as the root of personal dignity. It remains to resolve the objections which have been brought forth.

[682] Of course, by the very fact of excluding someone from participation in some order of good their ability to achieve the ultimate good may be seriously impaired. For example, a criminal in prison would likely not have access to many of the helps useful to advance in moral virtue or further his understanding of God and the order of the universe. This is due to his own fault. Nevertheless, what limited means remain to someone outside of the order of goods of which he is deprived should not be denied to him.

Chapter VIII: Response to Objections

We are now in a position to respond to the arguments raised against the thesis in Chapter IV. First, we will respond to the objections raised against the position that the common good is simply speaking better than the private good. Second, we will respond to the arguments which, though they do not expressly deny the primacy of the common good simply speaking, nevertheless affirm that the root of personal dignity is a private good.

VIII.A Responses to the Objections Raised Against the Primacy of the Common Good

VIII.A.1 Pleasure Is the Ultimate Good

The first argument against the primacy of the common good ran thus: The ultimate good is pleasure, but pleasure is not a common good. Therefore, the ultimate good is not a common good.

The minor premise of this argument is false. Pleasure is not the ultimate good simply speaking; rather the good object in which pleasure is taken, namely the good-in-itself,[683] is the ultimate good. The reason why pleasure cannot be the ultimate good or end simply speaking is that pleasure is nothing other than that which terminates the motion of the appetite as rest in the thing desired, but if the ultimate end were the very

[683] See Chapter V.B.7 above for the distinction between the good-in-itself and the pleasant good.

resting of the appetite, then there would no reason for motion to begin or for anything to be desired save resting of the appetite.

> It is ridiculous to say that the end of the motion of a heavy body is not to be in its proper place, but rather [that its end is] the resting of the inclination by which it tends towards this [place]. For if nature had principally intended this, that the inclination be put to rest, it would not have given it [i.e., the inclination]. But [nature] gives it so that through this [inclination] it might tend to its proper place. When this [place] has been obtained, as an end, the resting of the inclination follows. And thus, such a resting is not the end, but concomitant with the end. Nor, therefore, is delight the ultimate end, but something concomitant with it.[684]

If the purpose of an inclination or desire is that it be put to rest, it would follow that the purpose of an inclination is to cease to be. In other words, inclinations themselves would have no intelligibility or order or reason for being. They would exist for the sake of not existing, which is simply a contradiction.

From the analysis of pleasure given above (in V.B.7) it can be seen that there are two reasons why pleasure is often mistaken for the ultimate good. First, among sensible goods, which are better known to us, the pleasing good is better known than the good-in-itself. This is so much the case that something harmful is often considered good-in-itself because it is pleasant. The primacy of pleasure as something better known in the sensible order is not a sign that pleasure is better than the good-in-itself since in animals this pleasure is always seen to be ordered to some good-in-itself, as the pleasures associated with eating or sex are ordered to their respective activities,[685] which in turn are ordered to

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[684] *S.C.G.*, III.26.

[685] See *S.C.G.*, III.26. "Delight is the perfection of operation, not so that the operation itself is ordered to it according to its species, but it is ordered to other ends, just as eating is ordered, according to its species, to the conservation of the individual. But [delight] is like the perfection which is ordered to the species of a thing. For on account of delight, we apply ourselves more attentively and becomingly to the operation in which we delight. Hence, in the tenth book of the *Ethics*, the Philosopher says that delight perfects

the ends of nutrition and propagation of the species.[686] Pleasure is the bait that nature uses to ensure that the good-in-itself comes about for the most part in animals. The distinction between a motive and an end is helpful here.

> To do something on account of an end is two-fold: either on account of the end of the work done (*finem operis*), or on account of the motive of the agent (*finem operantis*). The end of the work done is that to which the work is ordained by the agent, and this is called the reason for the work (*ratio operis*). But the motive of the agent is that which the one acting principally intends.[687]

A man may study medicine for the motive of wealth, but wealth is not the ultimate reason for the art of medicine. Medicine has its own intrinsic intelligibility based upon its nature as an art ordained to its end which is healing. Similarly, it may well be that the ultimate motive for some agent in acting is pleasure, but this should not be confused with the end which explains the order that exists in the act done by the agent. To explain sexual activity or eating, for example, solely in terms of the pleasure that is often the motive of those who act in this way would clearly leave out the most fundamental explanation of such activities since the pleasure itself does not explain why all of the various elements

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operation just as comeliness [perfects] youth, which indeed is for the sake of him in whom there is youth, and not the converse."

[686] See *S.C.G.*, III.27. "The operations upon which the aforesaid delights follow are not the ultimate end, since they are ordered to other obvious ends, as eating is ordered to the conservation of the body, and sexual union to the generation of offspring."

[687] *In II Sent*., d.1, q.2, a.1, c. This very important distinction between motive and end seems to have escaped M. Novak. "The advent of personal liberty destroyed the simplicity of the concept of the common good. Now each human being was held responsible for forming his own conception both of his own good and of the common good," (*Free Persons and the Common Good*, p.91; also see pp.12, 15 and 21). This failure to distinguish between the motives of individual persons and the end of the person as person leads Novak to reject the possibility of political prudence. "In order to attain the common good, the technique set before us by tradition was authority. *Someone* in government was charged with putting order into the economic life of the regime. This task exceeded human intellectual capacities. It also violated the pluralism of individual consciences." (*Free Persons and the Common Good*, p.103; also see pp.93 and 97). Under this view the development of moral virtue becomes the sole province of the individual and the family.

involved in a reproductive or nutritive act should happen in the manner and order that they do.

A second reason why the pleasing good is often confused with the ultimate end is that the pleasing good is the last effect which is brought about by the agent's activity since delight follows upon the acquisition of the good-in-itself. Though delight has the character of being something ultimate in this respect, it does not have the character of the ultimate thing or activity for the sake of which other activities are done. Similarly, a healthy complexion is something consequent to good health, yet it is health, not a healthy complexion which is the ultimate end of exercise. Pleasure is not last in the sense of the ultimate intelligible or causal explanation of some activity or being; rather it is ultimate as something concomitant with the last end not as the ultimate end itself.[688]

VIII.A.2 Existence Is the Ultimate Good

The second argument against the primacy of the common good ran thus: The ultimate good is existence, but existence is not a common good. Therefore, the ultimate good is not a common good.

According to its natural sense the term "existence" in the minor premise is taken to signify the act of existing of a particular person, so that it could be restated: The ultimate good of the person is his own act of existing. Taken in this sense, the minor premise of this argument is false. Existence in the sense of first act (*i.e.*, the act of existing) is being simply speaking but not good simply speaking in creatures. The reason

[688] See *S.C.G.*, III.26. "Nor is the fact that men will delight not for the sake of another, but for its own sake a sufficient sign that delight is the ultimate end…For delight, even if it is not the ultimate end, is nevertheless concomitant with the ultimate end, since delight arises from the attainment of the end."

for this, as we indicated above in Chapter V.B, is that the good, unlike being, has the notion of something perfect and desirable so that unless a being have the whole actuality of which it is susceptible, it will not be called good simply speaking. Since operations are needed to complete the whole actuality of a creature,[689] substantial existence (*i.e.*, first act) is not the whole actuality of a creature. Therefore, a created person's own act of existence cannot be his ultimate good.

The fact that existence is presupposed to all other goods necessitates that the privation of existence is the greatest evil, but it does not necessitate that the possession of being is, therefore, the greatest good. Often a good can be more fundamental (in the sense of more necessary than or presupposed to other goods) without being better. Logic is more fundamental than metaphysics, but metaphysics is better; sensation is more fundamental than reason, but reason is better; the ability to read the alphabet is more fundamental than reading Shakespeare, but reading Shakespeare is better. In the same way substantial existence is more fundamental than other personal goods, and the privation of existence is more to be avoided than other evils, yet from this it does not follow that substantial existence is the ultimate good.[690]

If, on the other hand, the term "existence" is taken in the argument to mean self-subsisting existence, which is the very cause of existence in other things, then the major of the argument is false, since this good is most common, extending itself causally to everything that exists.

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[689] See Chapter V.B.1 above.

[690] See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae: Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation,* n.4: *AAS* 80 (1988), p.75. "Physical life, with which the course of human life in the world begins, certainly does not itself contain the whole of the person's value, nor does it represent the supreme good of man…However, it does constitute in a certain way the 'fundamental' value of life, precisely because upon this physical life all the other values of the person are based and developed."

VIII.A.3 Perfection Is a Private Good

The third argument against the primacy of the common good ran thus: The ultimate good is a thing's perfection, but a thing's perfection is not a common good. Therefore, the ultimate good is not a common good.

In response to this objection we must distinguish the senses of the expression "a thing's perfection." A thing's perfection can refer to: 1) its actuality in the order of being or 2) the object which is its end.[691] Taken in the first sense the minor premise is false and the major true, for the perfection of a thing as the actuality of its being is not its ultimate good since this is ordained to a further separated good. "Every creature obtains perfect goodness from an extrinsic end. For the perfection of goodness consists in the attainment of the ultimate end. However, the ultimate end of every creature is outside of it, namely, the divine goodness, which is not ordained to a further end."[692] If "a thing's perfection" is taken in the second sense, the major premise is false and the minor true. The separated object which is a thing's ultimate end is a final cause that can be communicated to many and is, therefore, a common good. Either way, the conclusion that the ultimate good is not a common good does not follow.

[691] See *S.T.*, II-IIae, q.184, a.1, c. "Each thing is said to be perfect insofar as it attains its proper end, which is the ultimate perfection of a thing." See also D. Scotus, *Ordinatio IV*, d.31, q.1. "The good and perfect are the same, but the perfection of a thing is twofold, namely intrinsic perfection, as form, and extrinsic perfection, as the end."

[692] *Compendium Theologiae*, I.109. The fact that the ultimate good of a creature must be something outside of it can be seen from our analysis of the good in Chapter V.B.8 above. Any good which inheres in a creature is good by participation since in every creature operation is distinct from substance and being is distinct from essence. Moreover, the good by participation must be ordained to the good through its essence so that nothing which is good by participation can be called the ultimate good, simply speaking.

The failure to distinguish between these two modes of perfection seems to be rooted in a fundamental misunderstanding of the formal notion of the good and the way in which the good is understood to be perfective. The good is not perfective as an inhering form in the order of formal cause but according to the notion of an end in the order of final cause.

> Perfection, as well as the perfect, is able to be considered in two ways. In one way, in the genus of formal cause, which constitutes; in another way, in the genus of final cause, which moves or attracts. For it cannot be denied that perfection itself informs and formally constitutes a perfect thing, since each and every thing is constituted through some actuality, while actuality is perfection. Therefore, it belongs to perfection that it formally constitute a perfect thing in the genus of formal cause. But in this way it is not able to be a modification (*passio*) [of being], nor can it be conceived as something superadded to entity, but [it must be conceived] as constituting the entity itself, inasmuch as it is perfect and integral in its constitution. And thus taken, the perfect pertains to the constituted essence or entity, since it is considered as constituting [it]. Therefore, it is necessary that perfection be extracted from the concept of formal cause which is a constituting cause, and considered under the concept of the perfective through the mode of the appetible or the end. For the end perfects by moving or attracting, and stands in such a way that it is perfective: that is, insofar as the end is desired as the perfection of the one desiring, and is that into which the one desiring tends as toward something perfecting the one desiring. But the appetible, as such, does not stand to the one desiring as constituting it, but as perfecting [it]; for if the appetible would constitute the appetite, it would not consummate it. Rather, it would constitute [it] under the aspect of an appetite and by way of one desiring, not by way of something terminated and perfect in its term and appetible object. Therefore, it is impossible that the appetible constitute the appetite, insofar as it is an appetite. Therefore, such a respect of that which is perfective through the mode of an end is not the respect of that which is constituting, but of something building upon and perfecting that which is [already] constituted. Therefore, taken in this way, the good can be considered in notion as a modification (*passio*) with respect to the constituted being, not however as formally constituting [it]. And thus, perfection, insofar as it is constitutive, formally does not pertain to the notion of the good as a modification (*passio*) [of being], but as a being which is constituted and integral. But perfection must be taken as it is perfective under the aspect of an appetible mover and consummative of the appetite itself. And this consideration is more proper to the good, as good, than the other considerations which are proposed in the other opinions: for example, that [the good] has the notion of the fitting, or the integral, and the like. For it is more proper to

> perfection that it perfect (which is said of it *per se* in the fourth way [*Cf.*, Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I.4]) than to explain a relation of fittingness or of integrity, which seems more to be something consequent to the notion of perfection. But perfection as formalizing and constituting cannot pertain to the formal notion of the good insofar as it is a modification (*passio*) of being, but rather [perfection] as finalizing or attracting and moving [pertains to the notion of the good insofar as it is a modification of being].[693]

Briefly stated, the good as a transcendental notion convertible with being is not to be understood as a perfection in the order of formal cause but in the order of final cause. Otherwise, the good could not properly be a *passio entis* (a consequence which Molina expressly teaches[694]), since no modification of a subject includes the subject itself. That which is perfective in the order of formal cause is formally understood as the very being itself not some modification of it. However, from the proper use of the term "good," it is clear that it signifies as a modification of being since good signifies in the manner of something which inheres in a subject and yet as something wholly coextensive with being.

VIII.A.4 Love of Others Is Founded upon Love of Oneself

The fourth argument ran thus: The natural order of goods follows the natural order of love. Moreover, a person naturally loves his private good above the common good. Therefore, the private good is better than the common good.

In response to this argument it should be said that it is not natural for a person to love his private good above the common good in which he participates. Every part,

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[693] John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, *In Primae Partis*, q.5, a.1, n.13.
[694] See *Commentaria in Primam Partem S. Th. Div. Thomae*, Lugduni (Sumptibus Joannis Baptistae Buysson, 1593), q.5, a.1, disp. unica.

insofar as it is a part, naturally loves the good of the whole more than its particular good. If it were natural for the part to love its particular good more than the good of the whole, then no whole would be able to remain in existence as a whole since the parts would always, or for the most part, tend to ends which are diverse from the end of the whole. Moreover, since the form of a thing depends upon its final cause, it would follow that every whole would lose its form as a result of the parts tending toward ends different from the end of the whole. A whole divided against itself cannot stand.[695]

The citation from Aristotle does not contradict this position since there "the Philosopher speaks of friendly actions which are toward another in which the good which is the object of friendship is found according to some particular mode, but not of friendly actions which are toward another in which the aforesaid good is found according to the notion of a whole."[696] Nor is it necessary that because a man is more one with himself than with another that he love his private good more than the common good since the common good is his good and more intimately so than his private good.[697]

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[695] *Cf.* Matt. 12:25.
[696] *S.T.*, q.26, a.3, ad1.
[697] See *De Virtutibus*, q.2, a.9, ad7. "By the unity of nature nothing is more one than we are, but by the unity of affect, whose object is the good, the highest good ought to be more one than we are." Remigio dei Girolami, attempting to develop this doctrine, argues that when considered precisely under the formality of whole and part, the whole is more united with the part than the part is to itself. "A thing is twofold: namely the supposital thing, *i.e.*, the supposit itself, and the virtual thing, *i.e.*, the virtue of the agent (taking agent broadly for everything which influences something in some way). Therefore, it ought to be said that although the supposit is more conjoined to its very self than the agent as regards the supposital thing, nevertheless, the agent is more conjoined to it as regards the virtual thing, since the virtue of existing is not in the supposit from itself, but from something influencing [it]…And in this way also we say that the whole is more conjoined to the part than the part to itself, although it is the contrary with regard to the supposit. But since the first conjunction [according to the virtue of the agent] is more powerful than the second, just as a principle is more powerful than a thing from a principle, therefore it ought simply to be said that the whole is simply speaking more conjoined to the part than the part to itself, while the contrary is true *secundum quid*." *De Bono Communi*, c.20, p.166-167.

VIII.A.5 The Common Good Is an Alien Good.

The fifth argument ran thus: The ultimate good of the person is not an alien good, but the common good is an alien good. Therefore, the common good is not the ultimate good.

If the expression "common good" is understood as that good which is perfective of another *per modum finis* and which is common to many, then the minor premise is false. That good which is common *per modum finis* is indeed more intimately personal than any private good of the person inasmuch as it touches upon and influences the most intimate principles of the person. Thus, the common good in this sense, far from being an alien good, is more intimately the good of the person than a private good, and the more common the good is, the more intimately is it the good of the person.

The reason why a common good is often seen as an alien good is that it is conceived as something belonging to the community as its proper and sole subject rather than to the persons in the community. According to this understanding it would properly be the good of the community conceived as an aggregate of persons, an accidental whole. *Per se*, the good would belong to the community not to the members of the community. Conceived in this way the common good can only have an indirect relationship to the good of the individual persons of the community. Moreover, since no one acts except for his own good, the common good becomes the object of actions not as though it were something good-in-itself but as something good for another. It is reduced to a merely useful good, a means to each person's proper good.

However, the common good which is perfective *per modum finis* is not formally the good of the society conceived as an accidental whole. "The common good does not formally look to society insofar as it is an accidental whole: it is the good of the substantial wholes which are members of the society. But it is not the good of the substantial wholes except insofar as they are members of the society."[698] The common good is common based upon a formality which is present in each of the members of the society not insofar as it is the proper and sole good of the society as an accidental whole.

When the common good is understood precisely as a final cause, the dichotomy between the good of the community and the good of the individual disappears. A final cause attracts and perfects not only the formal aspect of being but also the material aspect. The fact that the final cause of a knife is to cut influences not only the form of the knife but also its matter. The form must be sharp, but the matter must also be hard. Both form and matter participate in the end of the knife. In like manner, the members of the community, which are as it were material in relation to the whole community, are also drawn into the perfection realized by the final cause. Thus, a common good which is understood as a final cause is not a good alien to the members of the community. It belongs both to the community as a whole and to each of its parts as a proper good. Moreover, since this good is common according to causality, it has the ability to reach down to the singulars more powerfully and intimately than their private goods, for, unlike a universal predication, a universal cause is more distinct and actual. It reaches the singulars at a deeper level of their being and more distinctly actualizes their latent potencies.

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[698] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.56-57. *Cf.*, Maritain, PCG, p.40-41.

VIII.A.6 Love of Friendship Is Better Than the Love of Concupiscence

The sixth argument ran thus: A better good is loved with a better love. Moreover, the individual members of society are loved with a better love than the whole society since the former is loved with the love of friendship and the latter with a love of concupiscence. Therefore, the good of the individual members of society is a better good than the good of the society as a whole.

It is possible to respond to this argument in two ways. First, it can be said that the good of the society is loved by a love of friendship rather than by a love of concupiscence. The reason for this is that "something is loveable in two ways: either as the very reason for the love, or as the object, just as color also is seen as the object [of sight] and light as the reason why color is visible in act. But just as by the same act color and light are seen, so also by the same act the object and the reason for loving the object are loved."[699] Since the common good of the society is the very reason why we love the persons as members of the society, it is loved in the same act by which the persons are loved so that both are loved by a love of friendship. Nevertheless, this common good is loved in a different way than the persons who are members of the society since the persons can properly be called friends of the one who loves them, while the intrinsic common good of the society cannot.[700]

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[699] *In I Sent*., d.17, q.1, a.5, c.

[700] See *S.T.*, II-IIae, q.25, a.2. Notice that goods such as virtue and the common good of a society can be considered under two formally distinct aspects: either 1) as the reason why we love someone with the love of friendship or 2) the good which we will for some friend. It is the common good considered under the first of these formal aspects that is loved with a love of friendship not the common good considered under the second formal aspect (See *In Div. Nom.*, IV, lect.10).

Second, the term "better love" in this argument can bear two meanings. First a love can be better in the sense of a greater love according to which we either will someone a greater good or we will someone a good more intensely.[701] Second, a love can be considered better because it is a better mode of loving, as to love with the love of friendship is to love in a better way than to love with a love of concupiscence. Taken in the first sense it is true that a better good is naturally loved with a better love, but taken in the second sense it is not true that the better good is always naturally loved with a better love since the same object can be rightly loved with both a love of concupiscence and a love of friendship at the same time.[702]

VIII.A.7 Society Is Loved for the Sake of Its Individual Members

The seventh argument ran thus: Any society is loved on account of the members of that society, but that on account of which something is loved is loved still more. Therefore, the individual members of society are loved more than the whole society, and the good of the individual members is better than the good of the whole.

In this argument "that on account of which something is loved" can bear two meanings. On the one hand, it can mean that object *for whom* we will some good. Thus, insofar as someone wills a gift or virtue or any other good for some person, that person is that on account of which the good is loved. On the other hand, it can mean the *reason why* someone or something is loved.[703] For example, if someone is loved because of his

[701] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.20, a.3; II-IIae, q.26, a.7.
[702] See *S.T.*, II-IIae, q.17, a.8, c.; q.26, a.3, ad3; *De Malo*, q.1, a.5, c.
[703] See *S.T.*, I-IIae, q.2, a.7, ad2.

virtue, then this virtue is the good for the sake of which he is loved and is that on account of which he is loved.

Applying this distinction to the argument when it is said that a society is loved on account of its members, this is true if it is taken to mean that the members of the society are those *for whom* we will the good of the society, but it is false if it is taken to mean that the members of the society are the *reason why* we love the common good of the society. In fact it is the contrary since the reason why we love the members of the society as such is the common good in which they participate as members of that society. The good of the persons which is the society is not the same as the good which is the persons of the society. The good of the persons which is the society (*i.e.*, the very form and order of the society) is the reason why the members of the society are loved as such. On the other hand, the good which is the persons of the society is those persons precisely as objects for whom the common good of the society is willed.[704] Yet the common good of the society is not for the members of the society as if the members of the society were the end of the common good of the society.

If "that on account of which something is loved" signifies the object for whom some good is willed, then it is false to say universally that that on account of which something is loved is loved still more. For example, someone might will that God be possessed by some person as their good, but from this it does not follow that he loves that person more than God. Hence, no conclusion follows.

[704] Fr. Eschmann made this very error as De Koninck points out in his reply. "[Fr. Eschmann] confuses the good of the persons that is the universe with the good that is the persons; he confuses the persons as contributing to the essential perfection of the universe (which perfection is, within this order, their *finis cujus gratia*) with the persons considered as 'for whom' (*finis cui*) is the perfection of the universe." De Koninck, DST, p.41.

VIII.A.8 Persons Are Ends in Themselves

The eighth argument ran thus: The ultimate good of the person is that to which the person is wholly ordained. The good to which the person is wholly ordained is not a common good but is himself. Therefore, the ultimate good of the person is not a common good.

In this argument the major premise is false. A person is not wholly ordained to himself as to an end but rather to a good which is able to be shared by many persons, namely, a common good. Recall that this premise was established on the principle that persons are ends in themselves and never merely means. In fact, both parts of this compound statement are false in the sense postulated by Kant.

First of all, a person is not an end in himself in the sense that all things are to be loved for the sake of himself. It is one thing to love all things for oneself and quite another to love all things for the sake of oneself. Every good which a person loves must be a good for that person, *i.e.*, it must be a good befitting that person, but it does not follow that every good which a person loves is for the sake of himself, *i.e.*, ordered to himself as to an end. "A part loves the good of the whole insofar as it is befitting it, but not so that it refers the good of the whole to itself, but rather so that it refers itself to the good of the whole."[705] When Kant says that man necessarily thinks of his own existence as an end in itself, he hits on something of the truth insofar as every person naturally desires his own happiness and continued existence, but this experience should not be confused with the position that a person necessarily orders all things to himself as to an ultimate end. On the contrary, man naturally experiences himself as a part of a larger

[705] *S.T.*, II-IIae, q.26, a.3, ad2.

whole from the very first awakenings of reason: as part of a family, part of a society, part of the universe. Moreover, we are naturally inclined to admit that the goods of these wholes are more important than our private goods, even the good of our existence. Experience teaches us that it is noble to order ourselves to some good greater than ourselves. Kant's interpretation of experience seems to have been distorted by his conviction that man does not know things outside of himself as independently existing realities and goods. What a man knows are simply manifestations of his own reason and nature as they are reflected in the phenomena.[706] If such were in fact the case, it would follow that a man necessarily refers all goods to himself as to an ultimate end since all the realities which a man knows and all the goods which he loves find their origin in the person himself.[707]

Second, a distinction must be made as regards the statement that a person is never to be considered as a mere means. A person should always be loved in such a way that we act for the person's true good and not just for our own interest. A person should not ever be a mere instrument of our self-love. In this sense a person must be loved for his own sake, *i.e*., insofar as we desire and act in such a way that his own, authentic good be promoted in our relations with him. Yet to act for a person's true good is not exclusive of acting towards that person for the sake of a greater good to which we wholly refer his own good. Something can be loved for its own sake and for the sake of another, just as

[706] "If the intuition had to conform to the constitution of objects, I do not see how we could know anything of it *a priori*; but if the object (as an object of the senses) conforms to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I can very well conceive such a possibility." I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the Second Edition 1787, tr. F. Max Müller (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p.xxxiii. He adds further: "The unconditioned must not be looked for in things, so far as we know them (as they are given to us), but only so far as we do not know them (as things by themselves)," (p.xxxv).

[707] If every good which a person loves is really a manifestation of the self, then in loving each good a person simply loves some reflection or effect of himself, but the cause of a good is more lovable than the good effect since the whole good of the effect is found more powerfully and perfectly in its cause.

virtue is desirable for its own sake and for the sake of happiness.[708] Indeed, if we consider our acts regarding a created person in reference to the ultimate good, it must be that the created person is referred to the ultimate good wholly as a means to that good. "The neighbor is never loved for his own sake, but for God's sake."[709] There is no good in the created person which is not some participated good derived from the ultimate good. "Whatever things are good do not have goodness except insofar as they approach to a likeness of the divine goodness."[710] Since every participated good is ordained to that which is good through its essence, it follows that there is no good in the created person which is an ultimate term. "Hence, it is necessary, since goodness is the reason for love and desire, that all things are loved in an order to the first goodness."[711] Rather, the whole good of the created person is a good that is for the sake of the ultimate good, just as a means, as such, is for the sake of the end. The created person should even consider himself as a good wholly ordained to the ultimate good: his love should never simply terminate in his own goodness.[712] In this sense it is not true that a person should never be considered as a mere means, where "mere means" is taken to signify a good which is

[708] See *In I Sent*., d.1, q.2, a.1, ad3. "'For the sake of' (*propter se*) is said in two ways. In one way insofar as it is opposed to 'for the sake of another.' And in this way, the virtues and that which is good-in-itself (*honestum*) are not loved for their own sake, since they are also referred to another. In another way, something is said to be 'for the sake of' according as it is opposed to the accidental (*per accidens*). And in this way, that which has in its nature something which attracts love (*movens ad diligendum*) is said to be loved for its own sake. And in this way, the virtues are loved for their own sake, since they have in themselves something for which they are sought, even if nothing else would accrue there from. Moreover, it is not unsuitable that something be loved for its own sake and yet be ordained to another."
[709] *In I Sent.*, d1. q.2, a.4, sc.1. Although this text appears in the objection to the contrary, St. Thomas concedes the argument in his response to the objections. Here, of course, "for his own sake" is taken as opposed to "for the sake of another" not as opposed to the accidental.
[710] *In I Sent*., d.1, q.3, a.1, c.
[711] *In I Sent*., d.1, q.3, a.1, c.
[712] *In Div. Nom.*, c.4, lect.10. "Someone ought to love God in such a way that nothing of himself remains which is not ordered to God."

wholly ordained to some further good.[713] This position, far from detracting from personal dignity, enhances it since every participated good has goodness from the fact that it is referred to the ultimate good. If the created person were treated as an ultimate end in any respect, the good of the person would be diminished or taken away, just as money treated as something absolutely desirable in itself, so that it was never spent, would lose what relative value it had.

It is also apparent that although God governs created persons for their own sake, they are not in any way an end for God. The ultimate good cannot have an end in the strict and proper sense. Otherwise that end would be the ultimate common good.[714] Even when we say that God acts for his own goodness and glory, we do not mean that that the divine goodness is something really distinct from God which stands to God as a final cause. Such a conception would be a contradiction since "God" is understood here to signify the ultimate good which causes all other goods. Thus, it is not true that every rational nature is an objective end in itself, namely something which stands as a final cause to every person. Neither created persons nor even a divine person is an end for God. As we showed above, God governs creatures for their own sake in the sense that they are willed so that they might have an absolute and explicit participation in the divine goodness, in contradistinction to non-rational beings which do not attain to the ultimate good of the universe explicitly (*i.e.*, as the object of their proper operations), and so are

[713] Yet a person is never a "mere means" if this is taken to signify that which is in no way loved for its own sake. See *In I Sent*., d.1, q.2, a.1, ad3. "There is, however, something which is desired not for the sake of something which it has in itself, but only insofar as it is ordained to another, as effective of it. Just as bitter medicine is loved, not for the sake of something which is in it, but since it produces health. And things of this kind are in no way loved for their own sake, whether 'for the sake of' signifies formal cause, as virtue is said to be loved for its own sake, or final [cause], as God [is said to be loved for his own sake]."

[714] This is not to deny that God acts with intelligence and purposefully. It is simply to assert that this purposeful activity is markedly different from ours since the purpose God intends is not a cause of God's action in the strict sense.

willed for the sake of rational creatures. For God created persons are not ends in themselves but are rather ordained by him to himself as to a common good.

VIII.A.9 The Common Is Less Precious Than the Unique and Irreplaceable

The ninth argument ran thus: The ultimate good is most precious, but that good which is common, and hence not unique or irreplaceable is less precious than that good which is unique and irreplaceable. Therefore, the ultimate good is not a common good.

This argument rests upon the false assumption that the unique or irreplaceable is always better than the common. Many things are unique and irreplaceable which are less precious than things which are common. In most cases uniqueness is not the determining factor of a thing's worth. If there were only one man and one sparrow in the world, we would not say that they were of equal value because they are equally unique and irreplaceable. Clearly it is principally due to the kind of thing that man is, a rational nature, that man has worth, not principally because of each man's uniqueness. Indeed, it is accidental to the worth of some particular thing that there is one or many of them. Someone may be willing to pay more for a work of art if there is only one, but this does not detract from the intrinsic worth of the work of art itself.

Crosby's argument for rooting human dignity in incommunicable selfhood actually presupposes the primacy of the common good.

> Suppose we were to become aware of the mysterious concreteness of human persons, and were to begin to experience each as if he or she were the only human person…Now for the first time the value datum called the dignity of the human

> person would appear, and it would appear as rooted in incommunicable selfhood."[715]

The argument asks the reader to imagine each person as if he or she were the only human person. Now why is the reader naturally inclined to be more aware of the magnitude of the good and dignity of the sole remaining human person than if human persons are considered as many? In such a case the person, being the sole instance of the nature, would become identified with the species, and the good of the person would coincide, in some respects, with the good of the species. Moreover, the good of the species is a formally common good which is greater than the particular good of the person, yet in the case hypothesized the two happen to be found together in the same subject. If we did not naturally think of the good of the species as being any better than the good of each individual, there would be nothing striking about the hypothetical example given by Crosby. Crosby uses this ambiguity to draw the conclusion that the dignity of the person is rooted in his or her uniqueness, when in fact the dignity of the species is found in that individual not insofar as he or she is an individual but insofar as he or she has a human nature. The argument relies upon the fallacy of the accident since it is accidental that the good of the species happens to belong to a single subject.

On the other hand, it is not accidental that more things should participate in a greater good. The higher and more perfect causes influence and produce a wider range of effects. The most universal cause extends to all effects. The fact that the most common good is a good shared by all effects is not a sign that the most common good is less precious than some particular good which is restricted to one effect. On the contrary, it is an indication that the most common good is the best of all goods, for that which is desired

[715] Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, p.66.

by all and perfective of all as something ultimate is better than that which is desired by some and perfective of some.

VIII.A.10 The State Exists for Man

The tenth argument ran thus: The dignity of man as individual must be a higher dignity than the dignity of man considered as a member of some larger society since society exists for man, not man for society. Personal dignity simply speaking signifies the greatest dignity of a person as such. Therefore, the dignity of a man considered as an individual is his personal dignity.

The minor premise of this argument is false because it rests upon a false understanding of the statement that society exists for man. When it is said that society exists for man, this is not the same as saying that the common good of society exists for the private good of man. Understood in this way it would be false to say that society exists for man. However, there are at least two senses in which it is true to say that society exists for man.

First, the organization and governing organs of society must be wholly ordained to the common good for which the society exists. Since this common good is a good for each of the individual members of the society, it follows that society, in its structures and organizations, is for the sake of the men who are members of the society. Thus, society is for man in the sense that society is for the sake of a common good which is the good for each and every man in that society.

> The city, when we envision it as an organization in view of the common good, ought to be entirely subject to this good insofar as it is common. Envisioned in this way, it has no other reason for being than the common good. But this common good is itself for the members of the society…If this common good were the good of the city insofar as it is, by an accidental relation, a sort of individual, it would be, by that very fact, a particular good and properly alien to the members of the society.[716]

Second, man is a member of a whole which exceeds the social community. Thus, each man is ordained to a good of a higher order than the good common to the social community. The social community in its very promotion of the common good which is its proper end must assist man to that higher end to which he is further ordained. The common good of society is ordained to an ultimate common good which is also the good of each man. Thus, society is for man in the sense that the common good of society is for the sake of the ultimate common good of man.

> The city, like the common good of the city, is for man insofar as he possesses certain formalities which order him to superior common goods, formalities which are, in the man, superior to that formality which orders him to the common good of the city…The formality "man simply as man" cannot be identified with the formality "citizen," nor with the subject "man." Thus, when we speak of a common good subordinated to man, there cannot be any other reason than a formality which respects a superior common good. Only the most perfect common good cannot be subordinated to man.[717]

When the statement "society exists for man" is understood properly in these two senses, it is clear that the dignity of man as a member of society is greater than his dignity as a solitary individual. "A greater respect is due to a person when we envision him in his ordination to the common good."[718]

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[716] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.68-69.
[717] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.69-70.
[718] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.70.

VIII.A.11 The Ultimate Good Is Self-Sufficient

The eleventh argument ran thus: The ultimate good is self-sufficient, but a common good is not self-sufficient. Therefore, the ultimate good is not a common good.

In this argument the senses of the major premise must be distinguished. If it is taken to mean that a common good, in particular the most common good, as an object is not sufficient to bring all desire to a rest so that the sufficiency refers to the good itself as an object, then the major premise is false. Only that good which is most common as a cause perfects each being under every aspect of its existence so that nothing escapes its perfective influence and no natural inclination is left unfulfilled. Thus, no conclusion follows. However, if it is taken to mean that a person is not sufficient by himself to acquire and hold a common good so that the sufficiency refers to the person as a subject, then the major premise is true. Nevertheless, no conclusion follows since then the middle term "self-sufficient" is used equivocally, modifying the good as an object in the minor term and the person as a subject in the major term.

When the objector argues that a good which cannot be possessed in the most secure manner lacks something desirable, in fact what is being shown is that the person who is unable to hold such a good in the most secure manner lacks something desirable. The defect is not in the good but in the person.[719] To demand that such an imperfection

[719] In a passage we have already cited from the letter to Fr. R. J. Belleperche, S.J., De Koninck makes this same observation. "The common good has the nature of what is common as opposed to proper, *primo et per se* because, in a given order, its perfection is greater than what can be possessed by an individual as a proper good – which shows that it always denotes an imperfection *in eo cujus est bonum*." This letter can be found in the De Koninck correspondence held at the Center for Maritain Studies, University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

be removed before a good can be considered self-sufficient is ultimately to demand that a created person cease to be a creature; it is to demand that personal dignity be the ultimate dignity simply speaking, the dignity of a divine being.

It should be appreciated, however, that due to its intrinsic perfection the ultimate common good is in some respect even more securely possessed by the created person than lesser goods. "A man is more sufficient by himself for this operation [of contemplating God], needing for it little help from exterior things."[720] Someone might take away a person's external goods or even imprison him, but the attainment of God as an object of contemplation does not depend upon external goods. A man can contemplate God in poverty, in prison, or even on his death bed. There are very few goods of which this can be said. Again, a free act can never by compelled by the violence of an external agent. Thus, those goods which depend wholly upon a person's free choice are in some sense inalienable since only the person himself acting freely can reject them. Moreover, to choose the ultimate good by ordering oneself to that good depends wholly upon a person's free choice. Therefore, the ultimate good cannot be alienated from the person by the agency of some external force. Nevertheless, it remains true that the attainment of this good in any explicit manner presupposes in advance the family and social community which make it possible for an individual man to acquire the habit of contemplation and to arrive at an explicit concept of God, the ultimate good.

[720] *S.C.G.*, III.37.

VIII.B Response to Arguments That the Root of Personal Dignity Is a Private Good

We now respond to the arguments which, though they do not expressly deny the primacy of the common good simply speaking, nevertheless affirm the conclusion that the root of personal dignity is a private good.

VIII.B.1 Personal Dignity Is Rooted in a More Perfect Mode of Possessing the Good

The first argument ran thus: A good which is possessed in a more perfect manner is the root of personal dignity. Private goods such as a person's existence and nature are possessed in the most perfect manner. Therefore, a private good is the root of personal dignity.

The major premise of this argument is false. Recall that this position was based upon the supposition that a good which is possessed in a more perfect manner is better than a good which is possessed in a less perfect manner, or at least that it is a better good for that person. Simply speaking this is not true. A good which is of itself more noble yet is less perfectly possessed is better, even for that person, than a less noble good which is possessed more perfectly. St. Thomas gives a reason for this in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*.

> There is this difference between sciences: some are more certain than others, and yet are about less honorable things; but others are about more honorable and better things, and yet are less certain. Nonetheless, that one is better which is about better and more honorable things. The reason for this is that, as the

> Philosopher says in the eleventh book of the *De Animalibus*, we desire more to know a little about the honorable and most lofty things, even if we know them in a dialectical and probable manner, than to know much with certitude about less noble things. For the former have nobility from themselves and from their substance, but the latter from their mode or quality.[721]

We measure the good for someone, simply speaking, according to the substance and nature of the good not according to the mode in which a good is possessed. A sign of this is that we more intensely desire those goods which are in themselves more noble, even if they can only be had imperfectly. Unless a good is of its nature the kind of thing which completely satisfies the natural inclinations of the person, it will never have the notion of an ultimate good, no matter how perfectly and securely it is possessed. Just as one medicine is better than another for a patient not because it belongs more perfectly to the patient but because it is more capable of curing the particular illness of that patient, so also one good is better than another because it responds more perfectly to the innate longings of the nature possessed by that person not because it is more perfectly possessed by the person.

Furthermore, as shown above, the fullness of perfection for a creature is achieved in being united to the ultimate end, and this means that to exist, to be absolutely perfected, a creature must participate. Moreover, to participate is an imperfect mode of possessing some good, yet this is a necessary consequence of the notion of the good. Only the ultimate good is unparticipated. "To fully exist the person must participate. Certainly, to attain this fullness depends upon my liberty, but the fullness is not fullness due to my liberty. My free act must be ordained to the fullness which is common. My

[721] *In I De Anima*, lect.1.

free act is my own singular [act], but my end is not an end insofar as it is mine."[722] The good of the person is not good for the person insofar as it belongs to the person, nor is it better for him (in the sense of more perfective of his nature or person) to the degree that it is more his. Even if the person did not possess it, it would still be his good, the object which puts his inclinations to rest; but it would be a good in which the person has yet to share. The greatest good of the person is still his greatest good, even if the person possesses it imperfectly or even has yet to possess it.

In those cases where a lesser good is preferred to a greater good on account of the greater security of possessing the lesser good, the goods are goods of the same order. Two birds are not a more noble good than one bird; a higher income is not a more noble good than a lower income. In such cases a good of the same kind can be possessed more or less securely. There is not a question of fulfillment at a deeper level of being of a nearer approach to the ultimate end. In relation to human nature a sufficient income is just as fulfilling as a high income although as a result of a disordered appetite a person might seek a higher income in lieu of some good, such as knowledge, which in reality is more fulfilling in relation to his nature. Thus, when goods of the same order are sought and there is a variation in degree as to the perfection in which they can be possessed, the mode of possession becomes a determining factor in preferring one to the other.

VIII.B.2 Personal Dignity Is Not Common to Many

The second argument ran thus: Personal dignity is not something shared by many. A dignity rooted in the common good is a dignity shared by many, while a dignity rooted

[722] De Koninck, *De la Primauté du Bien Commun*, p.50-51.

in a private good is not shared by many. Therefore, personal dignity is not rooted in the common good, but in a private good.

The minor premise of this argument can be taken in two senses. It can mean the personal dignity which exists in a singular person as in a subject and as something one in number is not the same in number as the personal dignities which exist in other persons as their proper subjects. In this sense the minor premise is true. However, if the same sense of personal dignity is used in the major premise, then the major premise is false since the fact that personal dignity is rooted in the common good does not prevent it from also being something one in number and not shared by other persons. Therefore, either the middle term is taken equivocally, or one of the premises is false, so no conclusion follows.

The minor premise might also be taken to mean that the common notion of personal dignity which can be said of many persons is not something shared by many. In this sense it is false since the same kind of dignity is found in many persons. Once again, therefore, no conclusion follows.

VIII.B.3 Personhood Consists in Being

The third argument ran thus: Person as such signifies something which cannot participate in another, but a dignity which is rooted in a common good is a dignity of something which participates in another. Therefore, the dignity of a person cannot be rooted in a common good.

This argument presupposes a false definition of person. The notion of person does not consist formally and primarily in being. As we argued above in Chapter VII, a determinate mode of existence in a rational nature also enters into the formal notion of person. Personhood is determined not only by the being of a thing, or what a thing *is*, but also by what it *has*, namely a certain kind of nature and a certain mode of existing. Not every person is his nature or his mode of existence (for this is proper to a divine person); but the personhood of every person is essentially defined in terms of the nature and mode of existing which he has. Moreover, both the notions of nature and mode of existence can signify something limited of itself and part of something larger than itself. Human persons have a nature which contracts *esse* to a particular act of existing. Besides this, they are determined to a mode of existence through signate matter. Both of these elements which enter into the formal notion of the human person as person[723] demand that human persons are, in virtue of their very personality, parts of some larger whole which must participate in that larger whole.

It belongs to the very notion of person that a person cannot be a part of something *per se* one, yet there are many other senses of part and whole. Created persons participate in being and goodness so that, in a certain sense, they stand as parts to the first cause of being and goodness which is unparticipated being and goodness. On the other hand, a divine person is not a part in any real way since the very nature of divinity is such that nothing can be prior to it,[724] while every real whole is prior to its parts in some way.

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[723] See John Paul II, *Discourse to the members of the 35th General Assembly of the World Medical Association*, October 29, 1983: *AAS* 76 (1984), p.393. "Each human person, in his absolutely unique singularity, is constituted not only by his spirit, but by his body as well. Thus, in the body and through the body, one touches the person himself in his concrete reality. To respect the dignity of man consequently amounts to safeguarding the identity of the man *corpore et anima unus*."

[724] See *S.T.*, Ia, q.3, a.8 ; *In III Sent*. d.6, q.2, a.3, ad4 ; and *S.C.G.*, III.51.

Thus, we can say that the notion of person is indifferent to being a part or not. There is nothing in the concept of person as such which demands that persons be a part or not be a part, so long as "part" does not signify a part of something *per se* one.

Chapter IX: Conclusion

We have argued that the primacy of the common good is the root of personal dignity and, furthermore, that in the created person this dignity is principally constituted by the right order of love. Moreover, we have argued as a corollary that a philosophical attitude of openness toward a further ennobling of human dignity is justified because of the possibility of participation in a higher order of good than that accessible by reason alone. These conclusions are founded upon a careful, metaphysical analysis of the good precisely as final cause and its relation to being. In all this we have attempted to follow St. Thomas Aquinas and to be faithful to common experience and the lessons of nature.

In his great wisdom St. Thomas discerned in created reality a kind of inverse order of being and goodness. The higher perfections of goodness are found in the least perfect modes of existing so that substantial being has the least notion of perfection, while the relation to the ultimate end has the greatest notion of perfection, even though among all things relation seems to have the least share of existence. In the created person this ultimate perfection rests upon a relation established by an act of reason. As a consequence, the created person reaches his ultimate perfection through layer upon layer of ascending perfections, beginning with the stable but contracted speck of individual, substantial existence and ascending through increasingly delicate but expanding perfections until he reaches that ultimate good which embraces all things actual or possible. St. Thomas further perceived the fundamental causal primacy of the good in relation to being so that he locates the root of personal dignity in this ultimate common

good rather than in the ground of the substantial act of existence. Dignity for the created person implies participation in an order more perfect than his own being.

The human person ascends from being to the ultimate common good through the intermediate common goods of society and the natural order. Without a love for each of these orders and a right appreciation for these orders which is presupposed to this love the human person cannot attain to the ultimate good which is the whole source of his personal dignity. When a person treats these goods as a means to his private good, instead of as ends more lovable in themselves than his private good, the order of love is perverted. Man constructs an order of goods which is nothing more than a turning inward upon his own being for the sake of his own existence. In this order all things are ultimately ordained to the preservation of the body and bodily pleasure so that the goods of this perverted order become successively more contracted and imperfect. In the place of the ladder of Jacob the tower of Babel is raised.

May our thesis contribute to a fuller understanding of personal dignity, of the good of the created order, and of that ordering Wisdom, Goodness itself, who is the source and perfection, the beginning and the end of all dignity, both in heaven and on earth. May He be forever loved and blessed. Amen.

Appendix I

Application of the Principles to Contemporary Problems

In the foregoing, the thesis has investigated the concept of the common good and its relation to personal dignity. In the present part of the thesis, the principles and major conclusions which have been investigated will be applied to two contemporary problems: capital punishment and the cloning of human beings. The purpose of this part is to refine the understanding of these principles and conclusions, to contribute to the contemporary debate surrounding these two very important issues, and to provide some examples which manifest the importance of the thesis as a foundation for ethical doctrine and discourse.

VIII.A Capital Punishment

According to the classical understanding, as well as common opinion, punishment is a kind of evil in the one who suffers the punishment. Evil is the lack of a due good, namely, a good which is necessary for a thing's completion or perfection. Since evil is opposed to good, the divisions of evil follow the divisions of good.

> Because evil is opposed to good, it is necessary that evil be divided according to the division of the good. Good designates a certain perfection. Moreover, perfection is two-fold: namely first perfection, which is form or habit; and second perfection, which is operation. To first perfection, the use of which is operation, all that which is used in working (*operando*) can be reduced. Thus, also conversely a twofold evil is found: one in the agent itself, according to which it is deprived either of form or habit, or any other thing necessary for operation, such

> as blindness, or a crooked leg, which is a certain evil. But the other evil is in the very defect of the act itself, as when we call limping a certain evil.[725]

When evil is found in a person according to this two-fold division, the evil which is found in voluntary acts receives a special name because of the special character of voluntary acts. In English, the names "sin," "fault," and "crime" can signify an evil in voluntary acts themselves.[726] For the sake of convenience, we shall henceforth use the term "fault" to signify the lack of a due good in a voluntary act.

The evil of punishment is not a kind of fault, but rather falls into the genus of that evil which is found in the rational agent, according to which he is deprived of some good necessary for right operation. However, for such an evil to be called punishment, three elements must be present in its notion. First, it must have respect to fault, "for someone is properly said to be punished when he suffers evil for some [fault] which he committed."[727] Second, punishment must be the kind of evil which is contrary to the will of the one who suffers punishment: "It pertains to the notion of punishment that it be repugnant to the will, since the will of each person has an inclination to his own good, so that the privation of his own good is repugnant to the will."[728] Third, punishment must be a kind of suffering or undergoing: "It seems to be of the notion of punishment that it consist in a certain passion, since those things which take place against the will are not from the intrinsic principle which is the will, but from an extrinsic principle, whose effect

[725] *De Malo*, Q.1, a.4, c.
[726] Each of these, depending upon context, could be used to render the Latin term "culpa," which is the term St. Thomas uses to signify the privation found in voluntary acts themselves.
[727] *De Malo*, Q.1, a.4, c.
[728] *De Malo*, Q.1, a.4, c.

is called a passion."[729] Hence, punishment can be defined as the evil contrary to the will of a person, which the person suffers as a result of some fault.

When it is said that punishment is contrary to the will of the one who suffers it, this can be understood in one of three ways.

> It ought to be known that punishment is repugnant to the will in three ways. Sometimes [it is contrary to] the actual will, as when someone knows himself to sustain some punishment. But sometimes, [punishment] is contrary to the habitual will only, as when some good is taken away from someone who is ignorant of the fact, about which he would be sorry if he did know. But sometimes, [punishment] is only contrary to the natural inclination of the will, as when someone is deprived of the habit of virtue, who does not will to have virtue. Nonetheless, the natural inclination of the will is to the good of virtue.[730]

In any one of these three ways, therefore, punishment can be contrary to the will.

Capital punishment is so called because among all punishments, it stands at the head, being the most severe punishment that can be administered in the temporal order. When one is deprived of life, he is also deprived of all other goods which presuppose life. Thus, deprivation of a more fundamental good is a greater evil than deprivation of a less fundamental good.

Because of its severity and irreversibility, particular ethical questions arise in regard to capital punishment. In this section of the thesis, we aim to answer two questions. First, can such a punishment be just? Second, can such a punishment be reconciled with human dignity?

In order to determine whether capital punishment can be just, it must first be established whether any punishment can be just. For example, if punishment is an evil,

[729] *De Malo*, Q.1, a.4, c.
[730] *De Malo*, Q.1, a.4, c.

and he who punishes does so voluntarily, it seems to follow that the one who punishes does evil voluntarily, and so is guilty of a fault. Or again, one becomes like what he loves, but one who deliberately chooses to punish does so because it seems good to him, so that he loves it. Therefore, since punishment is an evil, it seems that one who chooses to punish loves evil, and becomes evil as a consequence.

To resolve these and similar difficulties, it is necessary to understand that punishment is not evil in an unqualified sense, but it is an evil *for him who is punished*, as we showed above. It follows that punishment is not necessarily something evil for the one who punishes. It may happen that one who punishes intends and chooses an object which is in itself good, even if the punishment happens to be evil for someone in some respect. For example, when a parent punishes a child for bad behavior so that the child may be corrected, the intention of the parent is good. Moreover, if the punishment itself can be *per se* ordered to the correction of the fault, then the object itself chosen can be good, so long as the due circumstances are observed. These considerations reveal that, in principle, punishment rightly administered can be a morally good act in the one who punishes. Therefore, punishment has two aspects: one in relation to the person punished, the other in relation to the person punishing. In the former, it is always an evil of some kind, while in the latter it may be a good. Nevertheless, the precise criteria which must be met for a particular punishment to be good must be examined more carefully.

Recall that punishment has the notion of something done to someone on account of a fault of the one punished. It is from this very fact that punishment takes the character of an act of justice, inasmuch as it is just that someone who has voluntarily done evil should suffer evil involuntarily. "Punishment is due only for sin, since through

punishment the equality of justice is restored insofar as he, who by sinning pursued his own will too much, suffers something against his will."[731] Thus, the first criterion for punishment to be just is that the one punished has actually committed a fault. Notice that the restoration of order takes place at the level of the will itself. It is therefore not a question of two evils summing to a good or two wrongs making a right, but of an excess in the will being corrected by a privation in the will of the one who both commits a fault and suffers a punishment: "The penalty is inability, impotency to act for he who does not want to act well."[732]

From the fact that punishment must always be in response to some fault, it follows that it is never licit for public authority to punish one who is not guilty. One simple reason for this is that the innocent always contribute in some way to the common good, so that to punish the innocent is always *per se* opposed to the common good: "the killing of a sinner is made licit through comparison to the common good, which is corrupted through sin. However, the life of the just conserves and promotes the common good since they are the more principal part of the multitude. And therefore, it is in no way licit to kill the innocent."[733]

Besides the criterion that punishment must be administered only to those guilty of fault, there must also be a reasonable proportion between the punishment and the fault: "According to harshness, punishment is proportionate to sin as much in divine judgments as it is in human judgments."[734] Unless there is equality between the evil done and the evil suffered, there is not a right restoration of order. Ideally, therefore, to the degree that

[731] S.T., II-IIae, Q.108, a.4, c.
[732] C. Cardona, *Metafisica del Bien y del Mal* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1987), p.171.
[733] S.T., II-IIae, Q.64, a.6, c.
[734] S.T., I-IIae, Q.87, a.3, ad.1. See S.C.G., III.144.

someone exceeds the bounds of reason by a voluntary action, to the same degree he should suffer a privation contrary to his will. Notice that even if the one punished does not accept the punishment willingly, nevertheless, an objective order is restored: the guilty party at least knows by direct experience the harm which he caused to others, and is in this respect drawn back into the order of justice.[735]

Furthermore, if the evil inflicted upon another is to constitute a just punishment, it is necessary that it be the kind of evil which can be ordered to a greater good (i.e., a good greater than that to which the evil is opposed) by a rational agent. Otherwise, to choose punishment would be to choose evil in itself, rather than the greater good.[736] It is clear that there are evils which can be ordained to a greater good. For example, it is evil to cut off a man's leg, but this can be ordered to the greater good of saving his life if, for example, his leg is severely diseased. However, if there is some evil which is opposed to the greatest good, then it follows that such an evil can never be ordered to some greater good. Therefore, that evil which is opposed to the greatest good can never be justly inflicted upon someone as a punishment. On the other hand, if some evil is not opposed to the greatest good, such an evil might be ordainable to some greater good, at least in principle.

Even if an evil inflicted as punishment is ordainable to a greater good, it is further necessary that the one who punishes intend this greater good in order for punishment to

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[735] "In this manner, the one who commits the crime becomes experientially aware of the evil he has committed, since he suffers an evil of the same magnitude." P. Laurence, "He Beareth Not the Sword in Vain: The Church, the Courts and Capital Punishment," *Ave Maria Law Review*, Spring 2003, Vol.1, n.1, p.241.

[736] Shakespeare poetically illustrates such a defect in punishment in the person of Hamlet as he contemplates revenge upon his murderous uncle: "Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent. When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage, or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed; at gaming, swearing, or about some act that has no relish of salvation in't. Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven, and that his soul may be as damn'd and black as hell whereto it goes." *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 3.

be administered justly.[737] The judge who condemns a guilty man to be punished with a punishment proportionate to the crime, yet does so out of personal ambition or animosity, still acts unjustly in punishing.[738] Besides this, the person who administers the punishment must be the person who has care for the good of the community to which the guilty person belongs. Otherwise, the proper order of social relations will be weakened or destroyed. Such a lack of order is characteristic of so-called "vigilante justice." This is not simply a matter of convention, but is essential. The reason why it is the place of a child's parents to punish the child is not simply a matter of convenience for public order, but because they are presumed to care deeply for the welfare of their child. The reason why it is the place of the public authority to punish is not only for the sake of a clear line of authority, but also because the public authority is supposed to care deeply for the good of the community, and each of the citizens, even the ones who have done wrong. This view underlines the importance of virtue in those who rule. Unless they care deeply about the common good of their citizens, they will be impeded from administering justice.[739]

Finally, for punishment to be justly administered, it is necessary that it be done with due circumstances. For example, if a man is known to be guilty by the judge, yet is thought to be innocent by the public, it might be necessary to defer or forego punishment in order to avoid scandal. Such circumstances must be prudentially judged according to the measure of reason, taking into account the various relations which each of the circumstances bears to the ultimate good.

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[737] See S.T., I-IIae, Q.87, a.2, ad.1.
[738] See S.T., II-IIae, Q.108, a.1.
[739] One is reminded here of the words of Jesus to St. Peter when the care of the flock is entrusted to him: "Peter, do you love me more than these?" (Jn. 21:15).

In summary, for punishment to be just, on the part of the object itself: 1) it must be administered on account of a fault to one who is guilty of that fault; 2) it must be proportionate to the fault; and 3) it must be ordainable to a greater good. On the part of the one who administers punishment, the one punishing: 1) must have the legitimate authority to punish; and 2) must have the intention of ordaining the punishment to a greater good. Finally, on the part of the circumstances, the due circumstances must be kept in administering punishment.

We now return to the question of whether capital punishment can be administered justly. The principal issues which need to be determined are those on the part of the object: whether there is any fault which is proportionate to capital punishment, and whether this kind of punishment is ordainable to a greater good. Therefore, let us assume that we are speaking about a case in which the one to be punished is guilty of some fault, and that the one punishing is duly authorized[740] and does so with the right intention. Moreover, let us assume that the circumstances of the punishment do not make the punishment unreasonable.[741]

Because the evil inflicted by capital punishment is so great, there arises a doubt whether any fault is proportionate to capital punishment. Is it possible for a man to take so much delight in doing his will in an excessive way that this delight can only be

[740] In this case, the further qualification should be made that not just any person who has care of a common good is competent to inflict death as a punishment. Rather, only the one who has care of the perfect community is competent to inflict such a punishment: "The greater power ought to have a greater coercive force. But just as the city is the perfect community, so the ruler of the city has the perfect coercive power; and, therefore, he can inflict irreparable punishments, namely the punishments of death and mutilation. However, the father and lord, who preside over the domestic family, which is an imperfect community, have an imperfect coercive power according to lighter penalties, which do not bring about irreparable harm." S.T., II-IIae, Q.65, a.2, ad.2. Since the penalty of death is the gravest of all temporal penalties, it follows that it must be reserved to the highest temporal authority.

[741] Certainly, if any of these criteria are wanting, the punishment will not be just. However, it is sufficiently clear that each of these criteria pose no special problems as regards capital punishment. Thus, it is not necessary to consider these criteria in relation to capital punishment.

counteracted by the pain of death? To pose the question in this way, however, is to misunderstand what is meant by saying that punishment is proportionate to the fault. The excess is not measured in delight, but rather in departure from the rule of reason. Thus, the question is rather: Is it possible for a man to choose to do an evil which is so discordant with reason that his own death is the only evil which he could suffer that is proportionate to the evil he has chosen? Understood in this way, it is immediately apparent that certain faults, such as premeditated murder, are so far opposed to reason and to the common good of human society that only the death of the offender is proportionate as a punishment.[742] Moreover, only in this way could the one punished experience the evil he has willed for another as directed against himself, since the object wrongly willed by the offender and the evil suffered by the offender are commensurate.

The second difficulty is whether or not the evil of death can be ordained to a good greater than the good to which the evil of death is opposed. Death seems to be the greatest evil.[743] Thus it would seem to be opposed to the greatest good. If this is the case, there does not seem to be any greater good to which it can be ordered. Besides this, death seems to be in no way medicinal for the criminal. Yet the reform of the guilty seems to be the primary intention of the one who punishes rightly.

In fact, it is not true that death is the greatest evil. A sign of this is that it is considered praiseworthy for a man to give his life for the sake of virtue or friendship.[744]

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[742] It should be appreciated that the example of premeditated murder is an example of a fault which is gravely harmful to the common good of human society, not simply an evil which befalls a particular individual as such. Thus, the fact that a man naturally loves his own life more than the life of another individual does not make the punishment he suffers in the loss of his own life disproportional to his fault.

[743] See *In Ethic.*, I.9, lect.15.

[744] Thus, Aristotle argues that a man is happier in the moment of giving his life for the sake of a single, magnificent deed of virtue than he would be doing lesser acts of virtue throughout an entire lifetime: "It is true of the good man too that he does many acts for the sake of his friends and his country, and if necessary dies for them; for he will throw away both wealth and honors and in general the goods that are objects of

Moreover, to suffer death does not even make a person evil. As we argued above, the greatest evils are moral evils (i.e., faults), precisely because these evils are directly opposed to the ultimate good.

> The evil of punishment takes away the good of a creature, whether the good of the creature be taken as something created (as blindness takes away sight), or as an uncreated good (as when through the lack of the divine vision the uncreated good of the creature is taken away). But the evil of fault is properly opposed to the uncreated good itself, since it is contrary to the fulfillment of the divine will, and to the divine love by which the divine good is loved in itself, not only according as it is shared by a creature. Therefore, it is clear that fault has the notion of evil more fully than punishment.[745]

Since death is not the greatest evil, it follows that it can be ordered to a greater good. Moreover, the public authority has care of a good which is a greater good than the life of the individual person (for example, the moral welfare of the community, or the peace of the society). Thus, the public authority is competent to inflict even the punishment of death if such is necessary for common goods such as the moral welfare of the community.

It is clear that the moral welfare of the community is a greater good than the life of an individual person. First, it is better because the good simply speaking consists not in the perfection of first act, but in the perfection of operation. Since the moral good is

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competition, gaining for himself nobility; since he would prefer a short period of intense pleasure to a long one of mild enjoyment, a twelve-month of noble life to many years of humdrum existence, and one great and noble action to many trivial ones. Now those who die for others doubtless obtain this result; it is therefore a great prize that they choose for themselves." *Nichomachean Ethics*, IX.8, 1169a20-27 (Also see St. Thomas' commentary upon the same). Thus, it is not necessary to appeal to a belief in an after-life to explain why it is good for a man to give his life for the common good. In this regard, we must disagree with M. Sherwin, and others, who seem to hold that to give one's life for the common good can only be justified by appeal to an after-life: "How then does the temporal common good flow back upon one who dies promoting it? For Thomas the paradox is only resolved by divine grace, and only understood when seen in the light of charity…Only in heaven will the reward be his." (M. Sherwin, "St. Thomas and the Common Good: the Theological Perspective: An Invitation to Dialogue" *Angelicum* 70 (1993), p.328).

[745] S.T., Ia, Q.48, a.6, c.

the good of rational operations, it follows that the moral good is a good greater than life. Second, the moral welfare of the community is a good better than the life of a single person because the common good is better than the private good, as we have argued above.[746] Therefore, in those cases where the infliction of death upon a criminal is necessary to promote or preserve the moral welfare of the community, such a punishment could be ordered to this moral welfare as to a greater good.[747] In this sense, the infliction of punishment can be considered medicinal: not, indeed for the one punished, but for the community which is harmed by grave faults if these faults are not justly punished.

> Even the punishment which is inflicted according to human laws is not always medicinal for the one who is punished, but only for others. Just as when a thief is hanged, it is not for his own amendment, but on account of others, so that at least from fear of punishment they might cease to sin, according to Prov. 19:25, "When the wicked man is scourged, the fool will be wiser."[748]

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[746] Someone might argue to the contrary that when someone's life is taken, he is no longer capable of those acts which refer him to the common good, so that even the most perfect common goods are taken away by his death. Thus, it seems that not only private goods, but even the highest common good of which a person is capable is taken away by capital punishment. However, a distinction must be made between the object which is the common good and the person's participation in this common good as a subject. The latter is formally a private good, since it is some actuality or form present in the person as in a subject. When a guilty person is punished so that he can no longer participate in the objective common good against which he has committed a fault, this does not diminish the objective common good, since this kind of good is not diminished when either more or fewer subjects partake of it. On the contrary, the removal from participation in the common good of those who act against it promotes this common good; for if those who have shown contempt for the common good are still permitted to partake fully of its benefits, the good itself is cheapened in the eyes of those who share it.

[747] Indeed, unless punishments are administered to those guilty of faults opposed to the common good of society, the greatest goods will be compromised. Proportionate punishment conserves these goods not only through deterrence, but also through encouragement by example and education through law (cf. S.C.G., III.140). Without these goods, the persons in the society will be hampered or impeded from reaching their ultimate good, since social life and friendship are necessary to acquire the virtues which bring a person closest to the ultimate end. Notice also that the formal object intended in inflicting the death penalty is the common good. If the common good could be better served in some other way, there would be no basis for inflicting the death penalty. This also manifests more clearly why this punishment must belong to the one who has the care of the community, for only such a one can have the common good as his proper and formal object in moral acts, so that the intention of killing a malefactor can belong only to such a one. Hence, a private citizen can never intend the death of another person, even in self-defense (cf., S.T., II-IIae, Q.64, a.7).

[748] S.T., I-IIae, Q.87, a.3, ad.2.

In fact, the medicinal aim of punishment is more perfectly accomplished in its promotion of the common good than in its promotion of the conversion of the individual punished.[749]

Nevertheless, it should be appreciated that there is also a sense in which such a punishment can be medicinal even for the one punished. First, the knowledge of impending death can lead to repentance. In this case, the punishment can be willingly accepted as expiatory for the fault committed. But even if the criminal is not converted, at least he is spared a greater evil insofar as death puts an end to malicious acts. St. Thomas summarizes:

> The judge does this not out of hate for them, but from the love of charity by which the public good is preferred to the life of the singular person. And yet, the death inflicted by the judge is of benefit to the sinner: if he be converted, for the expiation of his guilt; or, if he is not converted, it is of benefit insofar as it puts an end to his fault, since through this there is taken away his power of sinning further.[750]

It would be incorrect to understand the reasoning in the above discussion as an application of the principle of double-effect, where an act is done so that some good can be achieved even though it is foreseen that an unintended, lesser evil will result. When a person who has care of the common good inflicts the punishment of death, he is not weighing two effects: the promotion of the common good and the death of the criminal. Rather, he is ordering the latter to the former. Moreover, the taking of life is something directly intended by the public authority. Thus, capital punishment is not justified

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[749] See P. Laurence, "He Beareth Not the Sword in Vain," p.242: "The medicinal impact of punishment on the social good is primary in its relation to its medicinal effect on the criminal. In this way, the reform of the criminal is not necessarily the determinative consideration of punishment by the state."
[750] S.T., II-IIae, Q.25, a.6, ad.2.

through an application of double-effect reasoning. Rather, the taking of life by a public authority is brought into a different moral species than the taking of life by a private individual by the fact that it is referred to the common good, so that it is intended precisely under the formal aspect of justice.[751] "Because the public authority is the guardian of justice and the common good, its legitimate scope of operation extends beyond that of the individual."[752]

It would also be incorrect to understand the above reasoning as a strict application of the whole-part analogy as understood of substantial wholes.[753] Indeed, it may seem on a first reading that this is exactly the procedure used by St. Thomas.

> Every part is ordered to the whole as imperfect to perfect. And therefore, every part is naturally for the sake of the whole. And because of this we see that if the cutting off of some member is expedient for the health of the whole human body, for example, if it is putrid or corruptive of the others, it is laudably and salubriously cut off. Moreover, each person is compared to the whole community as part to whole. And, therefore, if some man is dangerous to the community and corruptive of it because of some sin, he is laudably and salubriously killed, so that the common good might be preserved.[754]

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[751] St. Thomas makes an analogous point in considering the rectitude of divine judgment: "God does not will the damnation of anyone under the formal aspect of damnation, neither does he will the death of anyone insofar as it is death, since he wills that all men be saved, but he wills this under the formal aspect of justice." (S.T., I-IIae, Q.19, a.10, ad.2).

[752] P. Kais, *Punishment and the Common Good According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Santa Croce, 2002), p.248. The fact that intending to kill an individual is always prohibited to a private person is not due to the fact that it is always and everywhere wrong to kill a human being, but rather to the fact that a private individual is not competent to determine the specific manner in which the common good is to be fostered and preserved. The private individual's authority to determine the implementation and care of goods are restricted to the sphere of his private goods, which are not so great as to permit the intentional taking of another's life in order to promote and preserve one's private goods, even the private good of his own life, since considered as a private good, each man's life is equal.

[753] For example, see Niceto Blázquez, "La Pena de Muerte Según Santo Thomás," *Puena de Muerte* (Madrid: San Pablo, 1994), p.70: "Saint Thomas in this reasoning has done nothing more than apply with strict, logical rigor the Aristotelean principle of the whole and the parts to the case of the death penalty."

[754] S.T., II-IIae, Q.64, a.2, c.

In every analogy, there are not only similarities, but also differences. The cogency of the reasoning requires that the conclusion be drawn according as the analogous cases are similar, but not according as they are different. In the above argument, the relation of the whole body to its parts is such that the parts are naturally for the sake of the whole, since the part and its particular good are for the sake of the good of the whole. It is also true that a part of a body does not have independent existence apart from the whole body, since a natural body is something *per se* one. Yet this aspect of the relationship between whole and part is not employed in the argument. An individual person stands to the whole community as part to whole, yet not so that its existence depends upon the whole. Nevertheless, it is still true that the individual person and his particular good are naturally for the sake of the good of the whole community. The individual person is not related to the whole political society by a mere convention, as are the members of a sports team. Rather, as we have argued above, membership in the political community is something demanded by the very nature of man, so that his good, simply speaking, is found in the good of the whole political community. This is precisely the likeness between the two cases, and it is this likeness which forms the basis of the argument.

From the foregoing, it is clear that, in principle, capital punishment can be inflicted justly. The fundamental reason for this is that life is not the ultimate good, nor is it *per se* connected to the ultimate good. Because moral fault can separate a person from the ultimate good, and from the common good of human society, it follows that the life of the guilty, though not of the innocent, can be intentionally taken as a punishment.

We now turn to the second question, a question which pertains more immediately to the thesis: is it consistent with personal dignity to inflict death upon a human person as

a punishment? The key text relating to this problem in the writings of St. Thomas is taken from question sixty-four of the *Secunda Secundae*. In response to the objection that it is never licit to kill a human person, since we should have charity for all men, St. Thomas argues:

> Man, by sinning, departs from the order of reason, and therefore he falls away from human dignity: namely, insofar as man is naturally free and existing for himself. And he falls, in a certain way, into the servitude of the beasts, so that, namely, things are ordained concerning him according as he is useful for others…And, therefore, although it is according to itself evil to kill a man remaining in his dignity, nevertheless, to kill a man who is a sinner can be good, just as to kill a beast [can be good], for an evil man is worse than a beast, and does more harm, as the Philosopher says in the first book of the *Politics* and the seventh book of the *Ethics*.[755]

Here St. Thomas clearly teaches that it is not licit to inflict death upon one possessing human dignity, yet he justifies the death penalty by arguing that one who is guilty of a fault (presumably of sufficient gravity) loses his dignity. This line of reasoning seems to expressly contradict an assertion made in the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*: "Not even a murderer is destitute of his dignity."[756]

The principles which we have set forth above (Part VI.B) provide a basis for acknowledging the truth in both positions, so long as the notion of dignity in each is correctly understood. First of all, it should be noted that both positions refer to the dignity of the one punished. They do not make explicit reference to the dignity of the one punishing.[757] Above, we distinguished between two kinds of dignity found in the person:

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[755] S.T., II-IIae, Q.64, a.2, ad.3.
[756] John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, *AAS*, Vol. LXXXVII (1995), p.411.
[757] Indeed, there might be reasons on the part of the dignity of the one who is to punish that he should not inflict the death penalty. For example, St. Thomas argues that it is not appropriate to the dignity of clerics to inflict the death penalty with their own hands: "The ministry of clerics is ordained to better things than

the dignity of nature, and the dignity of finality. A property of the dignity of nature is that it is stable and inalienable, which agrees with the statement from *Evangelium Vitae*. A property of the dignity of finality is that it can be increased or diminished. This agrees with the language used by St. Thomas in the above citation where he speaks of "receding" from the order of reason and "falling away" from human dignity. Furthermore, the fact that the objection to which St. Thomas is responding is based upon the premise that men should love one another by an act of charity (an act by which persons are referred to the ultimate end and made worthy of it), indicates that the dignity to which he makes reference is the dignity of finality, not the dignity of nature. Thus, when St. Thomas says that it is not licit to put a man to death while he remains in his human dignity, this must refer to the dignity of finality, not the dignity of nature. Conversely, it follows that, for St. Thomas, it is licit to put a person to death while he retains his dignity of nature (i.e., so long as he has a rational nature). Indeed, this is something which follows necessarily and immediately from the conclusion we established above that, in principle, and under the right circumstances, a man can be justly put to death.

However, here a further distinction is helpful: "Someone can be worthy (*dignus*) of something in two ways: either so that he has the right of having it…or so that there be in him some congruity for that which is given to him."[758] If it can be just to put a malefactor to death, it follows necessarily that he no longer has a just claim upon his own life. Thus, the dignity of nature which remains to him is not such that he has a right to, or a strictly just claim upon his own life. Yet it may still be said that according to the

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bodily killings, namely [it is ordered] to those things which pertain to spiritual health." (S.T., II-IIae, Q.64, a.4, ad.2).

[758] *In IV Sent*., d.18, q.1, a.1b, ad.3.

dignity of nature which remains in him there is a certain congruity or fittingness that his life be spared. This is especially so if the person is repentant for his fault. Due to this fittingness for life arising from a person's dignity of nature, it is better if every attempt be made to spare the criminal's life. Yet this judgment must always be weighed against the requirements of the common good. For example, in cases where multiple lives of innocent persons are cruelly taken, the dignity of those lives must also be upheld. When such atrocities are punished by penalties clearly short of the magnitude of the crime, there is a real danger that the dignity of those innocent lives lost will be demeaned by the failure to punish with a proportionate penalty.[759]

A special consideration arises in the case of the repentant criminal. If, as we have argued above, the principal component of dignity is that love which makes a person suitable to participate in some common good, it seems to follow that simply by repentance a person regains his dignity of finality. In such cases, therefore, it seems that it is illicit to put such a person to death. Such an objection would be cogent if it fell within the power of the will of the individual to realize by itself the common good which is loved. However, such goods are beyond the power of the individual to realize by himself. Membership in a larger whole and participation in its good not only presupposes a love for this good on the part of the individual member, but also communication of this good to the individual member. A person is not admitted to citizenship in a particular country simply in virtue of loving the good of that country. The person must also be

[759] There is a certain sense in which the application of a proportionate penalty is an affirmation of the dignity of the one punished as well. We do not punish madmen or retarded people with the severest penalties precisely because we do not acknowledge in them the full capacity for free and authentic moral choices. By inflicting a penalty proportionate to the crime, the full responsibility of the malefactor is affirmed. Moreover, if such a penalty is accepted willingly by the one who committed the fault, it has the potential to provide a fuller satisfaction in the order of justice, which is a very great good for the one who accepts this punishment. Hence, this aspect of punishment should not be overlooked.

granted citizenship by the legitimate authority. In general, it is the one who has care of the common good who is competent to grant membership in the society and participation in the common good of the society. The principle by which a person participates in the civil order, or any other order of common good, is not wholly within his own power, but depends also upon the very principle of the order itself.[760]

This concludes our treatment of capital punishment. A deeper understanding of the nature and kinds of personal dignity in its relation to the common good, coupled with a right understanding of punishment reveals that while it can be just an even necessary to inflict the punishment of death upon a guilty person, it is more in keeping with personal dignity that such punishments be applied only in cases of true necessity. Moreover, a very careful consideration must be made of the very contingent and concrete circumstances of the common good, since this is the factor which primarily determines how punishments are to be applied. We now turn our consideration to human cloning and its relation to personal dignity.

VIII.B Human Cloning

In this section, the thesis will consider whether human cloning is opposed to personal dignity. Human cloning is the generation of a human being from the organic tissue of an already developed human being by artificial means. As such, the act of cloning produces a human being outside of natural sexual intercourse and without the

[760] See S.T., I-IIae, Q.87, a.3, c.: "Of every order there is some principle through which someone is made a participant of that order. And therefore, if through sin the principle of order by which the will of a man is submitted to God is corrupted, there will be a disorder which, when considered in itself, is irreparable, although it can be repaired by divine power."

union of a human sperm and egg. The human life produced has substantially the same genetic material as the human being from whom the organic tissue was taken to supply the matter for cloning, so that the one cloned would be something like a deferred identical twin of the human being whose tissue was used.

The proper and immediate end of cloning is the generation of a new, independent and complete human life capable, under the right circumstances, of developing and growing into a mature human person[761] in the same way that embryos generated from natural sexual union are capable of development and growth. This is the intrinsic end of the act of cloning, independent of the motives of those who attempt to clone. However, the motives for cloning are typically reduced to two: biomedical research (sometimes called "cloning-for-research") or the reproduction of a mature human being (sometimes called "cloning-for-children").[762]

The discussion of cloning which follows will prescind from the particular motives of those who attempt to clone. Thus, our focus will be restricted primarily to the end intrinsic to the act of cloning.[763] Moreover, although attempts at human cloning can result in the destruction of human embryos, as well as other potential side effects which might be significant factors that contribute to the moral judgment one should make concerning human cloning as actually practiced, these will not fall under the scope of our consideration, since they are accidental to human cloning as such. Our aim is to consider

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[761] We do not intend to deny that human beings are persons from the first moment of their existence as independent and complete substances. However, our argument does not depend upon the personhood of the human being from the first moment of existence. Therefore, to avoid unnecessary controversy, we have therefore decided to leave unaddressed the question of when the rational soul is first present in human development.

[762] See The Report of the United States President's Council on Bioethics, *Human Cloning and Human Dignity* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002); (Hereafter HCHD).

[763] The Report of the President's Council makes a similar distinction at one point: "Even if, in any given case, we were to continue to think of the cloned child as a gift, *the act itself teaches us a different lesson*, as the child becomes the continuation of a parental project." (HCHD, p.119; emphasis in the original).

human cloning in itself as the object which specifies a human, moral act, and to evaluate this act in its relation to personal dignity.

Insofar as human cloning involves the generation of human life outside of the act of sexual union between a man and a woman, the evaluation of human cloning as a moral act will be like the evaluation of *in vitro* fertilization, where a human being is likewise generated outside of the act of sexual union between a man and a woman. However, human cloning adds particular and proper elements to this moral evaluation since the human life produced is not produced through the union of sperm and egg. The following evaluation shall concentrate upon these particular elements proper to cloning.

Because human cloning produces human life without the union of sperm and egg, the human being produced cannot properly be said to be begotten: "Properly in living things…generation signifies the origin of some living thing from a co-joined, living principle. And this is properly called nativity. Nevertheless, not everything of this kind is said to be begotten, but properly that which proceeds according to the notion of likeness [of species]."[764] While the human being produced through cloning is of the same species as the one who provides the genetic material, nevertheless, the one who supplies this material is not a co-joined, living principle from whom the one cloned proceeds. Indeed, the one from whom the tissue is taken need not even be alive.[765] Thus, the one cloned cannot be said to be begotten, since begetting is the special kind of natural generation which belongs to living beings. Moreover, in relation to the one to be cloned,

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[764] S.T., Ia, Q.27, a.2, c.

[765] It is true that a sperm or an egg can belong to someone who has died since the sperm or egg was produced, and can be physically separated from the one who produced it, nevertheless, at the time in which the sperm or egg is produced its author must still be alive. This is important since the sperm or egg are fit by their very structure and nature to be life-communicating instruments of the living being from whom they proceed. There exists, therefore, a continuity of power or active ability between the progenitor and the one begotten by means of sperm and egg which preserves the essential notion of natural agency.

the one who provides the genetic material is a material cause and, in some sense, an exemplar cause, but is in no way an agent cause. The status of agent cause is assumed by the clinician who effects the substantial change from a piece of organic tissue to an independent and complete human being. Consequently, the human life produced cannot be said to have a mother or father according to the proper usage of these terms. Moreover, the clinician who effects the substantial change stands to the one cloned as maker to thing made, or artist to artifact.

It is true that, if the one cloned is implanted in and brought to birth by a woman, that woman could be called a mother in some sense, the same way that a surrogate mother could be called a mother in cases of *in vitro* fertilization. Nevertheless, the most essential aspect of natural motherhood would be missing: the very transmission of the formal principles of one's particular substance to the offspring by way of a natural agency. The most fundamental natural relationship between the host mother and the child which is born would not exist. Moreover, it is clear that one who is cloned would not have a father in any sense, unless the one cloned happened to be adopted by a man, in which case, again, this most fundamental natural relationships would be lacking. At least in naturally begotten children who are adopted, the adopted child can lay claim to some father and mother in the proper sense. This would not be the case for those children produced by cloning.

The status of the clinician as agent and maker in relation to the one cloned introduces the possibility of a completely novel relationship between two human beings. According to nature, the one cloned is equal to the clinician, but according to the order of production, the one cloned is something less noble than the one who made him. The one

cloned is the work of his hands and the product of his intelligence and will. Normally, such a relationship of maker to thing made is the basis for a certain authority and ownership of the maker over the thing made.

As argued above, human dignity in the fullest sense is a certain actuality inhering in a human subject which makes the subject suitable to participate in the ultimate common good. We also argued that it is necessary to participate in lesser common goods, such as the common good of the family and the state, in order to fully realize a person's potential to participate in the ultimate common good. This means that an integral part of human dignity is a suitability to participate in these lesser common goods. Yet one who is cloned lacks the particular suitability proper to membership in family life: namely the natural relationship and love which can have its origin only in natural generation.[766] Certainly, as a human being, the one cloned has within him a principle by which he ought to be loved and cared for as a member of the human species. Yet there is no compelling, natural reason why one who is cloned should belong to one family rather than another. Membership in a human family could only be a matter of arbitrary choice for one who is cloned. If it happens that one who is cloned finds love and acceptance in a particular family, this will happen in spite of the fact that the natural foundation for the love proper to parents and children is lacking. More significantly, this deficient state of family relationships will be something foreknown and deliberately chosen by those who practice human cloning. To choose to clone a human being is to choose to bring a human being into the world without an integral component of his human dignity: the natural basis for membership in a particular family. To deny that this component of human

[766] See HCHD, p.112: "Our emergence from the union of two individuals, themselves conceived and generated as we were, locates us immediately in a network of relation and natural affection."

dignity is important, is to deny that the common good of the family is an essential foundation for advancing to man's ultimate common good: it is to denigrate the very status of the common good of the natural family to a discardable appendage among the means to human happiness.[767]

A society which encourages or permits human cloning for the sake of the advancement of the private goods of individuals, exhibits a lack of esteem and appreciation for a common good which is objectively more lovable than the private goods of individuals.[768] As a further consequence, the ability of the members of the society to participate in this common good is diminished. In this sense, the dignity of all the members of the society is compromised by the acceptance of human cloning.

Besides the lack of a foundation for natural membership in a family, one who is cloned also has within him a positive and real basis upon which a limited claim of ownership can be made by the clinician who produces him. In spite of the natural equality of one cloned to the one who clones, there nevertheless exists a real, causal relation of maker to thing made between the clinician and the one cloned. The existence of the one cloned is really the result of the art, intelligence and will of the clinician. If

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[767] It is important to distinguish our argument from one framed in terms of the "rights" of the one cloned. Certainly, the predominant approach of those arguing on both sides of the human cloning debate is to invoke the rights of the parents or the one to be cloned. For example, V. Rayappan asserts: "Supporters of human cloning believe (whether consciously or not) that the rights of those wishing to reproduce are superior to the rights of any potential offspring." (*Human Cloning: Ethical and Legal Implications* (Rome: Pontifica Universitas Lateranensis, 2002), p.34; also see pp.45-47). Of course, there are obvious problems with invoking the rights of one who does not yet exist, especially in view of the principle that it is better to exist in an imperfect or deficient manner than never to have existed at all: "although the offspring may be begotten with infirmity, nevertheless, it is better for him to be such than utterly not to exist." (*In IV Sent*., d.32, q.1, a.1, ad.4). Our argument looks not to the rights of the one to be cloned, but rather to the surpassing worth of the common good and its claim to be loved in the right way.

[768] See HCHD, p.126-7: "In addressing this question, we must reach well beyond the rights of individuals and the difficulties or benefits that cloned children or their families might encounter. We must consider what kind of a society we wish to be, and, in particular, what forms of bringing children into the world we want to encourage and what sorts of relations between generations we want to preserve…A society that clones human beings thinks about human beings (and especially children) differently than a society that refuses to do so."

someone owes their very coming into existence to someone else's rational choice, it is difficult to see why there could not be a legitimate claim to ownership over certain aspects of the life of a cloned person. At the same time, this relationship established between the clinician and the one cloned is not one which is grounded in a natural love as that between parent and child. On the contrary, the maker tends to look upon what he has made as something less worthy of love than himself.[769] In this sense, one who is cloned would have a diminished dignity, and would fall into a new class of human beings who are made, but not begotten. The person cloned would not share in the whole common good of the human species insofar as he would be inferior to other human beings in his mode of origin. For there is a fundamental notion of equality between parents and children as a result of their mode of origin: a notion of equality which does not exist between maker and thing made.[770]

Since the family is itself an integral part of the natural order of society and the universe, it not surprising that a denigration of the common good of the family leads to a denigration of the common good of the natural order. Human reproduction is *per se* ordered to the common good of the human race. The natural mode of generation is not only sufficient for this end,[771] but it is also the best way to bring this end about, since "nature does nothing in vain, nor does it lack in necessary things."[772] Reproduction according to the natural means guarantees the bonds of natural love as well as the right

[769] See HCHD, p.112: "The things we make are not just like ourselves; they are the products of our wills, and their point and purpose are ours to determine. But a begotten child comes into the world just as its parents once did, and is therefore their equal in dignity and humanity."
[770] See HCHD, p.118: "Children born of this process [i.e., natural procreation] stand equally beside their progenitors as fellow human beings, not beneath them as made objects."
[771] It can even be said that the natural mode of generation is superabundant as a means to the end of the propagation of the species, as witnessed by the increase of overall human population even in a period when every effort has been made by public authorities to halt the increase of population throughout the world.
[772] *In III De Anima*, lect.14. See *In IV Sent*., d.24, q.1, a.2a, c.

order among members of the human species that human cloning cannot provide. Therefore, art in the service of human cloning would not be assisting nature, but would be an attempt to circumvent nature and to substitute something else in its place. Human cloning would subordinate the common good of the species and the natural order to the private good of individuals. Therefore, a society which accepts human cloning not only fails to appreciate the common good found in the natural family, it further fails to appreciate the common good of the whole order of the universe.[773] The failure to appreciate the tremendous good found in the natural order, and the inability to see in that natural order a profound wisdom[774] severely impedes the ability of members of such a society from fully participating in the common good of the order of the universe. Instead of seeking to understand and participate more deeply in the natural order, an artificial order opposed to the natural order is substituted for it. Man more and more participates in an order only of his own creation; and, consequently, participates in a good no better than himself. Those who value the counterfeit good of an artificially constructed order opposed to the natural order are finally diminished in their capacity and suitability for contemplating and attaining to the author of this order, who is the ultimate common good. Thus, man's highest dignity is ultimately diminished and corrupted by the practice and acceptance of human cloning.

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[773] For example, the constitutional scholar Lawrence Tribe has argued: "A society that bans acts of human creation that reflect unconventional sex roles or parenting models (surrogate motherhood, in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, and the like) for no better reason than that such acts dare to defy nature and tradition…is a society that risks cutting itself off from vital experimentation and risks sterilizing a significant part of its capacity to grow." ("On Not Banning Cloning for the Wrong Reasons," *Clones and Clones: Facts and Fantasies about Human Cloning*, ed. M. Nussbaum and C.R. Sunstein (New York: Norton, 1998), p.321). This position reflects a profound failure to appreciate the good of the natural order and the evils that result in departing from the natural order in areas as fundamental as the generation of the human species.

[774] This profound wisdom discovered by reason in the natural order is so deep that many aspects of it remain hidden, yet to be discovered. For example, it was only recently discovered that the genetic novelty which occurs in the combination of DNA from different persons is an important asset in the defense of the human species against microbial and parasitic diseases.

In brief, in evaluating human cloning as a moral act, reason sees that the order which ought to be preserved in human generation is not preserved in human cloning. Such acts, according to their very object, cannot be *per se* ordered to the ultimate end of human life, and are therefore contrary to the authentic dignity of the person.

VIII.C Conclusion

The application of our analysis of the common good and human dignity to the contemporary problems of capital punishment and human cloning reveals that a more universal perspective is offered in which to resolve these difficult moral problems by a shift from the consideration of rights and individual goods to a consideration of the common good understood as a final cause. Difficulties which seem irresolvable from the more limited perspective of individual rights can be satisfactorily resolved once the problem is stated in terms of the relation between the private good and the common good. This is not surprising since, as the cause of the causality of the other causes, the final cause has the greatest intelligibility. This underlines our contention that an appreciation of the primacy of the common good is foundational for ethical discourse.

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