

The Concept of Grace in St. Thomas Aquinas: (I) Analysis of the Term *Natura*

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It is my intention in these pages to analyze the elements that make up the formal Thomistic definition of grace. By the formal definition of grace I refer to the identification of the concept of sanctifying grace in Aquinas with the scriptural description of it as it appears in 2 Pt. 1:4,* namely, that grace is “a certain spiritual *participation* in the *divine nature*.”

The first crucial term of the above definition to be analyzed is *natura*. Our approach to it will be in a twofold way: one, philosophical and the other, theological. Our philosophical investigation will focus on three fundamental applications of the term *natura*: first, as something applied to man; second, as something applied to the world at large; and lastly, as something applied to God. The central issue of our theological investigation of the term *natura* will be how it is related to the Blessed Trinity. Thus, after investigating what constitutes the divine nature, we shall be confronted with two issues relative to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity: first, about our knowledge of it; second, about the reality itself of the Blessed Trinity as the source in which man is called to participate.

Next we will approach the second crucial term in the above-mentioned definition of grace, namely, *participatio*, theologically. This will be the object of another separate study.

* “By virtue of them he has bestowed on us the great and precious things he promised, so that through those you who have fled a world corrupted by lust might become *sharers of the divine nature*.” Translation from *The New American Bible*. Underline is mine.

But before we enter into the matter, I believe that some preliminary notations on grace are needed, if only to briefly introduce the types of grace existing in Thomistic theology.

Types of Grace in Thomistic Theology

We are forced by the formality of grace to distinguish kinds of grace since grace is an analogous term. Relative to its formality, there is unity in the notion of grace, for it is none other than a special calling of God. This generous calling is an invitation to man for a more intimate and personal union with him. We can speak of the multi-dimensional effects of grace, but since there are many *gracious* effects of this divine love, we can, accordingly, distinguish the various effects of grace in terms, for example, of purpose, subject, permanence, and the like. Two distinctions are apt for description here as they bear significantly on our main interest. They are the distinction between *created* and *uncreated* grace and between *habitual / sanctifying* and *actual* grace.

a. 'Uncreated' and 'Created' Grace

Grace as *uncreated* is seen from the perspective of God. If grace is seen as the ultimate result of God's initiative of sharing, then grace is distinguished from its cause or source, God himself. Thus, theologians distinguish between "uncreated grace" as God himself —this presence constitutes divine indwelling¹— and "created grace"² as the multi-dimensional, supernatural effects of this presence in an individual.

In the same vein, but quite different, is a parallel distinction reflected in the technical term *divina providentia*³ St. Thomas frequently uses. It may be stated that *divina providentia* as "God himself giving freely" (*ipse Deus gratis dans*) is "uncreated" grace whereas

¹ For the different modes of God's indwelling, see Robert W. Gleason, S.J., *Grace* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), pp. 135ff.

² For a more detailed division of this kind of grace, cf. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas*, Ia IIae, q.109-114, trans. The Dominican Nuns, Corpus Christi Monastery, California (St. Louis, Mo. and London: B. Herder Book, 1952), p.150.

³ See, for example, *Sent.* II, d.28, q.1, a.4, sol. This is not a constant term in his works. Other expressions are used like *divinum auxilium* or *primus movens*. Cf. *S.T.*, I-II, q.114, a.2; *ibid.*, a.1 reply; a.6, reply; q.111, a.2; q.112, a.2.

“created” grace, in its widest connotation is “any gracious gift” (*donum gratuitum*).⁴ The latter is a gift superadded to the natural. Without the latter, man can do good things but they lack the ability to merit anything relative to our supernatural destiny. Man cannot do anything good, meritorious or otherwise, without grace in the first sense, because it is in this sense that God is understood as “the principle of all good not only in man but also in other creatures.”⁵

Likewise, uncreated grace is distinguished from created grace in the sense that “uncreated grace is the more fundamental reality, and the cause of everything else that is denominated ‘grace’.”⁶

b. *Habitual / Sanctifying’ and ‘Actual’ Grace.*

Gratia gratum faciens may refer to any habitual grace. Hence, sanctifying grace, i.e., the entitative quality of healing and elevating a fallen nature into a graced state is a *gratia gratum faciens*. However, the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are also termed habitual graces if what is under investigation is the *permanence* of qualities or habits “which produce effects in a continual and indefectible manner in the subject in which they reside.”⁷ All habitual graces *dispose* for action whether it be *radically* (in the case of *sanctifying* grace) or *proximately* (in the case of the virtues and gifts).

Now, if what is considered in *gratis gratum faciens* is not permanent and dispositive, then we come upon what the medieval theologians called *auxilium speciale*, or later theologians called *actual grace* or *transient help*. Actual graces actuate or produce acts beneficial for sanctification or the attainment of eternal life. They are transient stimulation or movements “by which the soul is prompted to do or receive something relating to justification, sanctification, or salvation.”⁸ Set against actual grace, then, sanctifying grace is entitative while actual grace is operative.

⁴ *Sent.*, II, d.28, q.1, a.1 ad 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Hennessey, *Grace*. (Roma: Pontificia Universitas a S. Thomas, 1990), p. 114.

⁷ Aumann, J., O.P. and Royo, A., O.P., *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1962), p.42.

⁸ Aumann, J., O.P., *Spiritual Theology* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, London: Sheed & Ward, 1980), p. 78.

Thus in the state of integral nature man needs a gratuitous capacity supplementing the capacity of his nature in one respect, namely, to perform and to will the supernatural good. But in the state of fallen nature he needs it in two respects, namely, in order to be healed, and further that he may perform the good proper to supernatural capacity, which is meritorious.⁹

Sanctifying grace is *entitative* in the sense of elevating the spoiled nature of man by healing its radical sin.¹⁰ Actual grace is *operative* insofar as it prompts and actuates the act itself. However, both are considered *gratia gratum faciens* as opposed to *gratia gratis data* (the grace meant for the building of the Christian community)¹¹ since they are meant for the sanctification of the individual. Both contribute directly to the holiness of the person in whom the grace is found. That is to say, sanctifying grace is, logically speaking, prior in time and importance to actual grace. It is in this sense that sanctifying grace is "the formal principle of our supernatural organism, as the spiritual soul is the formal principle of our natural vital organism."¹²

Finally, sanctifying grace as thus understood may be studied under two aspects: under its *ontological* definition, as a supernatural entitative habit, i.e., *materially* speaking; or under its *theological* definition, i.e. *formally* speaking. Cognizant of this, when St. Thomas states that "grace is nothing other than a certain participated likeness of the divine nature,"¹³ he is referring especially to sanctifying grace as theologically understood.

⁹ S.T., I-II, q.109, a.2, c. This distinction is not clear in certain passages. For instance, when St. Thomas states that "by his natural endowments man cannot produce meritorious works proportionate to eternal life, but a higher power is needed for this, which is the power of grace." *Ibid.*, a.5, c. or when he calls *sanctifying grace* "the principle of meritorious action (*principium operis meritorii*)." *Ibid.*, a.6, c.

¹⁰ Dreyer notes that St. Thomas retains this healing or restorative quality of grace found in St. Augustine. However, St. Thomas puts greater stress on grace as elevating since for him the necessity of grace is above all due to the stark contrast between the integral state of human nature and its fallen state. This ontological disability incapacitates man's realization of his supernatural end which is made more arduous because of the fall. Cf. Dreyer, E., *Manifestations of Grace, Theology and Life Series*, vol. 29, 1990, pp. 92-93.

¹¹ See I Cor. 12-14. Here St. Paul enumerates these *gratiae gratis datae* as charismatic or pneumatic gifts.

¹² Aumann, J., *Spiritual Theology*, p. 67.

¹³ S.T., III, q.62, a.1, c.

I. THE NATURE OF *NATURA*¹⁴

The reason of presenting here some philosophical notions about *natura* is to facilitate our understanding of the term applied to the Christian God, i.e., the Triune God, since the life of grace involves participation in the life of the Triune God.

1. A Philosophical Investigation of *Natura*

For our purposes, *natura* can be applied in three instances: *natura* as human; *natura* as the order of nature; *natura* as divine.

'*Natura*' as Human

In St. Thomas, the term *natura* corresponds to the Aristotelian *phúsis*. St. Thomas accepts this Aristotelian term in all its analogical applications.¹⁵ On reflection, three applications are worth brief mention in this section.

The word *natura* is first applied to distinct, created basic units, including man.¹⁶ *Natura humana* in St. Thomas may be approached in

¹⁴ As regard this section, our reliance on the following sources should be acknowledged: James A. Weisheipl, OP and Fabian R. Larcher, OP, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John, St. Thomas Aquinas*, Part I, for Aquinas Scripture Series Vol. 4, Appendix III, "The Concept of *Natura* and *Person*" (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, Inc., 1980), pp. 458-468; M. Manzanedo, O.P. "El Hombre como *Microcosmos* según Santo Tomás," *Angelicum*, Vol. 56 (1979), pp. 62-92; Braulio Peña, OP, *The Bearance of the Concept of Nature on the Ethical Criterion of Human Behavior*, Theses ad Lauream (Manila: UST Press, 1979); Raimundo Paniker, *El Concepto de Naturaleza, Análisis histórico y metafísico de un concepto*. (Madrid: Instituto Luis Vives de Filosofía, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1951); James A. Weisheipl, OP, "The Concept of Nature," *The New Scholasticism*, Vol. 28 (1954), pp. 377-408; Daniel C. O'Grady, "The Scope of Nature: Eight Tables," *The New Scholasticism*, Vol. 22 (1948), pp. 113-125; Sheilah O'Flynn Brennan, "The Meaning of 'Nature' in the Aristotelian Philosophy of Nature," *The Thomist*, Vol. 24 (1961), pp. 383-401; H. Grenier, *Thomistic Philosophy*, First English Edition, trans. from the Latin of the original *Cursus Philosophiae* (Editio Tertia by J.P.E. O'Hanley, 3 Vols., Vol. I, *General Introduction, Logic, Philosophy of Nature* (Charlottetown, Canada: St. Dunstan's University, 1948); R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945).

¹⁵ *S.T.*, I-II, q.110, a.2, ad 2. See also *ibid.*, I, q.29, c.

¹⁶ On a distinct application of the notion of *natura* to man, see Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Nature and Grace*, trans. Cyril Vollert, S.J. (St. Louis 2, Mo. and London, W.C.: B Herder Book, 1954), pp. 60ff.

three ways. By an essential-physical definition, man is considered as composed of an organic body and a spiritual soul.¹⁷ Matter and form applied to man point to his corporeal and spiritual constituents. By an essential metaphysical definition, our interest focuses on what makes the proximate genus and specific difference in man.¹⁸ Attendant to this definition, man, we say, is a rational animal.¹⁹ Nature then as human is what makes man, first of all, to be rational and to possess reason, i.e., to act according to his rationality. Human nature both in its essential-physical as well as in its essential-metaphysical definition is the same for all individuals who belong to the species — rational animal.²⁰

Much more importantly for our purpose, St. Thomas, following Boethius, defines man as a supposit (Lt. *Suppositum*; Grk. *Hypostasis*) or a person, i.e., as a complete, individual substance of a rational nature. Now, “*person* means that which is most perfect in the whole of nature, namely what subsists in rational nature.”²¹ By virtue of this definition, man, composed of his organic body and rational soul, is seen as an individual complete entity. Not the body alone and not the soul alone (although it lives immortally at death) makes up the person. It cannot be denied, however that although all human acts are attributed to the whole person acting, it is the presence of a mind, i.e., the powers of knowing and of willing, that distinguishes man from the rest of God’s visible creation,²² and which makes man the nearest visible creature to God. Because of his incarnate mind man is a microcosmos. His nature is a micro-reflection of the cosmos.²³ This broaches a second use of the term *natura*.

‘*Natura*’ as Cosmic

This second application of *natura* draws our attention to the cosmos, *the order of nature*. Nature as cosmos in this respect is a

¹⁷ S.C.G., II, q.57; S.T., I, q.75, a.4, c.; *ibid.*, a.2, ad 1; q.76, a.1, c.

¹⁸ For example S.C.G., III, c. 39. *

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ S.T., I, q.13, a.9, c.

²¹ See S.T. I, q.29, a.3, c.

²² Cf. *De ver.*, II, a.10, c.; X, a.1, c.; X, a.1, ad 7; S.T., I, q.79, a.1, ad 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, XXIV, obj. 5, *sed contra*; *ibid.*, XXVII, a.3, obj. 23; *De pot.*, V, a.6, obj. 8; In *Phys.*, VIII, c. 2, lec. 4, n.3.

hierarchy of created beings of whatever level they may be, arranged according to the order of perfection,²⁴ patterned after the constitution of the whole by its parts: "The whole universe is constituted from all creatures as a whole from its parts."²⁵

For St. Thomas for a natural order to exist, two things must be present. First there must be a distinction of ordinations. Second, there must be a coordination of the distinctions toward the whole.²⁶ Each being in the cosmic hierarchy is distinct in the sense that each is and operates according to the degree of its assimilation of the commonest note, *esse*, depending on its *locus* in the scale of being. Hence, order is something of an intrinsic manifestation of the nature of its being. However, it must also be equally emphasized that although there is an intrinsic ordering in the nature of each being, this is an external ordination in view of the global nature of the whole.²⁷ It is to the credit of the Doctor Communis that he applies the Aristotelian act-potency distinction to the profound realities of essence and the act of *esse*. Of course, the natural movement of each being towards its own perfection and the whole universe towards its cosmic perfection are not left to chance or fate, but must be based on the governance of a supreme intelligence.²⁸

'Natura' as Divine

The supreme intelligence is God, a fact known even in philosophy. God must be *actus purus, ipsum esse subsistens*, perpetually active, without the imperfection of motion. At the same time it is the cause of all existing mobility.²⁹ St. Thomas calls this supreme intelligence, a *Universal Nature*.³⁰

²⁴ *S.T.* I, q.105, a.5, c; a.6, ad 1; *De pot.*, I, a.3, c.; *De anima*, a.21, ad 10.

²⁵ *S.T.* I, q.65, a.2, c.

²⁶ Cf. *In Metaphys.*, XII, lec.9.

²⁷ Cf. *In Metaphys.*, XII, lec.9; *In Phys.*, VIII, c.1, lec.3, n.3; *S.T.*, I-II, q.1, a.2, c.; *ibid.*, I-II, q.109, a.6, c. See also Paniker, R., *El concepto de naturaleza*, p. 307.

²⁸ Cf. *S.T.*, I-II, q.71, a.6, ad 3; *ibid.*, II-II, q.154, a.12, ad 1; *De pot.*, I, a.5, c.; *De ver.*, XII, a.3, ad 17; *ibid.*, XXII, a.1, c.

²⁹ The dynamism behind *natura* is perceived through its three primary manifestations: order, finality and love. Cf. Paniker, *op. cit.*, pp. 297ff.

³⁰ Cf. Peña, B., *The Bearance of Nature*, p. 12-14.

Thus, we arrive at a third use of the term *natura*.³¹

We may speak of anything as corruptible in two ways, first from the point of view of all nature (*secundum naturam universalem*), then from the point of view of a particular nature (*secundum naturam particularem*). This particular nature is the operating and conserving power proper to each thing,... But 'all nature' (*natura universalis*) refers to an active power existing in some universal principle of nature,... in the way in which some call God *natura naturans*.³²

There is, therefore, divine power in God but God's power and his essence are simply one.³³

It is to be noted that when St. Thomas postulates the necessity of a universal nature, this nature does not in anyway connote the conglomeration of all active and passive principles found in the world of physical nature. Rather, the one God as universal nature is said "to be the universal cause of all those which come about naturally (*causa universalis omnium eorum quae naturaliter fiunt*)."³⁴

God is the supreme universal nature by which all contingent natures are created (i.e., by efficient causality), to which all contingent natures are ordained (i.e., by final causality) and after which all contingent natures are patterned (i.e., by exemplary causality).³⁵

³¹ For example *In Phys.*, II, c.8, lec.12, n.252.

³² *S.T.* I-II, q.85, a.6, c. Cf. also *ibid.*, II-II, q.65, a.1 ad, 1; In *De causis*, lec.29; *S.C.G.*, I, c.43; *De pot.*, I, a.2, c.; *Comp. theol.*, I, c.19; *In Metaphys.*, XII, lec.8; *Sent.*, I, d.43, q.1, a.1, c.

³³ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.25, a.5, c. Cf. also *S.C.G.*, I, c.45; *ibid.*, IV, c.19; III, cc.3 & 16. The manner of conceiving divine power and divine essence, despite the real identity of the two, must respect logical priorities. The divine essence logically comes before divine power. St. Thomas explains: "God's essence suffices for him to act thereby and yet his power is not superfluous: because it is understood not as a thing in addition to his essence, but only as connoting *in our way of thinking* the sole relation of a principle: for from the mere fact that the essence is the principle of action it follows that it has the formality of power." *De pot.*, I, a.1, ad 9. Underlining is mine.

³⁴ *De div. nom.* c.4, lec.21.

³⁵ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.13, a.8, ad 2; *ibid.*, a.9, c.

Recapitulation: The Analogous Nature of 'Natura'

What we wish to point out here is the analogicity of the term *natura*. The term applies to all creation (the order of nature) but this includes, by a necessary postulation, God as universal nature relative to his triple function as efficient, final and exemplary cause. Cosmic nature is scaled in such a way that "every being has the act of existing in the proportion in which it approaches God by likeness. But according as it is found to be unlike Him, it approaches non-existence."³⁶ It is by virtue of the common note, *esse* that all creatures are said to be like God. Their likeness depends on their place in the hierarchy of being. However, St. Thomas does not consider the *cosmos* hierarchized only in this way. In fact, in the following passage, St. Thomas pictures the entire universe in a three-scaled framework: "Things are likened to God, first and foremost generally in so far as they are; secondly in so far as they are alive [and] in so far as they have discernment and intelligence."³⁷

Accordingly, the term *nature* is applicable to all beings in the case of *esse* most extensively but least comprehensively; to all animate creatures as living in the case of *vita* less extensively but less comprehensively; and to intelligent creatures as intelligent in the case of *rationalitas* least extensively but most comprehensively. Creatures come to be assimilated to God in a more restricted sense if the note of *vita*, the attribute shared with animate beings only as animate, is considered; this occurs in the most restricted sense when the note of *rationalitas* is considered in intelligent creatures as intelligent.

Since man partakes of this three-levelled scale and his note of *rationalitas* encompasses the other two and, therefore, presupposes them, man among the visible creatures is the most perfect and the nearest to the universal nature. This makes man a privileged creature, a person, because of his endowment with a soul which is gifted with the faculties of intellect and will: "The person, that is, some one subsisting in a rational nature, is the most perfect reality in all nature."³⁸ He is,

³⁶ *De ver.*, XXIII, a.7, c.

³⁷ *S.T.*, q.93, a.2, c; *ibid.*, ad 4. With this triple way of looking at the universe, something is natural which is "according to an inclination of nature" (*secundum inclinationem naturae*). Unlike the rest of the visible creation, however, man alone through his intellection and volition tends towards the end *knowingly and willing it*.

³⁸ *S.T.*, I, q.29, a.3, c.

therefore, capable of performing intellectual as well as volitional acts. If the note of *rationalitas* is found in man quite perfectly, still it is present only *secundum quid*. This note of *rationalitas* must be, therefore, found in the universal nature *simpliciter*. This paves the way for asserting that man, even in his own natural ontological state is a reflection of the eternal activities of intellection and volition in God. Much more importantly, man is an image of the divine Trinity. This is crucial for the doctrine of grace since a graced life is something supernatural (above the merely createdly natural) and participating in the divine nature as such and sharing in his triune personality.

Therefore, in whatever analogical sense *nature* is taken, its very definition, so it seems, is underscored as "the root of the properties and the radical principle of operations in any being."³⁹ The term [*natura*] has come to be applied being extensively to designate "the intrinsic principle of any movement whatsoever."⁴⁰

*As a principle of operations, the essence is called nature. A creature acts in one way (and not in some other way) precisely because it has being in some definite way, determined by its essence. Each nature, therefore, has a corresponding type of specific operations. Thinking and loving, for instance, are natural to man because they are operations which arise from human nature itself.*⁴¹

If such is the case, then, "by divine nature is meant the radical principle of the divine operations by which God sees Himself intuitively and loves Himself."⁴²

In fine, our preoccupation here revolves around *natura humana* not as something essentially and physically definable nor essentially and ontologically definable but as man in his concrete instance as an elevable person. Bearing this in mind, we will come to see graced participation in man to be an assimilation of *natura humana* (person) to the *natura divina* (as such and in its triune personality):

³⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, p.129.

⁴⁰ Spiazzi, R., O.P., *Natura e grazia: fondamento dell'antropologia cristiana secondo san Tommaso d'Aquino* (Bologna: Edizioni studio domenicano, 1991), p. 140.

⁴¹ Alvira, T. - Clavell, L. and Melendop, T. *Metaphysics*, trans. by L. Supan (Manila: Sinag-Tala Publishers, 1991), p. 90.

⁴² Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, p.129.

God creates a being who with his own resources of action can respond to him in knowledge and love. *Only a person can respond to a person; only personal love can answer to personal love.* The divine intention of entering into personal relations with a creature presupposes the reality of the creature's capability of love and action... Man is thus created as a personal incarnate spirit with his own proper natural consistency and with the fundamental capacities to know and to love. He exists as a being who is radically able by his personal actions to respond to the gift of divine love and grace.⁴³

2. A Theological Investigation of *Natura*

Although the heart of this section is to arrive at an understanding of *natura divina* relative to the triune personality of God, it seems incumbent, taking into account the formal aspect of the nature of sanctifying grace, to present briefly the theological states of *natura humana*, an important section in St. Thomas's treatise on grace. In other words, here our focus is on *natura humana* as "wounded." Effectively, without a discussion of this plight of *natura humana*, discourse about God's real invitation to man for a graced participation is unintelligible.⁴⁴

A. *The Theologically Discernable States of 'Natura Humana'*

The fount of St. Thomas's doctrine of the theological states of human nature is the Augustinian doctrine of the fall of man. The Thomistic doctrine of the theological states of *natura humana* is, however, a development beyond St. Augustine's doctrine of the fall of man.

The doctrine of the fall of man involves the entrance of original sin into the natural world of man. Due to this primordial sin, the actual state of man is gravely wounded and reduced from his originally graced state but he remains in his nature good.⁴⁵ From now onwards, a

⁴³ Stevens, Gregory, O.S.B., *The Life of Grace* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 69. Italization is mine.

⁴⁴ A particular study on this topic is W.M. Clune, *Human Nature after the Fall according to St. Thomas Aquinas*, (Roma: Ex. diss. Pont. Univer. Gregor., 1939).

⁴⁵ This is a patristic terminology St. Thomas uses occasionally. Cf. for instance *De ver.*, XXIV, a.10, obj.13.

difference between doing good and doing good meritoriously relative to eternal life is to be acknowledged.⁴⁶

A meritorious deed does not differ from an unmeritorious deed by reason of *what* is done but by reason of *how* it is done; for there is nothing which one man does meritoriously and from charity which another cannot do or even will without merit.⁴⁷

The presence or absence of charity as the motivation of any act is crucial.

Besides, because of his loss of supernatural status as a result of the fall, man is left with a wounded human nature and with intellective and appetitive faculties disordered. This involves the deviation of man's will from subservience to God to egocentric primacy. However, human nature, although wounded, has a natural knowledge and desire for God. Naturally, man can still attain to first principles. Man can desire and rest in what is naturally good.

In St. Thomas' *Summa theologiae*,⁴⁸ human nature is presented in two states relative to the economy of salvation: "First, in its intactness, as it was in our first progenitor before sin; secondly, as it is spoiled in us after the sin of our first progenitor."⁴⁹ In other words, due to original sin, there dawns a distinction between the previous state of integrity and original justice, and a subsequent state of the fallenness. However, it is a constant in Thomistic thought that in whatever state man's nature may be, divine assistance (*divinum auxilium*) or divine providence (*divina providentia*) is such that man can "be moved by it to act well"⁵⁰ whether naturally or supernaturally.

Now man most clearly needs *divinum auxilium* in order to will and to perform the supernatural good. The ability of man to reach the

⁴⁶ Cf. for example, *Sent.*, II, d.28, q.1, a.1, sol. & ad 1; *S.T.*, I-II, q.114, a.5, c.; *ibid.*, q.114, a.2, c. & ad 1.

⁴⁷ *De ver.*, XXIV, a.1, ad 2; *ibid.*, a.14, ad 2 and a.1, ad 6.

⁴⁸ We see here a doctrinal development of the necessity of sanctifying grace. In his commentary on the *Sententiae*, St. Thomas is constrained to follow the syllabus of Peter Lombard whose doctrine of the necessity of *gratia gratum faciens* lies within the doctrine of the fall of man. We no longer see the same scheme in the *Summa theologiae*.

⁴⁹ *S.T.* I-II, q.114, a.2, c.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* a.1, c.; a.6, c.; q.111, a.2, c.; q.112, a.2, c.

natural good is something different, but in the state of fallen nature man in fact falls short of reaching perfectly even the natural good by his unassisted capacity. This is because human nature after the fall, even though not totally deprived of the capacities proportionate to it, cannot in fact invariably use them perfectly.

To make the matter more intelligible, St. Thomas has recourse to the following analogy: "A sick man is capable of some movement by himself, yet he cannot move perfectly with the movement of a healthy man unless he is healed by the aid of medicine."⁶¹

The Thomistic theology of the states of human nature brings us to the following conclusions:

(1) There is need of divine motion or divine providence in both states. Grace as a superadded gift is offered both in the first and in the second state.⁶² Only with sanctifying grace is man able to perform acts meritorious relative to his supernatural calling. After the fall, grace is necessary even for the attainment of natural moral integrity.

(2) There is an insistence on the innate, natural goodness of human nature, whether in its integral or fallen state.

(3) There is a teleology proper to the natural and supernatural orders. In this respect, the ultimate truth or end, in the natural order, is God as the necessary being that accounts for existence of the whole contingent reality; in the supernatural, the ultimate truth or end is eternal life. Objectively this latter end is still God but now approached in his intimate divine nature as such. The subjective end which comes with the possession and enjoyment of God is happiness.

B. The Divine Nature and The Blessed Trinity⁶³

Natura said theologically of God is related to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. In turn the mystery of the three persons in the one

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 2, c.; *ibid.*, q. 109, a. 5, ad 3; *ibid.*, a. 7, ad 2 & ad 3.

⁶² Van Roo has his own way of nuancing the presence of grace in both states. In the first state, grace is a *donum naturae*, i.e., original justice as a gift to the whole human nature, and in the state of fallen nature, grace is more properly a *donum personale*, i.e., a purely personal gift. Cf. William A. van Roo, S.J., *Grace and Original Justice according to St. Thomas* (Roma: Apud aedes Univ. Gregorianae, 1955), p. 105.

⁶³ As far as this treatise is concerned, St. Thomas presents no major doctrinal development. However, as it is in the *Summa theologiae*, the treatise is replete with

divine nature is related to grace inasmuch as the participation in the divine life which it makes possible in man involves participation in the life of the three divine persons. This is commonly said to occur by reason of the indwelling in man of the persons of the Trinity.

Our intention is not to contribute any new proposal to the problem of divine inhabitation.⁵⁴ Our inquiry will enter into discussion of this mystery only as it is relevant to the formal definition of grace. The questions for us, therefore, are simply these: By reason of the *esse gratiae*, in what is man called to participate? In other words, more attuned to participatory language, what is it in the source (the *participatum*), i.e., the Blessed Trinity in which man (the *participans*) is called to partake? What is the *nota participata* in gracious participation?

In answer to these queries two investigations are set forth: how we come to know about the Blessed Trinity; and how we can understand the existence of three persons in one *natura divina*. For the latter investigation, the following questions are crucial: In what sense is God personal? How is the notion of "person" to be applied to the three divine persons? How do we understand that the activity *ad intra* of the Blessed Trinity as the source of eternal life?

1. Knowledge about the Blessed Trinity

Ratio naturalis stops at God's intelligibility insofar as he is the cause of all things. We know God philosophically via a knowledge of his creatures as his effect. We do not know God in philosophy as he is in his essence. Nor is God as three divine persons in one divine nature knowable in philosophy.⁵⁵ God in his singularity of nature is understood as a kind of being only in relation to his creatures and not in relation to his trinitarian personality.⁵⁶

references to the *De potentia*. It is worth noting that in the *De potentia*, St. Thomas deals with a disputed question on divine power. The whole discussion ends with a treatise on the Blessed Trinity, where the power of God lies, theologically speaking.

⁵⁴ For a survey of the problem surrounding the divine inhabitation cf. P. de Letter, S.J., "Sanctifying Grace and the Divine Indwelling," *Theological Studies*, Vol. 14 (1952), pp. 242-272.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Sent.*, I, d.3, q.1, a.4, c.; *De Ver.*, X, a.13, c.; *In Boet. de Trin.*, q.1, a.4; *S.C.G.*, IV, c.26. lec.6.

⁵⁶ Cf. *De ver.*, X, a.3, c.

As the mystery of the Trinity is a supernaturally revealed truth, a matter of faith, to comprehend⁵⁷ the Trinitarian God necessitates, St. Thomas affirms, a bestowal of a created light, an illumination of the power of human understanding.⁵⁸ This is a grace, more specifically, the light of grace.⁵⁹ Graciously disposed by God, man, St. Thomas affirms, is fit to apprehend in this life the fact of the three persons in the Trinity and then to initiate some search for traces of trinitarian similarities in created nature.

Theological and philosophical knowledge of God is possible in this earthly life, the first through the light of grace and the second, through the light of reason. Even so, as long as we are in this earthly sojourn, ours will always be an imperfect, intelligible possession of God's nature. It will not ascend to any proper grasp of God's essence. As the natural light of reason presupposes *esse naturae*, so in like fashion, the supernatural light of grace presupposes its own proper foundation, *esse gratiae*, which is brought about by sanctifying grace.

2. *The Reality of the Blessed Trinity*⁶⁰

Our investigation will attempt an initial understanding of the reality of the Blessed Trinity as St. Thomas teaches. Without being

⁵⁷ "To comprehend can mean two things. Strictly and properly it means to contain something, and in this sense God cannot be comprehended either by the mind or by anything else. The infinite cannot be contained in the finite; God exists infinitely and nothing finite could grasp him infinitely. In a broader sense, however, comprehending is the opposite of letting something slip: anyone who attains anything, when he lays hold on it could be said to comprehend it. It is in this sense that God is comprehended by the blessed." *S.T.*, I, q.12, a.7, ad 1.

⁵⁸ "Hence there must be some disposition given to the understanding beyond its own nature so that it can be raised to such sublimity. Since... the natural power of the intellect is not sufficient to see the essence of God, this power of understanding must come to it by divine grace. This increase in the power of understanding we call *illumination* of the mind, as also we speak of the intelligible form as *light*... By this light we are made *deiform*, that is, like to God..." *S.T.*, q.12, a.5, ad 1.

⁵⁹ Hence, "the function of created light is not to make the essence of God intelligible, for it is intelligible itself; its purpose is to strengthen our minds in understanding, rather as a skill increases the effectiveness of any of our powers." (*S.T.*, q.12, a.5, ad 1). It is rather to perfect the medium by which God is comprehended. Cf. *Ibid*, ad 2.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, I, qq. 27-43; *De pot.*, IX & X; *S.C.G.*, IV, cc.1-3; 11-14; 26; *Sent.*, I, dd.4, 5-18.

excessively technical about this mystery, for that is not the point here, our study will be guided simply by this single inquiry: In what does the *nota participata*—in which man is invited to participate in the intimacy of the triune God— consist?

a. God is Personal⁶¹

Adopting the Boethian definition of person —“an individual substance of rational nature”—, St. Thomas asserts that the word “person” is a special name⁶² to denote a special kind of individual who belongs to the genus of substance⁶³ differentiated as rational. Personal existence involves

first, the generic and specific nature existing in the individual [i.e., the essential principle]; second, such a nature’s mode of existence, inasmuch as the generic and specific nature in the individual substance exists as proper to that individual and not as common to many [i.e., the principle of individuation]; third, the principle whence arises this mode of existence [the principle of subsistence].⁶⁴

In other words, the mode of existence that a person exhibits is that of “a thing” which “exists by itself.”⁶⁵ And “inasmuch as it exists in itself and not in another, we call it ‘subsistence,’ for we say that those entities subsist which exist, not in something else, but in themselves.”⁶⁶ An individual subject subsisting with an intellectual nature is a type of a *suppositum*. It is a *suppositum* which possesses a spiritual nature.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.29, aa.1,2 & 3; *ibid.*, I, q.34, a.3, ad 1; *ibid.*, III, q.2, a.2, c.; *De pot.*, IX, aa.2 & 3; *Sent.*, I, d.25, d.1, q.1, aa.1 & 2; *ibid.*, I, d.23, q.1, aa.1-3. That God is a person, St. Thomas confesses, is not a biblical assertion. Notwithstanding, there are some biblical indicator-words expressing what the word *person* signifies. See *S.T.*, q.29, a.3, ad 1.

⁶² See *De pot.*, IX, a.2, c.

⁶³ Any individual in the genus of substance is called in Greek *hypostasis* and in Latin *first substance*. Hence, a person is a *hypostasis* (a singular being in the category of substance) among rational substances. Cf. *Ibid.*, IX, q. 9, a.2, c; *S.T.*, I, q.29, a.1, c.; *Sent.*, I, d.23, q.1, a.1, c.

⁶⁴ *De pot.* IX, a.2 ad 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, IX, a.3, c. Cf. also *ibid.*, a.2, ad 8.

⁶⁶ *S.T.*, I, q.29, a.2, c.

⁶⁷ Cf. Alvira, Tomas et al., *Metaphysics*, p. 123.

Elsewhere, St. Thomas recasts the definition of *person* to suit it for applicability to God. First, he prefers in the definition the word "intellectual" to the word "rational."⁶⁸ Second, being analogical by nature, when applied to God something of the creaturely in the *modus significandi* of the word "person" has to be dropped.⁶⁹ St. Thomas proceeds:

We can say that God has a rational nature if reason be taken to imply, not the process of thought, but in a general sense an intelligent nature. God cannot be called an "individual" in the sense that this implies matter which is the principle of individuation, but only in the sense of incommunicability. Finally, "substance if can be applied to God inasmuch as it refers to selfgrounded existence (*quod significat existere per se*).⁷⁰

When all is said and done, what should be retained as appropriate to God in that which is signified by the term "person" is "that which subsists in an intellectual nature..."⁷¹ "Nevertheless it is not used in exactly the same sense of God as of creatures but in a higher sense..."⁷²

To come to the point, from the material standpoint, God, as personal must carry on the two immanent and spiritual activities of knowing and willing in the most eminent and proper degree.⁷³ This does

⁶⁸ "...Boethius takes *rational* in a broad sense for *intellectual*, and this is common to man, angels and God." *De pot.*, IX, a.2, ad 10. Cf. also *S.T.*, q.29, a.3, ad 4; *ibid.*, a.4, ad 4; *Sent.*, I, d.23, q.1, a.2, ad 1.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Sent.*, I, d.25, q.1, a.2, c.

⁷⁰ *S.T.*, I, q.29, a.3, ad 4. Moreover, the word *essence* refers to the definition of what a thing is, but a definition only supplies us with a specific principle whereas the words *hypostasis* and *person* both add to the idea of *essence* individual principles, which in hylomorphic realities are not identical with the essence. Cf. *Ibid.* a.2, ad 3.

⁷¹ *De pot.*, IX, a.3, ad 1. Cf. also *Sent.*, I, d.23, q.1, aa.2 & 4, c.

⁷² *S.T.*, I, q.29, a.3, c. Cf. also *ibid.*, a.1, c.; q.39, a.5, ad 1; q.40, a.1, ad 3; q.57, a.2, c. In this connection, the word *nature* is preferred rather than the word *esse*: "Nature designates the source of an act, whereas *essence* comes from *essendo* (being). This is why about things having some act in common we can say that they are of one nature, but we cannot say about things not having one *esse* that they are of one essence. Thus the wording accepted better brings out the divine unity than the alternative proposed." *Ibid.*, I, q.39, a.1, ad 3.

⁷³ If the term "person" is predicated of man and angels because of their nobler way of sharing in the act of being made possible by the higher degree of their nature which receives *esse*, and, therefore, is capacitated to perform acts of knowing and

not at all demonstrate that God is three persons but it provides a basis according to which by analogy one can try to understand that the divine nature is, in fact, three persons.

b. *The Application of the Notion of Person to the Divine Persons*

What is the meaning of the Aristotelian category of *relatio*⁷⁴ and how does this notion apply to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as they are three distinct persons in one divine nature?⁷⁵ In this section, we limit our investigation to “real relation.”

There is something unique about this category. As any accident, it inheres in a substance (*esse in*)⁷⁶ but it makes the substance ‘get out of itself’, so to speak, in order to tend towards another.⁷⁷ The specific character (*ratio propria*), by which this term may be understood, according to St. Thomas, “consists in its being toward-another (*in eo quod est ad alterum*).”⁷⁸ Its *ratio propria* is *ad aliud*, “having a respect to something extraneous.”⁷⁹ The proper note of *relatio* is its “towardness” or “to be with respect to” (*esse ad aliud* or *essè ad*).

loving, then the term “person” is predicated of God in the most eminent and proper way since he is the source and cause of the “spiritualness” of both human and angelic natures.

⁷⁴ The concept of *relatio* for St. Thomas is the only possible principle of distinctness in God and “the smallest possible real distinctness.” Cf. *Sent.*, I, d.26, q.2, a.2, c. & ad 2.

⁷⁵ For a sketchy, historical presentation of the notion of *relatio*, see A. Krempel, *La Doctrine de la relation chez Saint Thomas* (Paris: Vrin, 1952).

⁷⁶ Because by itself it is a sheer “reference to,” *relatio* is “the most unsubstantial sort of being.” Therefore, the Aquinate calls *relatio* the weakest of all categories (*debilissimum esse*). Cf. *In phys.*, III, lec. 1, n.6; *De pot.* VII, a.9, c.

⁷⁷ Alvira, Tomas, *Metaphysics*, p.67.

⁷⁸ Cf. *S.C.G.*, IV, c.14. Other terms used by St. Thomas to convey this basic characterization of *relatio* are the verb *referre*, cf., e.g., *Sent.*, I, d.26, q.2, a.1, sol.; *ibid.*, d.8, q.4, a.3, sol.; *habitus*, cf., e.g., *S.T.*, I, q.13, a.7, c.; *De pot.*, VII, a.8, ad 4; *ordo*, (the term used often to convey real relations) cf., e.g., *De pot.*, VII, a.11, c.; *ibid.*, VII, a.10, c.; *ordinatio*, cf., e.g., *S.T.*, I, q.108, a.2, ad 1; *Sent.*, II, d.9, q.1, a.1, ad 2; *comparatio*, cf., e.g., *S.T.*, I, q.28, a.2, c.; *ibid.*, q.28, aa.3 & 4, c. For their respective elucidations, cf. Robert W. Schmidt, S.J., *The Domain of Logic according to St. Thomas Aquinas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966) pp. 134-140.

⁷⁹ *De pot.*, VIII, a.2, c. Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.28, a.1, c. For other passages where *relatio* is rendered synonymous with *respectum*, cf. *Sent.*, I, d.23, q.1, a.1; *De ver.*, IV, a.5, c.

The *ratio* of towardness indicates that "two things stand in relative opposition to each other."⁸⁰ From this particular standpoint, we can further describe *relatio* as properly "of something to something."⁸¹ The following are the fundamental elements that constitute a real relation:

(1) "Of something" refers to the subject from which the relation ensues, and "to something" alludes to the term, that in which the relation ends;

(2) This "to something" requires the subject's correlative. Without this correlative term, the whole *ratio propria* of *relatio* is destroyed.

(3) Aquinas further points out that "relation is founded on something as on a cause."⁸² This root, cause, or basis is technically called its foundation (*fundamentum*). By it is understood "the reason on account of which the subject bears a relation to its term,"⁸³ taken as something absolute in the sense of being definite, intelligible and referring to both terms of reference. This bears out the point that the proximate foundation of a relation must be an accident.⁸⁴ Seen from this point of view, St. Thomas speaks with constancy of three principal accidents performing this role: *quantity*, *action* and *passion*.⁸⁵

(4) The opposition or contrast between the subject and its correlative term "implies a distinction."⁸⁶ In this respect, relation is called a principle of distinction. Accordingly, the criteria for a real relation must include the following elements: the subject, the term, the foundation, and the distinction between the two *termini*.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ *S.T.*, I, q.28, a.4, c. Cf. also *Sent.*, I, d.30, q.1, a.1, sol.; d.26, q.2, a.3, ad 4.

⁸¹ Schmidt, *The Domain of Logic*, p. 138.

⁸² See *Sent.*, IV, d.27, q.1, a.1, sol.

⁸³ William J. Kane, "The Philosophy of Relation in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas," An Abstract of a Dissertation, for the Catholic University of America, *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 179, Abstract No. 30 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958), p.17. See also his article, "A Problem of Relation in Some Non-Scholastic Philosophies," *Modern Schoolman*, Vol. 32 (1946), pp. 61-81.

⁸⁴ Cf. Kane, W., *The Philosophy of Relation*, p.17. The remote fundamentum, of course, is always substance.

⁸⁵ Smidt, on some textual evidence, states that the two-foundation doctrine is more tenable. Cf. his argument in *The Domain of Logic*, pp. 140-150.

⁸⁶ *S.T.*, I, q.28, a.4, c.

⁸⁷ For further elaboration on this topic cf. Owens, J., CSSR, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 180-190.

Relatio is admitted into the description of the Trinitarian mystery by Aquinas in order to explicate the concept of distinctness (having to do with the three persons) within one nature (having to do with the one God). This being the case, creaturely elements in the *modus significandi* of *relatio* must be removed. First, the “accidentalness” of *relatio* must be dropped, for in God, most obviously, no accidental realities exist; however, its *ratio propria*, i.e. its towardness (its *esse ad*) perfectly applies to God since no idea connotative of creaturely imperfection is found therein. Second, any idea suggestive of causality of one person by another or by others must be excluded. Third, as far as the foundation is concerned, no accidental foundation can be found in the relation of the three, divine persons.

Now there is real relation in God’s trinitarian personality, namely, the Father and Son relationship, and the Father-Son and Holy Spirit relationship. If there is real relation in God, it follows that there is real opposition. Concomitant with opposition is a real distinction.

In the trinitarian paradox of relation, the word “procession” is crucial.⁸⁸ That there are only two processions in God is borne out by the fact that in God there can only be two immanent operations: intellectual and volitional.⁸⁹

Just as what “the intellect conceives is the likeness of what is understood.”⁹⁰ So, the Word or the Son proceeds from the Father in an absolute likeness, a numerical identity of nature. In the same passage, St. Thomas adds another parallelism in order to bring home the point that such an activity is vital. The Son proceeds from the Father in a way that is analogous to a human Father giving birth to a Son whose exact living likeness he is. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as the self-love of both spirates the absolutely exact goodness of the

⁸⁸ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.28, a.1, c. The notion of procession is indigenous to the concept of principle. A principle is that from which something proceeds in any way whatsoever (see *S.T.*, I, q. 33, a. 1, c.). Now, as ever, any creaturely imperfections found in the *modus significandi* of a word has to be eliminated because of the Trinity. In the case of the word principle, what must not be admitted to the Trinitarian mystery is the notion of causality (see *ibid.*, I, q. 33, a. 1, ad 1); the notion of priority and the notion of productive duration (see *ibid.*, I, q. 33, a. 1, ad 3; *ibid.*, q. 27, aa. 1 & 2, c. & ad 3). What is left is the *res significata* contained in the idea of origin or birth (*origo*). The *ratio* of origin, just like principle, indicates simply that “something is to another.”

⁸⁹ See *S.T.*, I, q.27, a.3, c. & ad 3; *ibid.*, q.27, a.5, c.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, a.2, c.

beloved. In both instances, one proceeds from another as from a principle of origin⁹¹ and not of cause. Since the activity is infinitely immanent, the correlative terms of each procession indeed remains simply in the same nature, God.

The three persons are co-equally and co-substantially God, and, therefore, are absolutely one in nature. Still, although they have really one act of intellect and one act of will, a certain order is perceptible. This is for two reasons:

Though in God will and intellect are the same, nevertheless because the very meaning of love implies an issuing from what the mind conceives, the procession of Love in Him is distinct by its connection with the procession of the Word.⁹²

The procession by way of willing is not generational like that of the procession by way of understanding since the former is a movement of assimilation while the latter is movement of tendency. If the procession issuing in the Father-Son opposition⁹³ is called generation, the other issuing in the Father, Son-Holy Spirit opposition⁹⁴ is called common spiration or simply, spiration.⁹⁵

⁹¹ "Origin implies 'being the source of another' and 'coming from another,'" St. Thomas says (*S.T.*, I, q.32, a.3, c). "Procession in Trinitarian theology then means 'being from someone as from the source of origin.'" See Appendix 5 of Vol. 6 of the Blackfriars's translation of the *Summa theologiae*, p. 137.

⁹² *S.T.*, I, q.27, a.3, ad 3. Cf. also *ibid.*, I, q.30, a.2, c.; *ibid.*, q.80 a.2, c. & ad 1; *De pot.*, X, a.2, ad 7; *ibid.*, IX, a. 9, ad 3. Elsewhere, St. Thomas makes this order the particular basis of his theological argument that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son. Cf. for example, *S.T.*, I, q.36, a.2, c.; *ibid.*, I, q.27, a.4, c.; *S.C.G.*, IV, cc. 24 & 25.

⁹³ In the Father-Son opposition, the name *Father* refers to the person whose relation is *fatherhood*. As opposed to the Son, he is the unbegotten (*ingenitus*), "the principle not from a principle" (*principium non de principio*). The Son, in its relation *generation*, is the begotten (*genitus*), "the principle from a principle" (*principium a principio*). Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.33, a.4, c and ad 2-5; *Sent.*, I, d.13, q.4; *ibid.*, d.28, q.1, a.1, c.

⁹⁴ In the Father, Son-Holy Spirit opposition, the *Father* refers to the person whose divine relation is common spiration; so also the Son. See *S.T.*, I, q.32, a.3, c. The name "Holy Spirit," although not a relational term nonetheless implies the person "who is spirated." Since no divine person proceeds from him, He alone proceeds from Father and Son as a principle. He is known through procession, or more specifically he is called the "one who proceeds by way of love." Since in relation to the Holy Spirit, no relative opposition exists except a common spiration, the Father-Son are, therefore, the one principle. Cf. *ibid.*, I, q.36, a.4, c.; *Sent.*, I, d.11, qq.2 & 4; *S.C.G.*, IV, c.25.

⁹⁵ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.27, a.4, c.

Two immanent, spiritual operations found two processions in the triune God: generation and spiration. Two processions found four real, distinct relations, two for each type:⁹⁶ the relation of Father-Son and the relation of Son-Father, for generation; the relation from Father-Son to the Holy Spirit and the relation from the Holy Spirit to the Father-Son, for spiration.⁹⁷

Therefore, distinction in God arises only through the relation of origin. Each divine person is distinct from each other, not from the divine nature but because of distinct divine relations. Each is subsistent because of its identity with the *ipsum esse subsistens*. If each relation is subsistent due to its identification with the *ipsum esse subsistens*, consequently “just as Godhead is God, so God’s fatherhood is God the Father who is a divine person. Hence ‘divine person’ signifies relation as something subsisting. That is, “as substance which is a hypostasis subsisting in the divine nature, though what is subsisting in the divine nature is nothing other than the divine nature. And in this sense it is true that “person” signifies relation directly and nature indirectly, yet relation is signified, not as relation, but as hypostasis.”⁹⁸

Therefore, what constitutes the distinction in each divine person is a relation, but relation *qua* relation does not constitute each divine person as subsistent. This insistence is clearly indicated, for instance, by the following passage:

Although the divine relations constitute the hypostases [i.e., persons] and thus make them subsistent, they do this inasmuch as they are the divine essence: because a relation as such neither has nor can give subsistence, for this belongs to a substance alone. On the other hand the relations as such distinguish, for it is as such that they are mutually opposed.⁹⁹

In the sequence of thought, divine nature —fatherhood-God the Father— person, we can see that person signifies relation and that

⁹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, I, q.28, a.4, c.

⁹⁷ Kane argues that “although there are four real relations, there are only three opposed real relations and hence only three persons, for there is distinction only where there is opposition, and the third relation (active spiration), while it is opposed to the fourth (passive spiration), is not really opposed to and hence not really distinct from the first two. Cf. Kane, *The Philosophy of Relation*, p. 32.

⁹⁸ *S.T.*, I, q.29, a.4, c.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, q.8, a.3, ad 7. Cf. also *Ibid.*, I, q.40, aa.2 & 3; *De pot.*, VIII, a.3, ad 5.

fatherhood signifies relation directly and nature indirectly. Nonetheless, relation is signified not *qua* relation, but as *hypostasis*, i.e., the word "Father," that which is related or "what is distinct through a relation" is subsistent. In like manner, the word "person" here signifies also divine nature directly and relation indirectly since nature and *hypostasis* in the Trinity are one.

c. The *Natura Divina* as the Source of Eternal Life

As noted already, the divine power is God's essence or nature. We say, however, that essence is conceptually the principle of power in God. In God, this power includes his two immanent, spiritual operations: divine knowing or understanding and divine willing.

Every relation in the Trinity is expressible through some characteristic acts:¹⁰⁰ for example, from generation comes to beget and to be begotten; from spiration, to spirate and to be spirated.¹⁰¹ A characteristic act differs from a person's relation only in its *modus significandi*.¹⁰² Since there exist these *actus notionales*, there must be some power corresponding to them since "power" precisely means 'principle of,' required for any sort of act."¹⁰³ The meaning of power to beget is that by which the begetter acts, for he does act in virtue of something. It is thus that in any begetter we must acknowledge his power to beget. Where does this power reside? In the person, St. Thomas maintains, not as he is indicated by his respective relation but precisely as identified with the divine nature—God:

¹⁰⁰ "The basis for distinctness within the Godhead is origin. Now the only accurate way to bring out the meaning of origin is through certain types of acts. Thus to indicate what the pattern of origin among the divine person is there was need to ascribe characteristic acts to them." *S.T.*, I, q.41, a.1, c. Hence the acts designating the acts expressing the order of this origin are called notional because the notions of persons are relations of persons to each other: (*Unde actus designantes hujus originis ordinem notionales dicuntur, quia notiones personarum sunt personarum habitudines ad invicem*). *Ibid.*, ad 2.

¹⁰¹ *To be begotten* and *to be spirated* bring immediately to mind a person being acted upon and, therefore, properly speaking, these phrases imply passion instead of action. Nonetheless, St. Thomas insists that the Son and so also the Holy Spirit, is equal in power with the Father in the sense that each person, the Son and the Holy Spirit has the power "as the one who receives." Cf. *Ibid.*, I, q.42, a.6, ad 3.

¹⁰² Cf. *Ibid.*, I, q.41, a.1, ad 2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, a.4, c.

Rather he [the Father] begets, by the divine nature, wherein the Son is his likeness; in this vein the Damascene teaches that *begetting is the work of the nature*, not as that which, but as that by which a progenitor begets. Thus in *potentia generandi* (the power of begetting) the nominative word (*potentia*) expresses essence, the genitive word (*generandi*) relation.¹⁰⁴

Within this framework of power we inquire: Where does the designation of life fall?

St. Thomas ascribes to life to those who have, properly speaking, the principle of self-motion in them. He states:

To live is attributed to some beings because they are seen to move themselves,... For, in a proper sense, those things move through themselves that move themselves, being composed of a mover and something moved, for example, animate things.¹⁰⁵

Now, an animate, living thing just as any other composite creature, is composed of form and matter. A composite is a hierarchized creature. This alludes to the hierarchy of being. A composite creature is, thus, ontologically situated in the scale depending on a participation of *esse magis vel minus*. The more a creature has of *esse*, the nearer it is to *ipsum esse subsistens*, and the greater its likeness to the supreme exemplar.

To exist more perfectly means that the being in question participates more in the act of existence, shows forth more perfectly the characteristics of Pure Act who is simple, identically himself, absolutely one. The essence of material things, purely material things, manifest these characteristics very dimly since the energy of the form is absorbed in matter, merely trying to exist. But if we ascend to a high grade of essence where the grip of matter is not so strong, where the form not merely informs but manifests itself strictly as form, then we have a greater participation in existence. To exist in such an essence is not merely to exist but to receive the special title, 'to live'.¹⁰⁶

"To live" has degrees depending on how the existence of an individual approaches pure act or sheer existence. The nearer the

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, a.5, c.

¹⁰⁵ *S.C.G.*, I, c.97.

¹⁰⁶ Brady, *Grace, A Continuation of Creation*, p. 25.

individual is to this pure actuality, the more intense the manifestation of its "to live." No other visible creature manifests this life so intensely as man, the apex of God's pyramidal visible creation, established as such in his note of intellectuality. He is thereby the most perfect of all visible creatures, both non-living and living. He is aptly called a person. Man, by his knowing and willing, is an epitome of the reflection¹⁰⁷ of the infinite activity of pure act:

In a being completely identical with itself, present to itself in the perfect identity of pure act, there is necessarily knowledge which is precisely the identity of being with itself - thought of thought and present to itself in the full identity of perfect knowledge. There must also be that affirmation of self which is the fundamental meaning of volition.¹⁰⁸

If the note of intellectuality makes man the most exalted, visible creature, it must be the same note that makes God to be what He is, that is, divine wisdom, absolute simplicity, pure act, the utter expression of "to live" or, most fittingly, life itself:

Now, "to live is for the living their very being,"... for, since an animal is said to be living because it has a soul, through which it has being as through its proper form, it follows that *to live* is nothing other than *such* a being arising from *such* a form. But God is His own being,... Therefore, He is His own act of living and His own life.¹⁰⁹

When we speak of life in the Trinity, it is the processions expressible in the eternal acts of knowing and loving: "That Being, then, whose

¹⁰⁷ Although these activities are immanent, they are so not to the highest degree, because man still is determined by first principles which are supplied to him by nature itself and the ultimate end which is outside him. Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.18, a.3, c.

¹⁰⁸ O'Mahony, J., *The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1929), p. 83.

¹⁰⁹ *S.C.G.*, I, c.98. In the *Summa theologiae*, St. Thomas gives two senses of 'to live': one, primary, and the other, secondary: "The word [life] is applied to things because of something in their external appearance, namely self-movement; nevertheless it is not applied to indicate precisely that, but rather the substance which of its nature has the power of moving itself or giving itself any kind of impulse to activity. In the latter sense 'to live' means simply to exist in such a nature; and 'life' means the same but in the abstract... Hence 'living' is not an accidental predicate but a substantial one. Yet sometimes 'life' is taken in the less proper sense to mean the activities of life, from which things are said to have life; thus Aristotle says that *to live* is primarily *to have sensation and understanding.*" *S.T.*, I, q.18, a.2, c.

own nature is its act of knowledge,... is the Being which has life in the highest degree. Such being is God."¹¹⁰ So, too "God wills the good of each thing according as it is the good of each thing; for He wills each thing to be according as it is in itself good... God, then, truly loves Himself and other things."¹¹¹ God's loving himself and loving others, two perspectives of divine immanence, are reflected, to some extent, as a capacity in all creatures in virtue of their being likenesses of God. There is "a capacity varying with the different levels of perfection in creatures; a capacity for unity with itself in the creature which is, in some way, linked to a capacity for becoming all things."¹¹² Ultimately, as gathered from the arguments above, willing compared to knowing is more active and dynamic since the will executes what the intellect legislates.¹¹³ From this viewpoint, "eternal life" is "love everlasting."

We have been discoursing the source of eternal life from the viewpoint of the singularity of *natura divina*. This urges us, for a better grasp and appreciation of the mystery, to develop the trinitarian activities *ad intra* in the line of appropriation. The trinitarian life, indeed, revolves around the eternal and immanent activities of the procession of the Word and the procession of the Holy Spirit.

d. The Trinitarian Processions as the Expressions of the Trinitarian Activities *Ad Intra*

If man is called to a participation in the *natura divina*, it is in these immanent, intellectual-volitional activities of the Trinity that man shares, exemplified under the aegis of appropriation, by the procession of Word and the procession of Love. For Moretti, the motivation of assigning a characteristic operation to one or other of the divine persons is along the line of exemplarity and likeness.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *S.T.*, I, q.18, a.3, c.

¹¹¹ *S.C.G.*, I, c.91. Although in reality, God's self-love is the same as his loving others, conceptually a subtle distinction can be made.

¹¹² Brady, *Grace: A Continuation of Creation*, p. 14.

¹¹³ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.19, a.4, c. and ad 4; I, q.20, a.1, ad 4; q.37, aa.1-2; *De pot.*, IX, a.9, ad 13; *Comp. theol.*, I, c.46; *Sent.* I, d.10, q.1, ad 4; d.32, q.1, aa.1-3; d.27, q.2, a.2, ii.

¹¹⁴ "The Thomistic formula insists, first of all, on the line of *exemplarity* and likeness. [This insistence] then is the motivation of a typical, operative relation, on which the dynamic presence of the Persons is conserved." Moretti, R., O.C.D., "Trinità e vita soprannaturale nella sintesi di san Tommaso," in AA.VV., *Studi tomistiche 2: San Tommaso e l'odierna problematica teologica* (Roma: Pont.A.S.Tommaso, [n.a.], p.256.

(1) The Meaning of the Term "Word"

The term "Word" is a personal and concrete name. Thus, "that which is signified" (*res significata*) by these terms is not immediately the divine essence or nature but the person concerned. The "Word" is predicated of God properly, not essentially but personally.

As insinuated above, to explain the reality of the Son, St. Thomas presents two analogical models, i.e. the analogy of birth or generation to indicate generation simply as proceeding from another as from an origin; and the psychological model of intellection. Thus, Aquinas supplements the idea of transmitting something with the idea of an operation that terminates within or remains immanent.

The consequence of this conjoint procedure—in the context of the first procession—is the convertibility of the terms "Word" and "Son." The *Word* is the *Son* in point of proceeding from another as from an origin; the *Son* is the *Word* "for the coming forth [of the Word] is like that in the mind's action, which is a vital activity,"¹¹⁵ and "like an idea which stays inside oneself."¹¹⁶

The copula *is* [in the proposition "The Son *is* the Word"] signifies that the term *Word* is equal in scope with the term *Son* and, therefore, that the terms *Word* and *Son* are identical in reference. The *res significata* of either term, *Word* or *Son* is *God* by nature. The nature of the *Word* then is identical with that of the *Father* since both are of one nature, i.e., *God*:¹¹⁷ "In *God* because He understands Himself, the intellect, the thing understood, and the intention understood are all identical."¹¹⁸ *Word*, then, besides being a personal term is a most real, signification of a *person*.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ *S.T.*, I, q.27, a.2, c.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, q.27, a.1, c. "In the divinity 'Word' as a literal term refers to a person and is a name proper to the Son. The reason: a word denotes a kind of coming forth from the mind; but in the godhead the person proceeding on the basis of an emanation of mind [*secundum rationem intellectus*] is called the Son, and... such a procession is a begetting. Therefore it must be that in the divinity the Son alone properly has 'Word' as his name." *S.T.*, I, q.34, a.2, c.

¹¹⁷ For a more elaborate distinction between human understanding and Divine knowing, cf. particularly *De pot.*, IX, a.5, c.

¹¹⁸ *S.C.G.*, IV, c.11.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.42, aa.1-6.

Elsewhere, St. Thomas precises that the term "word" applies to the Son in that which is its "first and root sense."¹²⁰ He calls it "the mind's inner concept (*interior mentis conceptus verbum*)."¹²¹ "The essence of the inner concept [is] that it proceeds from something other, namely from the knowing of the one who conceives it."¹²² Finally St. Thomas concludes:

"Word", then, used literally of the godhead, means one proceeding from another and that enters the meaning of personal names in the godhead,... Necessarily, therefore, the name 'Word' as applying literally in the godhead refers, not to the essence, but exclusively to a person.¹²³

The Word, then, is predicated most properly and personally of the Son, the correlative term of the subject-term, Father.

(2) *The Word as Exemplar Primus*

On reflection, through the psychological model of intellection, St. Thomas wishes to show that the Word is the *exemplar primus* of all that is in creation by way of appropriation. This seems to be in congruence with his thinking in his treatise *De nominibus Dei* where the analogy of *unius ad alterum* is decisive.

We recall that "God understands both Himself and other things. His act of understanding is the principle of things understood by Him since they are caused by His intellect and Will."¹²⁴ This consists in the fact that "things other than himself he sees not in themselves but in himself, because his essence contains the likeness of things other than himself."¹²⁵

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* q.34, a.2, c.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, q.24, a.1 c. The reason behind this allegation is set in place in *S.C.G.* IV, 11 in the following words: "The Word of God is, therefore, compared to God understanding (whose Word He is) as to Him from whom He is, for this is essential to a word. Therefore, although in God the one understanding, the act of understanding, and the intention understood, or Word, are by essence one, and although for this reason each is necessarily God, there remains the distinction of relation alone, in so far as the Word is related to the one who conceives as to Him from whom He is."

¹²⁴ *S.C.G.*, IV, c.11.

¹²⁵ *S.T.*, I, q.14, a.5, c. Cf. also aa.1-4; 6; 8-9.

Now with the dawning of divine self-revelation, one knows that the self-knowledge of God is the principle of activity *ad intra*, of the *Word proceeding*. For all God's "production," the proceeding of the Word from the Father is the exemplar or prototype. Aquinas argues:

But His act of understanding is referred to the intelligible which He Himself is as to a beginning, for this intelligible is identified with the intellect understanding, whose emanation, so to say, is the Word conceived. Therefore, the Word of God must be referred to the other things understood by God as *exemplar*,...¹²⁶

In the light of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity which supersedes that of the philosophical God, by appropriation, all things are said by appropriation to be created, thus, through the Word.¹²⁷ The Word expresses the Father cognitively; but in relation to creatures, the Word, the cognitive expression of the Father, becomes his causing expression.¹²⁸ Now since the Word is the subsistent nature of God, ever active and eternal in its causative power, the Word is the well-spring of life: "The intellection of the Word is His act of existence, and so is the likenesses of things He possesses. Therefore, a likeness of a creature existing in the Word is also His life."¹²⁹ This is the "first degree of participated likeness"¹³⁰ in the Word:

This is comparable to the likeness which exists between the finished house and the architect's mental concept; that is to say, a likeness of form; the form, however, is realized in the house in nonintellectual fashion while it exists intellectually in the architect's mind. In this way every creature is like the eternal Word since it is through the Word that it has been made.¹³¹

The second degree of participation in the Word as the *exemplar primus* is set forth in the following affirmation:

In intellectual substances which are the most noble creatures there is also procession according to the operations of the intellect

¹²⁶ S.C.G., IV, c.11. Cf. also S.T., I, q.39, a.8, c.

¹²⁷ Cf. *De ver.*, IV, a.4, c.

¹²⁸ Cf. S.T., I, q.34, a.3, c. Also q.39, a.8, c.; q.33, a.3, ad 1; *De ver.*, IV, a.4, ad 2; a.8, ad 4.

¹²⁹ *De ver.*, IV, a.8, c.

¹³⁰ S.T., III, q.23, a.3, ad 1.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, III, q.23, a.3, c.

and will: and in this respect the image of the Trinity is in them. In them, however, word and love are not subsistent persons, because their understanding and willing are not their substance, and this is proper to God...¹³²

In this particular standpoint, the Word is a *exemplar primus* in the sense that any creaturely word by man, the *imago Dei*, should share in the truth (i.e., an intellectual form) of the Divine Word who is Truth Himself, God.¹³³

Now, since a similarity between creation (*esse naturae*) and re-creation (*esse gratiae*) exists,¹³⁴ the Word in its recreative power, is also the *exemplar primus*. Of course, the similarity this time is limited to man, the only *imago Dei*: "The term 'sonship' applies to the creature to the degree that it shares something of a likeness to the Son or the Father."¹³⁵ Likewise, as the internal word of man's intellect proceeds from the human *supposit*, so the divine Word proceeds from the Father.

(3) The Meaning of the Term "Love"

The same argument applies, but for different reasons, in the case of the Holy Spirit. The personal term "Love," under the aspect of the term "Gift," a revealed notion appropriated to the Holy Spirit, sheds more light on the reality of grace.

Unlike the Son, the Holy Spirit is not to be considered a natural Son of the Father since its procession is not that of generation.¹³⁶ To maintain that the Holy Spirit proceeds by generation nullifies the reality of the Trinity and of Revelation.¹³⁷

¹³² *De pot.*, X, a.1, ad 5.

¹³³ This second sense of being an *exemplar primus* is well explained by St. Thomas in the following manner: "Secondly, creatures may possess a likeness to the Word which is not simply formal but attains as well the intellectuality possessed by the form in the Word. This is comparable to the likeness which exists between the knowledge gained by a student and the ideas existing in his teacher's mind. It is in this way that the rational creature, simply because of the nature which he possesses, is like the Word of God." *S.T.*, III, q.23, a.3, c.

¹³⁴ Cf. *Sent.* I, d.17, q.1, ad 3.

¹³⁵ *S.T.*, I, q.33, a.3, ad 1. Cf. also *ibid.*, a.3, c; q.27, a.4, c; *S.C.G.*, IV, c.19.

¹³⁶ Cf. *S.C.G.*, IV, c.19. Also *S.T.*, I, q.27, a.4, c.

¹³⁷ "Since the Father and Son are subsistent persons and of the divine nature, the Holy Spirit would not be numbered along with them unless He also were a person

We have shown above that the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father and from the Son on the grounds of a particular relation, i.e., of spiration.¹³⁸

Now, although the name *Holy Spirit* is not a relational term like the Son, it implies a person "who is spirated." Since no divine person proceeds from Him, He alone proceeds from the Father-Son as a principle. His procession is specifically called that which proceeds by way of love.¹³⁹

Whereas the Word is thought of analogically according to intellectual operation, the spiration of the Holy Spirit is patterned after volitional operation. Thus, while the object of the intellect is truth—or wisdom—and its operation is assimilative, the object of the will is the good, and its operation is that of tending towards the desired good impelled by love: "To be affected toward something—so far as it is of this kind—is to love that thing. Therefore, every inclination of will... has its origin from love."¹⁴⁰ If then to the Word is appropriated the term "Wisdom," to the Holy Spirit is appropriated the term *Goodness*: "Goodness, because it is the motive and object of love, accords with the Holy Spirit, who is Love;..."¹⁴¹ Ultimately, the intention here is no other than union:

Without the Holy Spirit, who is the bond between the others [i.e. the Father and the Son], there would be no way of grasping a unity of conjunction between Father and Son. This is why all are said to be conjoined because of the Holy Spirit, i.e., given the Holy Spirit, the idea of connection is verified among the divine persons, so that we can speak of the Father and the Son as conjoined.¹⁴²

The will is very much dependent upon the intellect since the intellect supplies it with the content of the good to be desired. It is in

subsisting in the divine nature... From this it shows clearly that He is not only a subsistent person like the Father and the Son, but has unity of essence with Them." *S.C.G.*, IV, c.18.

¹³⁸ Cf. Appendix 2, "The Holy Spirit: Love" by T.C. O'Brien, p. 258 of Vol. 7 of the Blackfriars's translation of the *Summa theologiae*.

¹³⁹ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.36, a.4, c.

¹⁴⁰ *S.C.G.*, IV, c.18.

¹⁴¹ *S.T.*, I, q.39, a.8, c.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

this perspective that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Word.”¹⁴³ It is also for this reason that the will compared to the intellect is more active and dynamic since the will executes what the intellect legislates.¹⁴⁴

If the relation that bespeaks the *Word* is subsistent, so also that of the Holy Spirit is subsistent since all are real relations in virtue of their identity with the same divine nature or essence. Finally, if the idea of *consciousness* is behind the term “Word” since it is the internal word, so is intention behind Love which in God is always a union *willed*.

In the trinitarian mystery, the *res significata* of the word *gift* is said to be restricted to something given because it belongs to someone by origin. Hence in the relation Father-Son, the Son belongs to the Father; equally, in the relation Father-Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit belongs to the Father-Son: A sense of “something’s belonging to someone is through origin alone. In this sense the Son belongs to the Father and the Holy Spirit to both of them. As one who belongs to the giver through origin, then, the Gift of God is distinct personally from the giver and is a personal name.”¹⁴⁵

By appropriation, it belongs to the Holy Spirit to be called most properly the *Gift*. The *res significata* of the term “according to Aristotle, is literally a giving that can have no return, i.e. it is not given with repayment in mind and as such denotes a giving out of good will.”¹⁴⁶ This is love in its pristine simplicity since love is nothing other than wishing the beloved good. And the first good is the object of first love. In the divine expression of love, the first Gift is the Holy Spirit Himself. Thus, to him is appropriated this impulse of love in the intratrinitarian activity: “Since, then, ... the Holy Spirit comes forth as Love, he proceeds as the first Gift.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ *De ver.*, IV, a.4, ad 3.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.19, a.4, c. Also *S.C.G.*, IV, c.18. Despite their reciprocity, St. Thomas maintains a subtle logical distinction between these two immanent operations: “There is actual understanding when what is understood is in the intellect through its likeness, whereas there is actual willing, not because of a likeness of what is willed as such in the person who wills, but because the will in some way tends to what is willed.” *S.T.*, I, q.27, a.4, c.

¹⁴⁵ *S.T.*, I, q.38, a.1 ad 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, a.2, c.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

(4) The Holy Spirit as *Exemplar Primus*

Just as in the case of the *Word*, the Holy Spirit as *Love* under the aspect of Gift is a *exemplar primus* by appropriation. This can be explained in regard to creation and re-creation.

Just as the *Word*, the Holy Spirit is present in a special way by appropriation in the creative power of God. The causative or creative power of God is seen in relation to creatures. In this respect the phrase "in him" is appropriated both to the Son and to the Holy Spirit but for different reasons:

The first [reason] regards their likeness, i.e., we say that things are in God because they are in his knowledge. From this point of view "in him" should be appropriated to the Son. In a second way God contains things in that by his goodness he keeps them in being and governs them by bringing them to their right end. From this point of view the "in him" is ascribed to the Holy Spirit even as goodness is.¹⁴⁸

This means that, first, it is through God's will that things are said to be naturally good because they are precisely caused by God to exist.¹⁴⁹ Since the Holy Spirit is Love, it follows "that the movement [i.e. love] which is from God in things seems properly to be attributed to the Holy Spirit."¹⁵⁰ Second, it is by the note of goodness that a teleological consideration is introduced.

The government of things by God is understood to be according to a kind of motion, in that God directs and moves all things to their proper end. If, then, drive and motion belong to the Holy Spirit by reason of love, the government and propagation of things is fittingly attributed to the Holy Spirit.¹⁵¹

We have stated above that one of the likenesses creatures bear to the *Word* is *Life*. However, this was acknowledged only with respect to that likeness as existing in God, for knowledge is assimilative. When we say that Life is more proper to the likeness of creatures to the Holy Spirit we appropriate Life to the Holy Spirit, in that its quality of inner

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, I, q.39, a.8, c.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* I-II, q.110, a.1, c.; cf. I, q.19, a.4, c.; *S.C.G.*, IV, c.20.

¹⁵⁰ *S.C.G.*, IV, c.20.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, IV, c.20.

movement accords with what is proper to the Holy Spirit as Love.¹⁵² "This also harmonizes with the name *Spirit* for even the bodily life of animals is due to a vital spirit diffused from the principle of life into the rest of the members."¹⁵³ Whatever reason justifies aspects of creatures as referred to the Word as *exemplar primus* in its creative power likewise justifies reference to the Holy Spirit as Love.

In recreation the Holy Spirit as Love is considered more prominently as an exemplar just as the Son is considered more prominently as *Word*:

We refer to an exemplar cause so far as we are, thanks to that in us which is from God, imitating God. Since, then, the power of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is identical just as the essence is, necessarily whatever God effects in us must be, as from an efficient cause, simultaneously from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the "word of wisdom" ... by which we know God, and which God sends into us, is properly representative of the Son. And in like fashion the love by which we love God is properly representative of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁴

The Holy Spirit is an exemplar of *Love*. The point at issue here is that there is no greater or more intensive a union than to be united with oneself. Since the good of the Father-Son and that of the Holy Spirit are identical, theirs is, more than anything else, the *archetype of all unions*.¹⁵⁵

In what exactly does the likeness of creatures to the Holy Spirit in *Love* consist? It is precisely *in wishing the beloved good*, on the basis that the lover

counts the other as another self; not that the lover makes himself the measure but that the experience of affective harmony is the experience of the other within oneself; it is a felt presence of the other's person, goodness, agreeableness, a transformation into the dearness of the other... That inner experience is the inner

¹⁵² Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.39, a.8, c.

¹⁵³ *S.C.G.*, IV, c.20.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 21.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *Comp. theol.*, I, c.50.

presence of the beloved in the lover and the term discernible within the vitality of love.¹⁵⁶

When God showers man with a special kind of love,¹⁵⁷ it is in view of sharing his own trinitarian life, the essence of which is love. Applied to the love in the God-creatures relationship, divine love is self-less simplicity seeking nothing in return. This is to treat of God as a direct object to be known and loved. The result is Love given, a Gift possessed on the part of man; and, in keeping with the notion of *missio*,¹⁵⁸ a new way of being present on the part of the divine person sent: "Of course, every beloved is in a lover. Therefore, by the Holy Spirit not only is God in us, but we also are in God."¹⁵⁹ This sense of good-will is also behind the meaning of being spiritually adopted.¹⁶⁰ Hence, the union with God that man seeks through and in grace is patterned most appropriately after the Holy Spirit as *Gift*. It can also be stated that as the *pondus* of goodness in the human will proceeds from human intelligence, so does the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.

In sum, the source, i.e., the *natura divina*, to which man is called to participate is the trinitarian life most appropriately and formally expressed in everlasting love. In all appearances, the dogma of the Blessed Trinity exemplifies to the fullest measure what constitutes *natura divina*, philosophically considered, in theology. If by *natura divina* is meant philosophically the radical principle of the divine operations by which God sees himself intuitively and loves himself, *natura divina* relative to the triune personality is the radical principle of divine operations which is the procession of the Word and the procession of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵⁶ Appendix 2, "The Holy Spirit: Love" by T.C. O'Brien, *op. cit.* p.258.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.110, a.1, c.

¹⁵⁸ *Missio* simply refers to two things: to origination, i.e., "procession of origin from another"; an origin marked by co-equality, and destination, i.e., "the beginning of a presence, in the sense either that the one sent was not previously there at all or not present in a certain way." *Sent.*, I, q.43, a.1, c. The divine persons sent are the Word/Son and Holy Spirit/Love. Their new presence somewhere implies possession. Within the context of *missio*, "to possess" implies to have a deiform or divinized power at one's disposal which one can see and enjoy but which power cannot be humanly contrived. It is gratuitously given. Cf. *S.T.*, I, q.38, a.1, c. The act of possessing is seen from the part of the recipient, i.e., a giving (*datio*) implies being received. Cf. *Sent.*, I, d.15, q.4, a.1, c.

¹⁵⁹ *S.C.G.*, IV, c.21.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

Viewed from the question of a personal relationship,¹⁶¹ we affirm that since graced participation in man is an assimilation of the *natura humana* (person, i.e., an individual substance with a nature empowered to know and love) to the *natura divina* (as such and in its triune personality), and since man's participation in the trinitarian activity *ad intra* implies, in the ultimate analysis, possession and resting in the beloved, by appropriation, *natura humana* is called to participate in the loving unitive activity *ad intra* of the divine Person, the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶¹ This aspect in graced participation is important, if not the most fundamental, according to Mackey. He laments the sad state of theology of grace today as bookish and dry. It does not touch the individual at a personal level. He suggests, following Brunner, recasting the notion of *natura humana* along personalistic lines because, after all, such is the demand of graced participation—a personal encounter with God “as God knows himself (the only way he can know another person as that person knows himself is through a gracious self-revelation from that person.” Cf. J.P. Mackey, *The Grace of God: The Response of Man: A Study in Basic Theology* (New York: Magi Books, 1966, p. 44.