

The Thomistic Metaphysics of Grace and the Infused Virtues

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Abstract : In Thomism, once Grace is infused, the Theological and Moral virtues are also infused. But, why are the Moral virtues infused when they are naturally acquirable? ‘Is not the Theological Virtue of Charity sufficient to move the natural moral virtues to the Supernatural Happiness?’ Scotus asks. This problematic among the infused and acquired virtues is hooked on ‘Grace-nature’ proportion. ‘Grace perfects nature.’ But Grace exceeds human nature, which implies that human nature is incapable to receive it, hence its infusion seems intrusive and unnatural. Moreover, ‘Grace-nature’ proportion begot serious paradigms against Thomism: the extrinsicism of Barth and the intrinsicism of de Lubac. For Barth, Thomism cannot explain the ‘extrinsic’ transcendence of grace. For de Lubac, Thomism cannot justify the ‘intrinsic’ directness of nature to grace. These disturb the Thomists. Thomists, like Steven Long and Thomas Joseph White, attempted to answer the two paradigms. But their reply seems insufficient. My paper addressing (1) The Grace-nature proportion (Barth-de Lubac difficulties), and (2) the problematic relation between the Infused and Acquired Moral Virtues (the debate among Thomists) argues that, (1) there is a proportion between ‘Grace-human nature in its ‘mere essence,’ and (2) there is a qualified interdependence among the infused and acquired virtues, in light of the three Thomistic Metaphysical principles: 1. Nature is proportionate to its end, 2. The three senses of the term ‘Essence,’ and 3. obediential potency.

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Introduction

With Grace, the Theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity as well as the moral virtues of Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude are infused.¹

But what is the necessity of infusing the Moral virtues when they are naturally acquirable? “Is not the Infused Charity enough to ordain the acquirable moral virtues to Beatific Vision?” Scotus asks. Theologians still debate on this, and it disturbs the Thomists.

However, the problematic relation between the Infused and their corresponding Acquirable virtues hooks on the Thomistic dictum ‘Grace perfects Nature.’ Regarding this, Angela McKay Knobel explains:

The very fact that Aquinas describes two sets of moral virtues naturally raises the question of how he believes those virtues are related. This latter question is particularly important because of its ties to broader questions about the relationship between grace and nature.²

Why? Because God loves us not because we are good but we are good because He loves us. Says St. Thomas: “whatever is pleasing to God in a man is caused by the Divine Love.” God manifests His Love with the gift of Grace. Grace, with the Infused theological and moral virtues, — inclines and moves a man to God as his Supernatural End. For St. Thomas, Grace elevates man to a higher dignity, which far exceeds even the good of the whole universe — hence the Thomistic dictum: ‘Grace perfects nature.’

Yet, the same dictum renders the relationship among virtues — problematic. For Scotus, once Grace is infused, Charity is enough to move the natural powers of man toward the Eternal End.³ In that case, the Infused Moral virtues appear unnecessary.⁴ Close on the heels of Scotus, Dom Odon Lottin rejects the existence of Infused Moral virtues.⁵ But Michael Sherwin disagrees, arguing

¹ The Infused moral virtues are consequent of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity upon the infusion of Grace.

² Knobel, Angela McKay. 2011. “Relating Aquinas’s Infused and Acquired Virtues: Some Problematic Texts for a Common Interpretation.” *Nova et Vetera* no. 9 (2):411-431, 411.

³ Sherwin, Michael S. 2009. “Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtues.” *The Thomist* (73):29-52. p. 31; Thomas F. O’Meara. 1997. “Virtues in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas.” *Theological Studies* (58), 266.

⁴ Sherwin, “Infused virtue,” 32-33.

⁵ Sherwin, *ibid.*

if sanctifying grace orders us to our supernatural end [...] how can the grace be effective for salvation in one who lacks the acquired virtues? [...] It is precisely this issue that was one of the factors motivating the Scholastics to posit the existence of Infused Moral virtues.⁶

Some theologians who accept the existence of Infused Moral virtues, disagree as regards the mode of relation between the acquired and Infused moral virtues. John Inglis, for instance, admits the mutual dependence between these virtues,⁷ while Angela McKay Knobel denies such mutual dependence.⁸ William Mattison denies not only their mutual dependence but rejects their compatibility in the Christian. He remarks:

Scholars do differ on how to relate the acquired virtues vs. Infused virtue. Most contemporary scholars writing on Thomistic virtue affirm the existence of the acquired cardinal virtues in the Christian, who by definition possesses the Infused cardinal virtues. My thesis is that Christians cannot possess acquired cardinal virtues.⁹

Because of this difficulty, theologians like Arielle Harms, Thomas Joseph White, and Kevin Staley among others, debate regarding the End of man. Is the End of man One or Two—one is natural and the other is supernatural?¹⁰

An endless debate?

This debate seems endless and unresolvable. The difficulty lies in the Thomistic *dictum* ‘Grace perfects nature,’ which *suggests* the ‘proportion’ between Grace and human nature. But, is there a proportion?

⁶ Sherwin, “Infused Virtue,” 34-35.

⁷ “Without the parallel Infused Moral virtues that redirect one’s actions, such actions would remain imperfect. Therefore, one prepares for the infusion of moral virtue through the acquisition of moral habits that are themselves strengthened by infusion.” John Inglis, “Aquinas’s Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22 (2002): 19.

⁸ “I argue that the texts (Thomistic texts) cited in defense of some common theses about the relationship between the Infused and acquired virtues fall short of establishing the positions they supposedly support. My analysis of these texts, if correct, lends support to those who claim that Aquinas’s position on the relationship between the Infused and acquired virtues is simply unclear.” Knobel, “Relating Aquinas’s Infused Virtues,” 430.

⁹ Mattison, William C. III. 2011. “Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues?” *Theological Studies* no. 72, 559.

¹⁰ See Harms, Arielle. 2001. “Acquired and Infused Moral Virtue: A Distinction of Ends.” *New Blackfriars*. See also White, Thomas Joseph O.P. 2014. “Imperfect Happiness and the Final End of Man: Thomas Aquinas and the Paradigm of Nature-Grace Orthodoxy.” *The Thomist* no. 78:247-89; Staley, Kevin M. 1989. “Happiness: The Natural End of Man?” *The Thomist* no. 53:215-234.

Consider:

For a man to attain Eternal life, God infuses Grace and other virtues as the *conditio sine qua non* for Beatific Vision. This ‘theological given’ *assumes* that man can receive it. But it is also a ‘theological given’ that Beatific Vision and Grace exceed human nature. Now, if Grace exceeds human nature, how can a man receive it to obtain Beatific Vision? St. Thomas seems to answer this when he says:

No being can act beyond the limits of its specific nature [...] Now the gift of grace surpasses every capacity of created nature since it is nothing other than a certain participation in the divine nature which surpasses every other nature.¹¹

The text implies that Grace allows man to partake in the Divine Esse because through it human nature becomes proportionate to such a Supernatural End.

But the difficulty stays: ‘How can Grace allow a man to partake in the Divine Esse when it exceeds human nature?’ Does it not make the infusion of Grace *intrusive* and *contrary* to human nature? If God infuses a perfection, then it implies the recipient must be capable of receiving it. In that case, is there a *primordial* disposition in human essence by which a man can receive Grace?

Knobel is right. The ‘nature-Grace’ proportion glues itself to the current theological debate about the relation of the Infused and acquired moral virtues. To understand this proportion is to penetrate the relation of the two species of virtues and to justify the existence of the Infused Moral virtues, which Scotus denies. If Grace perfects nature, then the Infused Virtues perfect the acquired ones. But how can Grace perfect what it exceeds, how can an Infused virtue perfect the acquired one?

Is the ‘Grace-Nature proportion’ issue still relevant?

In an International Conference on Virtues in Utrecht University (2015),¹² I addressed the same question to a renowned Thomist who merely replied, “God infusing grace which exceeds human nature is a miracle.” The lecturer’s reply shows the grace-nature proportion remains a difficulty. In fact, it led to the most influential theological paradigms against Thomism. About this, Thomas Joseph White remarks:

[...] two most influential paradigms in modern theology concerning the relationship of grace to nature are at opposite extremes of the spectrum, and

¹¹ STh, I-II, q.112, a.1 co.; STh, I-II, Q. 109, a.5, co.

¹² International conference in the Institut Te Utrecht: “ Aquinas on the Theological Nature of Acquired and Infused Moral Virtues.” Dec. 16-19, 2015.

yet the extremes touch in their criticism of Thomism as it is expositied in the classical Dominican tradition. On the one hand, there is the influential view of Karl Barth, whose radical vision of the extrinsic transcendence of grace to nature was paired with an equally radical [...] disavowal of any predisposition or potential inclination in human nature for the gift of divine life. On the other hand, there is the vision of Henri de Lubac in his 'Surnaturel' which charts out the idea of an inclination toward the supernatural inscribed in the human spirit from its creation such that we are always everywhere animated by a latent natural desire for the gratuitous gift of supernatural beatitude, the vision of God.¹³

Barth speaks of 'grace-nature extrinsicism,' and he sees "in man no natural point of contact [...] upon which grace might act to elevate him beyond his own natural capacities."¹⁴ De Lubac speaks of 'grace-nature intrinsicism' when he "sees in man's natural capacities an innate, we might say inherent, inclination toward divine life, a life that is provided by grace alone."¹⁵

Both positions oppose the Thomistic tradition. For Barth, Thomism cannot explain the 'extrinsic' transcendence of grace. For de Lubac, Thomism does not justify the 'intrinsic' directedness of nature to grace. Again, White remarks, "What these two specifically opposed extremes share by way of a common genus of presupposition is a conviction that the classical Thomistic tradition fails to safeguard a balanced sense of grace-nature extrinsicism and nature-grace intrinsicism."¹⁶

White tries to resolve the dilemma set by Barth and de Lubac. With both, he agrees with qualifications. He says: "Against Barth, and with de Lubac, there exists a natural point of contact in us such as grace is not alien to human nature and can lead human nature without violence through the ascent upward into the supernatural life of God."¹⁷ He continues: "Against de Lubac, and with Barth, grace is wholly transcendent to our nature to which our ordinary reasoning and willing are not innately and naturally inclined or proportioned."¹⁸

Now, White tries to reconcile these extreme positions premised on the principle that "the natural desire for the vision of God is a rational, philosophical desire that arises from man's reaching an imperfect beatitude of the natural contemplation of God"¹⁹ [...]. From this premise, he infers two conclusions:

¹³ Thomas Joseph White. 2014. "Imperfect Happiness and the Final End of Man: Thomas Aquinas and the Paradigm of Nature-Grace Orthodoxy." *The Thomist* no. 78:247-89, 247.

¹⁴ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 247.

¹⁵ White, "Imperfect Happiness," *Ibid.*

¹⁶ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 250.

¹⁷ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 288.

¹⁸ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 289.

¹⁹ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 288.

Therefore, (1) when grace promises us a yet higher beatitude of seeing God face to face, it does not act extrinsically to our natural end; and (2) nature is not intrinsically ordered toward the objects of supernatural revelation but is surpassed by the higher order of divine life even as it is fulfilled by it.²⁰

But his conclusions reaffirm the objections hurled by Barth and de Lubac against traditional Thomism, i.e., ‘How can Grace, which surpasses human nature (Barth), be received by man (de Lubac)?’ White’s conclusions return to the same problem he wants resolved. His first conclusion: ‘Grace does not act extrinsically to human nature implies that Grace acts intrinsically to our nature. But once his first conclusion is connected to the second, a difficulty follows, “if our nature is not intrinsically ordered to grace, then how can grace act intrinsically to our nature?” It is the same objections hurled by Barth and de Lubac against the Thomistic tradition. Hence, White’s solution only returns to the initial difficulty he wants resolved.

Considering the above, this paper addresses two questions: (1) How can Grace perfect nature? (Barth-de Lubac), and (2) the problematic relation between the Infused and acquired moral virtues vis-à-vis the Beatific Vision (the current debate among the Thomists).

The Theological conclusion and its premises

The question on Grace is a theological issue and is resolvable through a theological reasoning whose premises are from Faith as its major premise, and from natural Reason as its minor premise. For instance: “Christ is God (from Faith), but Mary is the Mother of Christ (a historical reason). Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God” (Theological conclusion).

What are the premises of this paper?

We take as the Major premise that “God infuses grace” as revealed truth, and the ‘metaphysical assumptions’ as the Minor from Reason.

Since the Major premise of this paper is a matter of Faith thus a theological given,²¹ this paper shall deal primarily with the Minor Premise, i.e., the metaphysical foundations of Grace:

²⁰ White, “Imperfect Happiness,” Ibid.

²¹ “[...] explicit divine revelation is the starting point of all (theological) conclusions [...]” Francisco Marin-Sola, O. P. (1987). *The Homogeneous Evolution of Catholic Dogma*. Manila Philippines: Santo Tomas University Press, 160.

- (1) Nature is proportionate to its end
- (2) The three senses of the term 'Essence,' and
- (3) Obediential Potency

With the theological fact that God infuses grace and the three metaphysical principles, this paper attempts to resolve: How human nature can receive Grace and the Theological Virtues which exceed it.

The First Metaphysical Assumption: 'Nature is proportionate to its End.'

The theological given that Grace is necessary to attain the Beatific Vision implies that the 'human nature' must be proportionate to it. St. Thomas clarifies this assumption:

Since different natures have different ends, there are three prerequisites for obtaining any end: (1) a nature proportioned to that end, (2) an inclination or a natural appetite for that end, and (3) a movement towards the end.²²

"Nature is proportionate to its end" is the metaphysics behind all modes of 'motion' to an end—be it natural or supernatural,²³ and from it, the principle '*operari sequitur esse*' is derived. Hence, an agent, in accord with its nature, tends and moves towards its end.

Barth and de Lubac assume the same metaphysical assumption in their respective positions; for Barth, man has no natural inclination towards the supernatural because human nature is not proportionate to the Supernatural end. For de Lubac, man has the natural inclination towards the grace of supernatural beatitude²⁴ because God imprinted a supernatural finality upon human nature to make it proportionate to such beatitude.²⁵

This first assumption speaks of the soul 'by which' a man is human. Now, Grace is an entitative habit whose subject is the soul's essence.²⁶ Thus, if God with His active potency infuses Grace to the soul as the subject, He is infusing a perfection which exceeds human nature.²⁷ If active potency is proportionate to passive potency,²⁸

²² Aquinas, St. Thomas. 1952. Disputed Questions on Truth (De Ver.) Translated by Robert Mulligan. Three vols. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company). Vol.3, q. 27, a.2, co.

²³ STh, I-II, q.109, a.6 co.; STh, I-II, q.110, art. 2, co., STh, I-II, q.111, a.2, co.

²⁴ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 256.

²⁵ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 256, footnote 23.

²⁶ De Ver. Vol. 3. q. 27, a. 2, ad7. "[...] sanctifying grace, which is an entitative habit, Infused into the very essence of the soul [...]." Garrigou-Lagrange, "Reality," p. 285.

²⁷ STh I-II, q. 110, a. 2, ad 2.

²⁸ Aquinas, St. Thomas. 1951. The Virtues in General (De Virt.). Translated by John Patrick Reid. Washington: The Providence College Press), a.10 ad 13.

there must be something in the essence of man a passive potency proportionate to the active potency of God to receive Grace and its consequent virtues.²⁹ In this sense, de Lubac is right. White remarks: “[...] with de Lubac, there exists a natural point of contact in us such as that grace is not alien to human nature and lead human nature without violence through the ascent upward into the supernatural life of God.”³⁰ However, de Lubac does not identify the ‘natural point of contact’ which renders Grace proportionate to the human nature.

Considering the first assumption, we ask: ‘*If nature is proportionate to its end, in what sense do we understand the term ‘human nature or essence’ in relation to Grace?*’ The Second Assumption addresses this question.

The Second Metaphysical Assumption: The term ‘Essence.’

De Lubac, Barth, and some Thomists, like White, dealing with the same difficulty seem to overlook the distinction of the term ‘essence’ which led to the controversy. For instance, in what sense do Barth and de Lubac take the term ‘human nature’ or ‘essence’? The works of Aquinas are replete with the notion of ‘essence.’ Joseph Matthias Scheeben in his book *Nature and Grace* addresses the relation of ‘grace and nature’ by distinguishing ‘nature’ from ‘*supernature*,’ and ‘natural’ from ‘*supernatural*.’

However, we find the Thomistic distinction of ‘essence’ clear in Francisco Marin-Sola in his book, *The Homogeneous Evolution of the Catholic Dogma*.³¹ For him, the term ‘essence’ admits three senses: (a) the Metaphysical essence or the essence ‘in the abstract’; (b) the integral essence (as found in nature, in Peter and Paul), and (c) the perfect or individual essence found in Peter different from Paul’s.

A. *Metaphysical essence, mere essence, or essence in the abstract* “admits the essential predicates alone, and nothing else.”³² The ‘mere essence’ of a mother as a female parent does not suggest whether a human or an animal. A ‘human mother’ in her metaphysical essence does not suggest in any way she takes care of her young. The mere essence of ‘man’ includes only the essential predicates of rationality and animality; and it does not suggest that man actually possesses intellect, will, senses, and body organs.³³ As St. Thomas puts it: “humanity contains nothing but what

²⁹ De Virt. a. 10, ad 3.

³⁰ White, “Imperfect Happiness,” 288.

³¹ Marin-Sola, Francisco, O.P. (1987). *The Homogeneous Evolution of Catholic Dogma*. Manila Philippines: Santo Tomas University Press, p.160.

³² Marin-Sola, *Homogeneous Evolution*, 160.

³³ STh, I-II, q. 110, a. 4, ad 4.; De Virt. a.12, co);

belongs intrinsically to humanity.”³⁴ Man, in the abstract, is a ‘rational animal’—nothing more. ‘Metaphysical essence’ is absolute; it remains the same in any condition. It is the ‘essence per se’ or ‘essence in an unqualified sense’ or the words of St. Thomas—‘nature simply’ or ‘thing as such.’ The metaphysical essence of man is in every man always, in all conditions or state (*omni, soli et semper*).

B. *Integral or connatural essence* is an essence as it exists in nature.³⁵ Marin-Sola explains: “The integral or connatural essence, besides the essential predicates, comprises furthermore the connatural predicates or the integral parts which the essence should have under the laws of nature.”³⁶ Thus, aside from the essential predicates of ‘mere essence,’ the individual has perfections as found in nature. This essence is ‘connatural’ because it is the principle of its operations in accord with the laws of nature. Blesilda, a ‘human mother’ has biological, psychological powers to function as a ‘human female parent’ as found in her connatural essence. Man, in his integral nature, possesses vegetative, sensitive, and rational powers such as the intellect and will,³⁷ with the proper organs needed to exist in the ‘integral nature.’ With this connatural essence, man becomes the subject of the laws of nature: physical, biological, psychological, and moral laws. In this sense, Peter shares what is common with other human persons in their actual existence as subjects of rights and of acquirable virtues.

C. *The Perfect or individual essence refers*³⁸ to the individual who *actually* possesses all the acquirable perfections, and this pertains to the individual nature of Peter apart from other individual men. Marin-Sola further explains, “[...] the completely perfect essence also includes all the accidental perfections of which the given essence is capable.”³⁹ Thus, Peter as this virtuous man, this scientist, this faithful husband, this father of John, and this theologian—all refer to Peter’s perfect essence.

It does not mean that everything has three essences; rather, it means that an ‘individual’ has three aspects of the same essence. When we say, ‘Peter is a good father,’ we refer to Peter, as this ‘man’ in his individuality as distinct from Paul. Again, to say, ‘Peter is subject to physical, psychological, moral and civil laws,’ — it means Peter, in his connatural essence which he shares with other men. Finally, when we say, ‘Peter is rational,’ it means Peter in his ‘mere’ essence, a rational being who transcends the laws of nature.

³⁴ STh, III, q.5, a. 1, co.

³⁵ Marin-Sola, *Homogeneous Evolution*, 160; Long, “Obediential Potency,” footnote 47, p. 237.

³⁶ Marin-Sola, *Homogeneous Evolution*, 160.

³⁷ De Vir. a.10, co.

³⁸ Marin-Sola, *Homogeneous Evolution*, 160.

³⁹ Marin-Sola, *Ibid.*

The ‘metaphysical essence’ is implicit in the connatural essence, and the connatural is implicit in the individual essence. Peter as an individual has the perfections acquirable in his connatural essence grounded in his metaphysical essence as a rational animal.

The distinction of ‘essence’ is premised on the principle ‘Agere sequitur esse.’ An individual manifests behavior which belongs to it alone, but the same individual manifests behavior in common with other individuals of the same species, and the same individual possesses operations or behavior which transcends every species in so far as it is as a being, e.g., passing from potency to act.

With the first⁴⁰ and second Metaphysical assumptions,⁴¹ we discuss two questions: (1) In what sense the human essence is ‘not proportionate’ to Grace and the Beatific Vision, and (2) in what sense human essence *can be proportioned* to it?

Steven Long holds that the *connatural* essence of man *can* receive the Beatific Vision—he holds it possible “with divine help (obediential potency).”⁴² To prove it, he points out two things: first, that the immaterial *connatural* nature of the intellect makes up human transcendence to the divine light enabling it to be proportionate to such Beatific vision—and this is because of obediential potency; second, he posits that St. Thomas’s account of the natural desire for God is due to obediential potency. Thus, for Steven Long, the *connatural essence* of man is proportionate to the Beatific Vision because of obediential potency.

We disagree with Steven Long. We say, human essence, in its connatural sense, is not proportionate to the Supernatural Happiness (Beatific Vision) because man’s connatural essence is only proportionate to natural happiness. Man, through his natural efforts, cannot obtain supernatural happiness which exceeds his nature. In this sense, the human soul, being subject to physiological, biological, psychological, and moral laws, is not the proportionate to the supernatural end.

Contrary to Steven Long’s position, we hold that the intellect in its present condition (whose formal object is the essence of material things) is not proportionate to Beatific Vision which exceeds the intellect’s connatural potency. Even the natural desire for God limits itself to what the intellect (in its connatural essence) can know, such as that God exists as the First Mover, the First Cause, the Necessary Being, an All Perfect Being, and the Grand Designer. This knowledge of God quiets the natural desire to know the Ultimate Cause. With such knowledge, the desire to love and to worship Him is the reason natural religions exist. The craving to know and love

⁴⁰ “Every agent acts for an end.”

⁴¹ The distinction of the essence.

⁴² Long, “Obediential potency,” 2.

God requires man's natural powers alone and does not demand obediential potency which Steven Long calls "the creature's remote passive potency for that which only the active agency of God can bring about in the creature."⁴³ The obediential potency is the disposition to receive perfections that a creature can receive beyond its natural potency.⁴⁴

Likewise, Grace is not proportionate to man's connatural essence. God infuses it precisely because it exceeds the human nature. Thus, Barth is right, if by 'human nature' he means the 'fundamental' or connatural essence when he speaks of the transcendence of grace to nature (extrinsicism). Human nature in its connatural sense is not proportionate to Beatific Vision and Grace, as St. Thomas puts it, "he (man) cannot reach it (Beatific Vision) by nature but only by grace, and this is owing to the loftiness of that end."⁴⁵ In this sense, de Lubac is wrong. On this, White comments: "Against de Lubac [...] grace is something wholly transcendent of our human nature to which ordinary human reasoning and willing are not innately and naturally inclined or proportioned."⁴⁶ Man, in his connatural essence, is inclined to natural perfection such as the contemplation of truth, which for philosophers, is the perfect beatitude.

Addressing the *second question*, we say *Human nature, in its 'Metaphysical essence,' can be proportionate to the Supernatural End (Beatific Vision).*

Beatific Vision, which exceeds the natural powers, is the good intended by the Creator for His rational creatures. It is an extrinsic end determined by the Creator as it pleases Him, which in the words of St. Thomas, is borne out of God's liberality and mercy to His rational creatures. But, only man, among bodily creatures in his metaphysical essence can receive Grace to attain the Beatific Vision. The 'mere' essence of man is his rationality because of his rational soul by which he is a man. The rational soul's metaphysical property is 'spirituality' which renders it capable of receiving perfection which may exceed its connatural powers⁴⁷ clear in St. Thomas when he says the soul is the subject of Grace.⁴⁸

Since the human soul, in its metaphysical essence, is the subject of Grace, hence it 'can' receive spiritual perfections like Grace and Infused Virtues deemed beyond its connatural powers. In this sense, Barth is incorrect. Regarding this, White remarks: "Against Barth [...] there exists a natural point of contact in us

⁴³ Long, Ibid.

⁴⁴ St. Thomas distinguishes two potencies in creatures: natural and obediential.

⁴⁵ De Pot. Bk 1, q.3 a.9 co.

⁴⁶ White, "Imperfect Happiness," 289.

⁴⁷ For instance, immortality is the property of spirituality.

⁴⁸ De Virt. a.2, ad 21; Sth, I-II, q. 110, a.4, co.

such that grace is not alien to human nature without violence⁴⁹ [...]. That ‘natural point of contact’ by which human nature can receive Grace is ‘human nature in its metaphysical essence,’—and not in its integral nature (connatural essence). Considering this, we ask: ‘What is that ‘potency’ in the metaphysical essence of man by which he can receive Grace, and through it, he can attain the supernatural end?’

The essence of the soul is the subject of Grace, according to St. Thomas.⁵⁰ Now, just as operations follow nature, so potency follows essence. Since metaphysically, any power flows from its essence, so from the human soul’s ‘connatural essence’ the integral powers of the soul flow, which are perfected by the acquired virtues. In the same way, from the human soul’s ‘metaphysical essence,’ the radical powers of the soul flow, which are perfected by the Infused Virtues once they received Grace. As St. Thomas puts it,

just as from its essence the powers of the soul flow, so from grace flow perfections into the powers of the soul—called virtues and gifts, whereby the powers are perfected.⁵¹

It does not mean that man has two separate sets of powers as the subject of virtues, rather, the same human powers are perfectible in their ‘mere essence’ and ‘connatural essence.’⁵² Once grace as an entitative habit is infused into the soul, virtues, and gifts as operative habits are likewise infused. Because ‘nature is proportionate to its end,’ hence its powers must be proportionate to the same end. Again, just as acquired virtues dispose and move the powers of the soul to its natural end, so in the same way, the infused virtues dispose and move the same powers to their supernatural end.⁵³ St. Thomas clarifies this point:

And so, the motion whereby God moves them is made connatural to and easy for creatures, according to Wisdom ‘she [...] ordereth all things sweetly.’ Much more, therefore, does He infuse into those whom He moves to the attainment of an eternal, supernatural good, certain forms of supernatural qualities, whereby they may be moved by Him sweetly and promptly, to the attainment of eternal good.⁵⁴

Both the acquired, and the Infused Virtues perfect the same powers of the soul—but in different modes:⁵⁵ (1) ‘acquired’ virtues, which perfect the natural

⁴⁹ White, “Imperfect Happiness,” 288.

⁵⁰ De Virt. a.2, ad 21; Sth, I-II, q. 110, a.4, co.

⁵¹ STh, III, q.62, a.2, co.

⁵² STh, III, q.62, a.2, co.

⁵³ SCG, Bk 3 Chap. 152 (Aquinas, Thomas. 1924. *The Summa Contra Gentiles*. Translated by English Dominican Fathers. Leonine Edition ed. New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: Benziger Brothers). Also see Sherwin, “Infused Virtue,” 39.

⁵⁴ STh, I-II, 110, a. 2.

⁵⁵ “He (Aquinas) asserts that although the subject matter (material propria) of both sets of virtue is the same, they are guided by different measures.” Sherwin, “Infused Virtue,” 39-40.

powers, are caused by human powers themselves as ‘ruled by reason;’ and (2) ‘infused’ virtues which perfect the same powers and ordain them to Perfect Beatitude by the ‘Divine rule.’

Man becomes proportionate to his Supernatural end once Grace is Infused because through it man shares the ‘Divine esse.’ Upon the infusion of Grace, the theological and moral virtues are infused. The theological virtues, especially Charity, incline a man to the Supernatural End, and through the Infused Moral virtues, — man sufficiently and effectively moves toward that End. However, for St. Thomas, both the acquired and the Infused Virtues potentially exist in the rational soul even before their acquisition or infusion. He says:

Similarly, there is in the soul something potential which can be actualized by a natural agent. In this way, the acquired virtues exist potentially in the soul. In another way, there is something potential in the soul, which is not naturally ordered to be reduced to act except by Divine Power; and in this way, the Infused Virtues exist potentially in the soul.⁵⁶

Thus, for St. Thomas, there are potencies in the soul actualized by the ‘natural’ and the ‘Divine’ agents, respectively. The acquired virtues exist potentially in the soul in its integral nature before they are acquired or reduced to act by the natural agent. In the same way, Infused Virtues exist potentially in the soul in its ‘mere essence’ before their infusion or reduction to act by the Divine agent.

Does Grace potentially exist in the soul like virtues? For St. Thomas, Grace is not an operative but an entitative habit. Hence, Grace does not potentially exist in the powers of the soul as virtues, but it exists potentially in the soul’s essence. God infuses Grace into the soul’s essence as if it were creating a second ‘esse.’⁵⁷ Hence Grace is not *ex nihilo* because it is potentially in the soul.⁵⁸

Just as powers flow from nature, the Infused Virtues flow from Grace. For St. Thomas, the Infused Theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the Infused Moral virtues of Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude are consequent to Grace. Once Grace divinized human nature, the Infused Virtues divinize human powers. Before receiving Grace and Infused Virtues, the human soul has a ‘radical potency’⁵⁹ to receive entitative habits or perfections which far exceed the soul’s

⁵⁶ De Virt. a.10, ad 13.

⁵⁷ STh, I-II, q.110, a. 4 co.

⁵⁸ It is in this sense that Grace is intrinsic without falling into the intrinsicism of de Lubac. For de Lubac, grace is intrinsic in the connatural essence of man.

⁵⁹ “Granted that the irascible and concupiscible parts do not remain actually in the separated soul; still, they do remain radically (radice): for the essence of the soul is the root (radix) of its powers.” De Virt. a.4, ad 3.

connatural essence. Because of this radical passive potency, it is possible to receive the supernatural habits or virtues, and even miracles to happen. Understood this way, the infusion of grace is not contrary to man's mere essence (metaphysical), as St. Thomas explains:

[...] even so by the power of God something can occur that is contrary to universal nature which is dependent on the power of the heavens; without being contrary to nature simply, since it will be in accord with the supremely universal nature, dependent on God in relations to all creatures.⁶⁰

God, by His active potency, infuses the spiritual soul to the human body⁶¹ because the human body has radical potency in its mere essence to receive the rational substantial form.⁶² The active potency of God connotes passive potency on the part of His creature;⁶³ the creature must have a kind of radical passive potency to receive proportionately such Divine active potency.⁶⁴ What could be this radical passive potency in a man? This question leads us to the third metaphysical assumption.

The Third Metaphysical Assumption: Obediential Potency

What is this radical passive potency by which the human soul can receive Grace and its consequent virtues? It is the Obediential Potency. St. Thomas says:

The capacity of a creature is predicated on its potency to receive. Now the potency of a creature to receive is of two kinds. One is natural, and this can be entirely fulfilled because it extends only to natural perfections. The other is Obediential potency because it can receive something from God, and such capacity cannot be filled up because whatever God does with a creature it remains in potency to receive from God.⁶⁵

Again, St. Thomas explains:

We say that in the whole creation there is a certain obediential potency whereby every creature obeys God by receiving into itself whatsoever God wills.⁶⁶

Although de Lubac may agree with St. Thomas about man's natural capacity for divine life, yet, he does not attribute such to the Obediential Potency to explain the

⁶⁰ Aquinas, St. Thomas. 1932. *De Potentia Dei (De Pot)*. Translated by English Dominican Fathers. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd.), Bk 2, q.6 a.1 ad 1.

⁶¹ Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald O.P. *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*. Translated by O.S.B. Rev. Patrick Cummins. U.S.A.: B. Herder Book Co.), 181.

⁶² *De Virt.* a.10, co.

⁶³ *SCG*, Bk 2 Chap. 22.

⁶⁴ *De Ver.* Vol 1 q. 2 a.10.

⁶⁵ *De Ver.* vol.3, q.29, a.3. ad 2; *De Ver.*, vol.1., q. 8, a.12, ad 4.

⁶⁶ *De Virt.* a.10, ad 13.

Grace-nature relation.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Thomists, such as Garrigou-Lagrange, Maritain, and Steven Long resort to the doctrine of Obediential Potency. Jacques Maritain remarks, “It is necessary that there be in man an ‘obediential potency’ which, answering to the divine omnipotence, renders him apt to receive a life which surpasses infinitely the capacities of his nature.”⁶⁸

Just as there are two modes of potency, so there are two modes of ‘aptitude.’ First, the natural aptitude perfected by a natural agent; and second, obediential aptitude in the ‘mere essence’ of things as perfected by the Creator. Man’s obediential potency (in his mere essence) disposes him to receive Grace and its consequent virtues. We infer that through creation God put two potencies into His creatures proportionate to their specific nature: natural and obediential. The former determines the specific nature of the creature; the latter, for their further perfections as it pleases God, such as Grace in a rational creature. As Lynch explains it:

a supernatural end, a created nature can become a true instrument that responds to God as primary agent, not from any passivity that comes from a potentiality of nature, but from the obedience of a creature, before the author and sustainer of its being.⁶⁹

Through Obediential potency, to infuse Grace into the rational soul is possible. Steven Long expresses the same when he says, “the passive potency is conditioned by the actual nature God has bestowed—it is only because of man’s essentially spiritual nature that he has an obediential potency to the supernatural life.”⁷⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, with his usual clarity, further explains:

Thus, the soul has an Obediential potency to receive not only grace and glory, and the hypostatic union, but also an ever-higher degree of grace and glory since Obediential potency can never be so completely actualized as not to be still actualizable.⁷¹

Just as the human soul is Infused into the human body because of its Obediential Potency,⁷² in the same way, Grace and its consequent virtues are Infused

⁶⁷ Long, Steven, “On the Possibility of a Purely Natural End for Man.” *The Thomist* no. 64:211-237) (2000), 217.

⁶⁸ Maritain, Jacques. 1954. *Approaches to God*. Trans. Peter O’Reilly (New York: Harper), 112.

⁶⁹ Lynch, Reginald M. O.P. 2014. “Cajetan’s Harp: Sacraments and the Life of Grace in Light of Perspective Instrumentality.” *The Thomist* (78): 65-106, 78.

⁷⁰ Long, “On the Possibility,” 215.

⁷¹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, 308.

⁷² “Hence, it must be that, just as man’s first perfection, which is his rational soul, exceeds the power of corporeal matter, so the ultimate perfection which man can attain which is the blessedness of eternal life, exceeds the powers of the whole human nature.” *De Vir. a.10 corpus*.

into the human soul's Obediential Potency. Because of this Potency, the infusion of grace is neither intrusive nor unnatural to the soul's essence.⁷³

It is not *intrusive* because:

All creatures are compared to God as works of art are compared to the artist. Hence all nature is the work of the divine art. Now it is not inconsistent with a work of art that the artist makes some alteration in his work, even after giving it its first form. Neither, therefore it is contrary to nature if God does something in natural things, other than that which occurs in the ordinary course of nature. Wherefore Augustine says 'God the creator and author of all natures, does nothing unnatural: because to each thing, that is natural which is caused by Him from whom is all measure, number, and order in nature.'⁷⁴

Such an infusion of Grace is *natural* because:

Whatever is implanted in a thing by God is natural to that thing. Therefore, if something else is implanted by God in that same thing, it will not be unnatural.⁷⁵

God can 'implant' Grace in the soul's essence because of Obediential Potency which God put in His creatures. The cited text from St. Thomas could support de Lubac had he admitted the doctrine of Obediential Potency.

The Obediential Potency of the bread and wine makes it possible to turn them to the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. It is the Obediential Potency of the human nature of Christ by which it can unite to the Divine nature.⁷⁶ 'Miracles' happen because of the liberality by God, and Obediential Potency by the creature. Through the Obediential Potency, God infuses Grace with the theological and moral virtues by which the acts of the corresponding acquired moral virtues are ordained to Perfect Beatitude.

Although Garrigou-Lagrange, Jacques Maritain, and other Thomists like Steven Long⁷⁷ have pointed out that the human nature could receive Grace and its consequent Infused Virtues because of Obediential potency, however, they were not explicit *how* human nature receives Grace, considering that Grace is beyond it. This

⁷³ "By contrast, the life of grace through the active agency of God perfects human persons, uplifting human nature without destroying or mutating it." Steven Long, "Obediential Potency," 1.

⁷⁴ SCG, Bk 3, Chap. 100.

⁷⁵ SCG, Ibid.

⁷⁶ "[...] it is the doctrine of obediential potency which, par excellence, articulates the theological truth that the inner profundity of human nature is manifested to us through the revelation of God in Christ. " Also see Long, 237.

⁷⁷ Long, "Obediential potency," 1.

paper tries to prove that Grace and Infused Virtues are not proportionate to human nature in its connatural essence, but they can be proportionate to the human nature in its ‘mere essence.’ i.e., man as a rational being with his Obediential Potency can receive Grace.

Grace is only Infused to rational beings (*solī*), but not to all of them (*non-omni*), and not always (*non-semper*). Though all men ‘can’ receive Grace because of Obediential potency, yet not all receive it. It is God’s liberality which ordains some to Perfect Beatitude by infusing Grace as He pleases. Hence, man in his connatural essence is ordained to the ‘Natural vision of God’ in the contemplation of truth, but not to the ‘Beatific Vision.’ Only through Grace, God ordains a man to Beatific Vision as St. Thomas puts it:

There is Infused into man by God, to enable him to perform acts ordered to eternal life as their end: first, grace, which gives the soul a certain spiritual or divine being, and then, faith, hope, and charity. By faith, the mind is enlightened concerning divine truths, which in their order stand as do principles naturally known in the order of natural actions. By hope and charity, the will acquires an inclination to that supernatural good to which the human will, by its own natural operations, is not adequately ordered. (*De Virtutibus*, a.10, co.)

Thus, through the three metaphysical assumptions: (1) ‘nature is proportionate to its end,’ (2) the distinction of the three senses of the term ‘essence,’ and the (3) Obediential Potency, we can understand how Grace and its consequent virtues can make man proportionate to his supernatural end—to resolve the Barth-de-Lubac criticism of Thomism on Grace-Nature problem.

We now consider the second part of this paper: **The relation of the Infused with the acquired virtues**

From the three metaphysical assumptions we infer the following conclusions: (1) That the acquired virtues are rooted in the natural potency, while Grace and its consequent Infused Virtues are rooted in Obediential potency, and (2) since, acquired virtues are the ‘means’ toward the natural end, their corresponding infused virtues are the ‘means’ toward the Supernatural end.

However, from the above conclusions, the following questions follow: Are acquired and Infused Virtues in any way related or ordained to each other? If they are related, in what manner? Are they ‘interdependent’ as contended by Inglis⁷⁸

⁷⁸ “Therefore, one prepares for the infusion of moral virtue through the acquisition of moral habits that are themselves strengthened by infusion.” John Inglis, “Aquinas’s Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22 (2002): 19.

or independent of each other as argued by Knobel or incompatible in a Christian subject as claimed by Mattison?⁷⁹

St. Thomas discusses theological and moral virtues showing their subordinations and interconnections as functions of the same spiritual organism called man.⁸⁰ He states the connection among Infused Virtues when he says: “The virtues must needs [sic] be connected together so that whoever has one has all, as stated above (Sth, I-II, 65, 1). Now whoever has grace has charity so that he must need to have all the other virtues⁸¹ [...]” St. Thomas further elucidates the same relation among the Infused Virtues stating:

All the moral virtues are Infused together with charity. The reason for this is that God operates no less perfectly in works of grace than in works of nature [...] Now it is evident that charity, inasmuch as it directs man to his last end, is the principle of all the good works that are referable (sic) to his last end. Wherefore all the moral virtues must needs be Infused together with charity since it is through them that man performs each different kind of good work.⁸²

The cited two texts are St. Thomas’s reply against the position of Duns Scotus who denies the need for Infused Moral virtues upon the infusion of Grace and the theological virtues. Sherwin further explains St. Thomas’s position when he says:

Aquinas’s teaching on the two measures that guide our actions explains ‘love alone’ is not enough. It explains why the theological virtues cannot be the only virtues the Christian receives with sanctifying grace. If faith, hope, and love are indeed to be human acts lived in the context of a human life, they require 1) the ability to judge practically about what we should do and when and how we should do it (Infused Prudence), as well as 2) an inclination in the will toward a higher justice (Infused justice), and 3) a receptivity in the passions to be guided by these higher judgments and inclinations (Infused courage and Temperance).⁸³

How about the relation between the Infused, and the acquired moral virtues?

In *De Virtutibus* art.10, ad 4, St. Thomas specifies the relations between Infused and acquired moral virtues. He says:

⁷⁹ “By this point, my arguments in support of the claim that there cannot be acquired cardinal virtues in the Christian should be evident.” William C. Mattison III. 2011. “Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues?” *Theological Studies* no. 72. p.584.

⁸⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, 284.

⁸¹ STh, II-II, a. 14, co.

⁸² STh, I-II, q.65, a.3, co.; *De Virt.* a.10, co.; also see *De Virt.* a. 10, ad 5.

⁸³ Sherwin, “Infused Virtues,” 41.

Since there is no merit without charity, the act of an acquired virtue cannot be meritorious without charity. Now the other virtues are Infused together with charity; hence an act of acquired virtue cannot be meritorious save through the (corresponding) Infused virtue. The virtue, which is ordained to an inferior end, produces no act ordered to a superior end, save by means of superior virtue; as the fortitude which is man's as an individual does not order its act to the common good save by means of that fortitude which is a kind of man in his capacity as a citizen.⁸⁴

The cited text distinguishes the acquired from the Infused Virtues, and it likewise shows their relation. For St. Thomas, any acquired virtue produces an act ordained to the natural end; while the Infused virtue produces an act ordained to the Supernatural end through Charity. However, an *acquired virtue* cannot produce an act for a superior end—*unless* a superior virtue ordains it.⁸⁵

It means that although the '*acts*' of the acquired virtues are only ordained to the natural end yet, these '*acts*' may be ordained to the supernatural end by means (mediante) of the '*acts*' of the Infused Virtues. It means the Infused virtue does not ordain the acquired virtue, as Knobel contends, rather the *acts of the infused virtues* ordain the *acts of the natural virtues* to a superior end (Beatific Vision). The virtue as habitual perfection is distinct from its act (its exercise).⁸⁶ It is in this sense that 'De Virtutibus, art. 10, ad 4' is understood.

Is the relation between the acquired and the Infused Virtues, a kind of 'mutual dependence' as John Inglis argues? 'Mutual dependence' between the acquired and Infused Virtues means that (1) the acquired virtues are perfectible only with the Infused ones, and that (2) the Infused Virtues cannot work without the acquired ones. Opposite to Inglis, Knobel argues for the non-mutual dependence because the acquired moral virtues *per se* are not ordained to the supernatural end.

Between the two extreme positions of John Inglis and of Knobel, a midway, —a *qualified interdependence* among the said virtues which the cited text De Virtutibus art.10, ad 4 supports. Considering the Thomistic distinction of 'ad esse' and 'ad melius esse,' we say, *ad esse*,⁸⁷ the '*acts*' of acquired moral virtues become meritorious only through (mediante) the corresponding acts of the Infused Moral virtues. It means without the mediation of the Infused Moral virtues, the '*acts*' of acquired moral virtues 'cannot' be ordained to Perfect Beatitude. On the other hand, though the Infused Virtues do not need (*ad esse*) the '*acts*' of acquired virtues

⁸⁴ De Virt. a.10, ad 4.

⁸⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange, Reality, 287.

⁸⁶ De Vir. a. 1, ad 4.

⁸⁷ 'Ad esse,' i.e., without which something cannot be (a conditio sine qua non).

towards Eternal Life, yet *ad melius esse*⁸⁸ the ‘acts’ of acquired virtues ease the exercise of Infused Virtues. This interpretation is in accord with Garrigou-Lagrange, he says “*Yet we must note that acquired virtue facilitates the exercise of the Infused virtue, as to illustrate, finger exercises facilitate the musician’s art, which resides in the musician’s intellect.*”⁸⁹

The ‘acts’ of acquired virtues of a man in the state of Grace renders the exercise of the Infused Virtues with ease and delight, which differs totally from a man in a state of Grace but without the acquired virtues as in the case of Matt Talbot who struggled to resist the temptations due to previous vices. Still with the stains of the previous vice, the soul with Infused Virtues (*sans* acquired virtues) moves towards God yet with difficulty—this will not be the case with one who possesses both the Infused and acquired virtues.

Hence the *qualified interdependence* between the acquired and Infused Virtues is understood through the cited *De Virtutibus* a.10, ad 4, that (1) the natural virtues *per se* cannot produce acts ordained to the supernatural end; however, (2) the ‘acts’ of the natural virtues can be ordained to the supernatural end by the superior virtues (Infused ones). Just as a habit is distinct from its act, so the act of virtue is distinct from the virtue itself.⁹⁰

Man, by the acquired virtues, becomes a ‘perfect image’ of God but he becomes a ‘son’ of God through Grace. However, a man with acquired virtues is disposed to receive Grace.⁹¹ Since Grace perfects nature, the Infused Virtues ordain the ‘acts’ of acquired virtues towards the Beatific Vision. Just as a man with acquired virtues is a good citizen of this world—so with the infused virtues, he becomes a citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom. On the other hand, the ‘acts’ of acquired virtues help the exercise of the infused virtues towards the Eternal End. God infuses Grace to the human nature without destroying it.⁹² When both the infused and acquired moral virtues are possessed, they help us endure our daily struggles. As St. Thomas puts it:

Acquired virtue prevails in this that the struggle is felt less, and this is due to how this virtue is caused, which is by repeated acts: for one loses the custom of obeying such passions when one becomes accustomed to resisting them, and that is why one is troubled by them less. But Infused virtue prevails in this, that although such passions are felt, they in no way

⁸⁸ ‘*Ad melius esse*’ i.e., not a necessary condition or means, yet with it, something becomes better or better done.

⁸⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, 288.

⁹⁰ *STh*, I-II, q. 96 a. 3 ad 2.

⁹¹ Sherwin, “Infused Virtues,” 51.

⁹² *De Virt.* a.9.co.; *De Virt.* a.10, co.

dominate, for Infused virtue brings it about that the concupiscence of sin is in no way obeyed, and as long as Infused Virtues remain, it does this infallibly.⁹³

In the mind of St. Thomas, a virtuous person (who possesses the acquired and the infused virtues) does not experience what Matt Talbot and other adult converts experienced.⁹⁴ With the acquired virtues alone, one does not suffer much sadness struggling with vices but he cannot resist the temptations infallibly. While, the one with the infused virtues alone can resist the temptations infallibly though with much sadness struggling with vices. Hence a *perfectly virtuous* person does not suffer much struggling with vices (because of acquired virtues), and he can resist the temptation infallibly (because of infused virtues). This mode is the midway between the mutual and non-mutual dependence of Inglis and Knobel respectively in light of *De Virtutibus* art. Q. 1, 10, ad 4 and ad 14.

Therefore, the conclusions derived from the three metaphysical assumptions likewise shed light on the ‘qualified’ interdependence between the Infused and the acquired virtues and the difficulties related to them.

Corollary: Can the same conclusions explain the twofold end of man?

When St. Thomas speaks of the twofold potency in man, i.e., natural and obediential, he speaks of the twofold end in man.⁹⁵ Man, for St. Thomas, has only One End, i.e., Happiness, but twofold: Natural and Supernatural.⁹⁶ The former is obtainable by man’s natural potency, and the latter is obtainable only through Grace because of Obediential Potency. The Natural end is acquirable by human efforts⁹⁷ while the Supernatural end is acquirable only by God’s active potency and liberality— made possible through Obediential Potency. Through the Obediential

⁹³ De Virt., q. 1, a.10, ad 14.

⁹⁴ Sherwin, “Infused Virtues,” 35-36.

⁹⁵ Some theologians think that man has two ends according to Aquinas, but Aquinas says man’s end is ‘two-fold,’ not two ends. He says in I-IIae, q. 1, a.5. that one man cannot have several last ends because 1) it is impossible for the appetite to tend to two things as its perfect good; 2) nature tends to one thing only; 3) the last end of man as man is to the whole human race, thus it is the same last end of any individual end.

⁹⁶ “I answer that Man is perfected by virtue, for those actions whereby he is directed to happiness, as was explained above. Now man’s happiness is twofold, as was also stated above. One is proportionate to human nature, a happiness, to wit, which man can obtain by means of his natural principles. The other is a happiness surpassing man’s nature, and which man can obtain by the power of God alone, by a kind of participation of the Godhead [...] And because such happiness surpasses the capacity of human nature, man’s natural principles which enable him to act well according to his capacity, do not suffice to direct man to this same happiness.” Sth I-IIae, q. 62, a. 1, corpus. Again, he says: “The end is twofold; the last end, and the proximate end.” STh, I-II, q.21, a. 1, ad 2.

⁹⁷ STh, I-II, q. 110, a. 3, co.; also see Sherwin, “Infused Virtues,” 38.

Potency of human nature that the Supernatural end can receive Divine nature (Hypostatic Union) as with Christ.⁹⁸

For St. Thomas, the natural end is man's proximate end ordainable to the Ultimate End, i.e., Eternal life.⁹⁹ Thus, Steven Long maintains: "This order of ends proportionate to human nature does not disappear with the bestowal of elevation of grace, but is assumed and further ordered toward the felicity of the supernatural end."¹⁰⁰ We negate the doctrine of the Theologians who deny the twofold end in man by calling the natural end of man—fictitious.¹⁰¹ They assume that the Eternal End is the only end meant for all men and that to speak of the natural end (i.e., Philosophically a perfect beatitude) is indistinguishable with Eternal End (i.e., Theologically the perfect Beatitude). Some theologians instead speak of two 'ladders' vis-à-vis the twofold end of man, and they suggest throwing one of these ladders away.¹⁰² However, these two ladders are understood to mean the 'twofold' end of man. The first ladder comes from man's natural potency to meet his natural end (upward movement) which, however, falls short of the supernatural end; while the second ladder comes from God (downward movement) who provides help (Grace) to some men upon whom He shows mercy to attain the Beatific Vision. These ladders, which come from opposite directions (up-down), can meet along the way through Grace. Because man is a creature and an image of God, he tends to God as his natural happiness attainable through his natural powers through the acquired virtues. As the natural happiness of man, God is the end of all men and of all things 'as of the thing which is the end,' and God is the end of all men (rational creatures) as the 'acquisition of the last end' as the imperfect beatitude.¹⁰³ However, some men are not only images of God as His creatures but they are His children in Grace and Charity;—in this case, God is their End as the 'acquisition of the last end' as the Perfect Beatitude.

⁹⁸ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, 308.

⁹⁹ "proximate end refers to the natural end." *STh*, I-II, q.75, a. 7, ad 1.

¹⁰⁰ Long, "Obediential Potency," 231.

¹⁰¹ *STh*, I-II, q.63, ad 2. "In a recent article, Brian Shanley approvingly cites Bradley's challenge to the legitimacy of any allegedly Thomistic Ethics based on the fictitious 'natural end' of man, noting that Bradley is in line with Laporta on this point." Steven Long, "Obediential Potency," footnote n. 19, 237.

¹⁰² Pinsent, Andrew. "A 'Copernican Revolution' of the virtues: One more step for Peter Hampson's integrative role of habitus." *The Transdisciplinary Journal of Christian Psychology*:31-32.

¹⁰³ *STh*, I-II, q.1 a. 8 co.

Final Note

Grace, though meant for all men, is not found in all,¹⁰⁴ and if given to some,¹⁰⁵ it is unequally Infused to them.¹⁰⁶ Grace is God's mercy and love for His elect; but, even among them, Grace is not given to them equally. The Grace of the predestined¹⁰⁷ is a special Grace which infallibly and impeccably assists him to gain Eternal Life through Charity.¹⁰⁸ As St. Thomas used to say: he whom God loves more has more charity,¹⁰⁹ so anyone who depicts the image of His Son is His beloved son and daughter.**PS**

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¹⁰⁴ STh, I-II, q.109, a.6, co.

¹⁰⁵ De Ver, q.6, a.1 corpus.

¹⁰⁶ STh, I-II, q.112, a.4, ad1.

¹⁰⁷ STh, I-II, q.110 a.1, co.

¹⁰⁸ STh, I-II, q.112, a.3, co.

¹⁰⁹ STh, I-iae, q.12, a. 6, co.

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