

Religion and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit¹

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Outside the Confines

WITHIN THE CONTEXT of reflection on interreligious dialog and the new evangelization, the topic “Religion and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit” piques the theological imagination. The mind turns with a certain liveness of spirit to a theme that, over the past fifty years, has both animated theologians and appeared in authoritative Church documents. I refer to the claim that the Holy Spirit works “outside of the visible confines of the Mystical Body.”² *Lumen Gentium* §16, though it makes no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit, sparks thinking along these lines. *Gaudium et Spes* §22 takes up the “outside” theme, though with specific reference to the Holy Spirit: “For, since Christ died for all men (see Rom. 8:32), and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with [the] paschal mystery.”³ So also *Ad Gentes* §15 makes refer-

¹ An earlier version of this article was delivered at the annual meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Saint Thomas Aquinas held in the Vatican City State on June 19–21, 2015. The general theme of the Academy’s sessions was “Religion and Religions: A Thomistic Look.”

² John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), §6. In the next sentence, the encyclical warns against using the testimonies of other religions as establishing grounds for doubt. The Pope refers to an anathema found in the nineteenth-century Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*, ch. 3 (*De fide*), can. 6.

³ Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, §16 (accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

ence to “the Holy Spirit, who calls all men to Christ by the seeds of the Lord and by the preaching of the Gospel.”⁴ Thus run several significant texts from the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).

In 1997, the Interreligious Dialogue Commission of the Central Committee for the Year 2000 published a short report on the “outside” theme titled “Presence and Actions of the Holy Spirit in the World and in Other Religions.” The author introduces his essay with these words: “The Christian community lives in the firm belief that it is guided by the Spirit, but God’s closeness to humankind, which is accomplished by the power of the Spirit, cannot be limited to the Christian community alone. The Spirit is free, and blows where it wills (Jn 3:8); wherever the Lord’s Spirit is, there is freedom.”⁵ All in all, the words of John 3:8, “The wind blows where it will,” have prompted over the past five decades broad considerations and interpretations about what significance this biblical affirmation may hold for Christian life and practice, including its serving as an endorsement for the “outside” theme.⁶ More recently, in his Presentation of Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia on 22 December 2014, Pope Francis, citing John 3:8, spoke about the “freedom of the Holy Spirit” to warn against curial “functionalism.”⁷ One may view this

⁴ Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes*, §15 (accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html).

⁵ Giovanni Cereti, “Presence and Actions of the Holy Spirit in the World and in Other Religions,” a document prepared for the Interreligious Dialogue Commission of the Central Committee for the Year 2000 (accessed August 5, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01091997_p-56_en.html). The author represents official teaching as it stood in 1997.

⁶ Of the three times that John 3:8 appears in the conciliar documents, none refers unequivocally to the “outside” theme. See Vatican II, *Apostolican Actuositatem*, § 3, and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, §§8 and 13.

⁷ Admittedly, the context of the reference does not relate directly to inter-religious matters. “The disease of excessive planning and of functionalism. When the apostle plans everything down to the last detail and believes that with perfect planning things will fall into place, he becomes an accountant or an office manager. Things need to be prepared well, but without ever falling into the temptation of trying to contain and direct the freedom of the Holy Spirit, which is always greater and more flexible than any human planning (cf. Jn 3:8). We contract this disease because ‘it is always more easy and comfortable to settle in our own sedentary and unchanging ways. In truth, the Church shows her fidelity to the Holy Spirit to the extent that she does not try to control or tame him . . . to tame the Holy Spirit! . . . He

papal admonition as an in-house variation on the “outside” theme.

Outside is not always a bad place from which to look. For example, it may be useful for students of comparative religion to draw up a list of values or beliefs found in other religions that may compare favorably with the received gifts of the Holy Spirit, for which the first magisterial reference may be found as early as the late fourth century (382).⁸ It would be odd, in fact, to think that such things as wisdom, counsel, and piety do not correspond, at least in name, to some of the highest aspirations found among the practitioners of non-Christian religions. More specific examples of possible inquiries also come to mind. One may envisage research into comparisons such as between knowledge and Brahman, understanding and Confucius, and fear of the Lord and the *fatwā*.⁹ Moreover, this kind of comparative exercise should be easy to accomplish. Research that aims to establish apparent parallels between Christian and non-Christian categories flourishes in schools where comparative religion has replaced the exercises of Catholic theology. It would surprise me, however, to discover that, today, much fruitfulness for the Catholic Church results from multidisciplinary investigations. Religious studies, at least in North America, have become increasingly prone to the promotion of religious and ethical relativism. In any event, the pursuit of these correlations would unlikely advance investigations into the place that the virtue of religion holds in the new evangelization. Such a pursuit may even entail odd reversals of theological method. A robust theology of the gifts of the Holy Spirit goes in search of its anthropological, psycho-

is freshness, imagination, and newness” (Pope Francis, Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia, December 22, 2014, accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html; quoting his own homily from a November 29 Mass of the same year, 2014, on apostolic journey to Turkey).

⁸ See the *Decretum Damasi* in Heinrich Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matter of Faith and Morals*, ed. by Peter Hünermann, 43rd ed., trans. and ed. Robert Fastiggi and Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), no. 178. For the latest pronouncement, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1831: “The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David (see Isa 11:1–2). They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.”

⁹ Pope Saint John Paul II raised certain considerations about elements of these world religions that may find points of correspondence within Catholicism (*Crossing the Threshold of Hope* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994], esp. 82–94).

logical, and similar foundations. An exercise of this kind could result in the theologically self-defeating effort to portray nature as perfecting grace. What is regrettable, at least from a Catholic viewpoint, appears in the frequency with which some version of the method of correlation controls theological style and education in Catholic settings.¹⁰

Advances in the new evangelization must be made, however. Recall the repeated exhortations of Pope Francis, who gave this reason for urgency: “How many men and women, on the existential peripheries created by a consumerist, atheistic society, wait for our closeness and our solidarity!”¹¹ Other voices are raised. One prophetic announcement came from the pen of the British poet T. S. Eliot († 1965). In his essays on *Christianity and Culture*, Eliot wrote: “If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes. Then you must start painfully again, and you cannot put on a new culture ready-made. You must wait for the grass to grow to feed the sheep to give the wool out of which your new coat will be made. You must pass through many centuries of barbarism. We should not live to see the new culture, nor would our great-great-great-grandchildren: and if we did, not one of us would be happy in it.”¹² Eliot first spoke these words in 1939 at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Though one may appreciate the suggestion that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, albeit in some disguised form, range outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body, T. S. Eliot’s prognosis (and perhaps Pope Francis’s exhortation) should give the Catholic theologian a moment for pause. That some Catholic theologians of the 1960s thought hypothesizing about “secularization” held promise for the future of Catholicism should be obvious to even the novice in theological studies.¹³ Perhaps

¹⁰ For an overall good-willed example, see *Searching for a Universal Ethic: Multidisciplinary, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Responses to the Catholic Natural Law Tradition*, ed. John Berkman and William C. Mattison, III (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

¹¹ Pope Francis, Address to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, Consistory Hall, May 29, 2015 (accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/may/documents/papa-francesco_20150529_nuova-evangelizzazione.html).

¹² T. S. Eliot, *Christianity and Culture: The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1949), 200.

¹³ For instance, see Harvey G. Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (New York: MacMillan, 1965), which appeared in

the Cambridge, Massachusetts, theologians of “The Secular City” should have paid more attention to the warning given by the Poet Eliot at the Cambridge six months before the start of World War II.

In any event, seventy-five years later, in 2015, world circumstances, as Pope Francis has warned, make it difficult to pursue the secularity option with a buoyant optimism.¹⁴ The Holy Father instead directs us to educate people, especially children, “to encounter Christ, living and working in his Church.”¹⁵ How better to achieve this salutary objective than by considering those “special dispositions, created in our powers by the Holy Ghost, for the purpose of perfecting the infused virtues”—to borrow the language of a venerable American author of the twentieth century?¹⁶

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

There is another consideration that dissuades us from pursuing an investigation into whether or not the gifts of the Holy Spirit may be found among those who subscribe to other world religions. The structure of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—if not the numbers that treat explicitly the gifts of the Holy Spirit—locates these divine graces within the confines of justified human existence.¹⁷ This presentation in the *Catechism* follows what, in 1897, Pope Leo XIII wrote in his encyclical *Divinum Illud Munus*. The following text, which is not included in the Denzinger collection, affords a convenient magisterial snapshot of what the Church holds about how the gifts of the Holy Spirit shape the life of the justified Christian:

The just man, that is to say he who lives the life of divine grace, and acts by the fitting virtues as by means of faculties, has need

the midst of the debate that preceded the passage of *Gaudium et Spes*. See also *The Secular City Debate*, ed. Daniel Callahan (New York: Macmillan, 1966). Callahan, then editor of the magazine *Commonweal*, wrote in the “Introduction” to these collected essays by both Catholics and Protestants: “I can attest from my own experience as an editor of a Catholic periodical that Cox’s book aroused unusual interest in the Roman Catholic community” (1).

¹⁴ For a different viewpoint on the “outside” theme, see Ralph Martin, *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).

¹⁵ Pope Francis, Address to Council for Promoting New Evangelization, May 29, 2015.

¹⁶ Robert Edward Brennan, O.P., *The Seven Horns of the Lamb* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1966), 11.

¹⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1830 and 1831.

of those seven gifts which are properly attributed to the Holy Ghost. By means of them the soul is furnished and strengthened so as to obey more easily and promptly His voice and impulse. Wherefore these gifts are of such efficacy that they lead the just man to the highest degree of sanctity; and of such excellence that they continue to exist even in heaven, though in a more perfect way. By means of these gifts the soul is excited and encouraged to seek after and attain the evangelical beatitudes, which, like the flowers that come forth in the spring time, are the signs and harbingers of eternal beatitude. Lastly there are those blessed fruits, enumerated by the Apostle (Gal. v., 22), which the Spirit, even in this mortal life, produces and shows forth in the just; fruits filled with all sweetness and joy, inasmuch as they proceed from the Spirit, “who is in the Trinity the sweetness of both Father and Son, filling all creatures with infinite fullness and profusion” (St. Aug. *de Trin.* 1. vi., c. 9).¹⁸

While admittedly not a definition of faith, this papal text clearly presents the gifts, beatitudes, and fruits of the Holy Spirit as among “those many heavenly gifts and helps that can only be enjoyed in the Catholic Church.”¹⁹ The influence of Aquinas shines forth.²⁰ One wonders whether contemporary students of theology would not mistake Pope Leo’s text for a page from a nineteenth-century scholastic manual.

Like the Church, spiritual authors discuss the gifts as the prerogatives of the justified. In 1994, Don Arnaldo Pedrini, S.D.B., published in the Academy’s series *Studi Tomistici* his *Bibliografia Tomistica sulla Pneumatologia*.²¹ This survey of the literature begins in 1870. Father Pedrini indicates that, within the period of his research, one

¹⁸ Pope Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus* (1897), §9 (accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_09051897_divinum-illud-munus.html).

¹⁹ Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (1943), §103, cited in Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, *Dominus Iesus* (2000), §22: “If it is true that the followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that objectively speaking they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation.”

²⁰ See Brennan, *Seven Horns*, 33.

²¹ Arnaldo Pedrini, S.D.B., *Bibliografia Tomistica sulla Pneumatologia*, Studi Tomistici 54 (Rome: LEV, 1994).

of the first treatments of the gifts of the Holy Spirit appears as early as 1882. Three years after the publication of *Aeterni Patris* (1879), the Swiss Jesuit Moritz Meschler (1830–1912) from the Valais published his work *Die Gabe des heiligen Pfingstfestes: Betrachtungen über den heiligen Geist*,²² and a French translation appeared in 1895, while an English one followed in 1903.²³ The book, a collection of tailored meditations on the Holy Spirit and his activity in the life of the Christian, originally was published in Germany a year after the launch of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* and remained in print long enough to warrant a new edition fifty years later!²⁴ It thus falls squarely within the discipline of spiritual theology that, during the period of moral casuistry, Servais-Th. Pinckaers has shown had become the normal category for such treatments.²⁵ When, in a chapter dedicated to the topic, Meschler begins to treat the gifts of the Holy Spirit, he includes a footnote that explains that his theology of the gifts depends mainly on the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas.²⁶ This is significant for two reasons. First, Meschler, though not numbered among the recognized Thomist authors of his period, claims Aquinas as his mentor.²⁷

²² Moritz Meschler, S.J., *Die Gabe des heiligen Pfingstfestes: Betrachtungen über den heiligen Geist* (Freiburg-im-Breslau: Herder, 1882). Even before 1879, Edward Cardinal Manning took up the theme of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in *The Internal Missions of the Holy Ghost* (New York: D.&J. Sadlier, 1875), although he relies more on Denys the Carthusian (1402–1471) than he draws explicitly from Aquinas.

²³ Moritz Meschler, *Le Don de la Pentecôte. Méditations sur le Saint Esprit*, ed. Ph. Mazoyer, 2 vols. (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1895); English translation as *The Gift of Pentecost: Meditations on the Holy Ghost*, trans. Amabel Kerr, (London: Sands and Company, 1903).

²⁴ See Meschler, *Die Gabe des heiligen Pfingstfestes*. For the effect of the *Kulturkampf* on the Jesuits, see Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

²⁵ See Servais-Th. Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 263–64.

²⁶ Meschler, *The Gift*, 230n1. He also acknowledges the great difference of opinion that one finds among the theologians when it comes to speaking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Aquinas influences the overall book, as the author attests in his introduction: “We have taken as our guides on this journey the great masters of theology, especially St. Thomas Aquinas, and his disciples and expounders, ancient and modern, as well as all the others from whom there is something to be learned about the Holy Ghost” (vii).

²⁷ Meschler does not appear in the exhaustive list of Thomist authors composed by Leonard A. Kennedy, C.S.B., *A Catalogue of Thomists, 1270–1900* (Houston,

Secondly, Aquinas clearly teaches that the gifts of the Holy Spirit “cannot exist apart from charity.”²⁸ Charity of course includes all that friendship with God entails.²⁹

Pedrini’s catalogue, which does not pretend to be exhaustive, includes some sixty-five publications, both books and articles, that treat the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the mind of the Angelic Doctor. Each considers the gifts as graces proper to the justified, to those who abide in charity. The final entry for 1989 refers to an essay by Horst Seidl, of our Academy, on the gift of Piety in John of Saint Thomas.³⁰ This seventeenth-century Iberian Thomist, as is well known, enjoys a certain prominence among the commentators for his treatment of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.³¹ One advantage of the Thomist commentatorial tradition is that those who interest themselves in it are always referred back to the saint who stands as the inspiration for his commentators. Many people think that the

TX: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1987). It may be interesting to note that Meschler does not adopt the Molinist interpretation of the how the gifts move—namely, that they set in motion the production of virtuous actions. For further information and a Thomist response to a Molinist author of a later period, R.P. de Guibert, S.J., and his unique interpretation of the surpahuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, see Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Perfection chrétienne et Contemplation selon S. Thomas d’Aquin et S. Jean de la Croix*, vol. 2 (Saint Maximin, FR: Éditions de La Vie Spirituelle, 1923), appendix 2, pp. [52]–[64].

²⁸ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [hereafter, *ST*] II-II, q. 19, a. 9. See also I-II, q. 68, a. 5.

²⁹ Pope Francis addressed this theme in the General Audience of November 6, 2013: “The Church grows only by the love that comes from the Holy Spirit. The Lord invites us to open ourselves to communion with him, in the Sacraments, in the charisms and in charity, in order to live out our Christian vocation with dignity!” (accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20131106_udienza-generale.html).

³⁰ H. Seidl, “Osservazioni al trattato di Giovanni di S. Tommaso sul dono della pietà,” *Angelicum* 66 (1989): 151–60.

³¹ See Javier Sese, “Juan de S.T. y su tratado de los dones del Espiritu Santo,” *Angelicum* 66 (1989): 161–84. See also Romanus Cessario, “A Thomist Interpretation of Faith: The Gifts of Understanding and Knowledge,” in *Novitas et Veritas Vitae: Aux Sources du Renouveau de la Morale Chrétienne; Mélanges Offerts au Professeur Servais Pinckaers à l’Occasion de Son 65e Anniversaire*, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1991): 67–102, and “John Poinso: On The Gift of Counsel,” in *The Common Things: Essays on Thomism and Education*, ed. Daniel McInerny (Mishawaka, IN: American Maritain Association, 1999): 163–78.

Thomist commentators distract from Thomas. In fact, the commentators have kept Aquinas alive. With the possible exception of Saint Bonaventure, who enjoys his own sort of following, the other figures of the middle ages remain, by and large, objects of historical investigation, most of which begins in the twentieth century. In any event, Pedrini's *Bibliografia* documents a fairly long suite of treatises on the gifts of the Holy Spirit that begins at the end of the nineteenth century and continues until the present day. During the roughly twenty-two years since Pedrini completed his work, authors have continued to discuss the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian.³² In April of 2014, Pope Francis himself devoted a series of General Audiences to the sevenfold gifts. He began by saying: "The Spirit himself is 'the gift of God' par excellence (cf. Jn 4:10), he is a gift of God, and he in turn communicates various spiritual gifts to those who receive him."³³

A recent scientific study on Aquinas's teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit comes from the atelier of the German Dominican Ulrich Horst. His title is straightforward: *Die Gaben des Heiligen Geistes nach Thomas von Aquin*.³⁴ Horst exposes carefully the important theological construction that Aquinas develops around the gifts of the Holy Spirit. From the historical point of view, Horst observes that earlier theologians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including the Dominicans Peter of Tarentaise († 1276), Robert Kilwardby († 1279), and Albert the Great († 1280), pioneered in explaining and organizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, Horst also points out that the secondary literature on patristic treatments of a theology of the gifts suggests that thematization of the gifts did not much detain patristic authors, even though both Augustine and Gregory the Great offer commentary and intuitions.³⁵ Aquinas, for his part, shows himself thinking about the theology of the gifts of the Holy Spirit from his earliest writings, including his Scripture

³² See for example the remarkable study by Daria Spezzano, *The Glory of God's Grace Deification According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2015), which includes a general discussion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (240–48).

³³ Pope Francis, General Audience of April 9, 2014 (accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140409_udienza-generale.html).

³⁴ Ulrich Horst, *Die Gaben des Heiligen Geistes nach Thomas von Aquin* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001).

³⁵ Ibid., 23n1.

commentaries, the *Summa contra gentiles*, and sermons. A magisterial refinement, reports Horst, appears in the *prima-secundae* of the *Summa theologiae*. There Aquinas associates each of the seven gifts with the powers or capacities of the human soul, both the intellectual and the appetitive “faculties.” Horst underscores the dynamic harmoniousness that the gifts of the Holy Spirit develop in the powers of the soul, one that benefits the human subject in his march toward the promised plenitude of happiness. He also commends the “instructive” article by M.-M. Labourdette in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* that remains, in Horst’s view, one of the best accounts of Saint Thomas’s theology of the gifts.³⁶

The contribution of twentieth-century French Thomist authors to the popularization of Aquinas’s doctrine on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, even under the guise of their providing Thomist spiritual instruction, is well known. The Dominicans Bartholomew Froget († 1905), Ambrose Gardeil († 1931), and Reginald Garrigou-La-grange († 1964) rank among the best known.³⁷ Father Labourdette’s lecture notes and articles, however, have inspired much Thomist reflection specifically on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including that by the author who probably is better known outside of France than he, the abovementioned Belgian Dominican Servais-Th. Pinckaers († 2008).³⁸

Father Labourdette stands in the line of classical Thomist commentators. He is more concerned to sniff out incursions of Molinism into the theology of the gifts than to worry about what historical exegesis may come up with in order to explain the different ways that, in his major writings, Aquinas organizes the sevenfold gifts.³⁹ For Labourdette, Aquinas’s doctrine of the gifts conforms

³⁶ Ibid., 43n6. See Marie-Michel Labourdette, O.P., “Dons du Saint-Esprit, IV, Saint Thomas et la théologie thomiste,” *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Paris: Dabert-Duvergier Beauchesne, 1957) 3:cols. 1610–35.

³⁷ Bartholomew Froget († 1905), *De l’habitation du Saint-Esprit dans les âmes justes* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1898); Ambrose Gardeil († 1931), *La structure de l’âme et l’expérience mystique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gabalda, 1927); R. Garrigou-Lagrange († 1964), *Perfection chrétienne et contemplation* (Paris: Éditions de la Vie Spirituelle, 1923). For more information, see Edward D. O’Connor, C.S.C., *The Gifts of the Spirit*, *Summa theologiae* 24 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 151–52.

³⁸ See Romanus Cessario, “On the Place of Servais Pinckaers († 7 April 2008) in the Renewal of Catholic Theology,” *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 1–27.

³⁹ For a brief account, see O’Connor, *Gifts*, 110–30. O’Connor speaks of an “evolution” in the thought of Aquinas.

perfectly to his conception of how the new law of grace works in the justified: “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God” (Rom 8: 14). Aquinas of course employed a Vulgate version of this text: “Quicumque enim spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei.” The true children of God are moved by God more than they move themselves.⁴⁰ The general doctrine of the infused virtues, whether the theological virtues or the moral virtues, takes account of this movement from within. However, as Labourdette insists, the *principles of action*, the infused *habitus*, differ from those direct divine movements that move on our *actions themselves*. Such movements Aquinas originally calls inspirations. “Inspiration,” the Common Doctor says, “denotes a motion coming from the outside.”⁴¹ He means, of course, outside the human creature, not outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body. Inspiration gives way to *instinctus* as Aquinas’s preferred way to describe the action of the Holy Spirit.⁴² For Saint Thomas, the gifts come from God in the form of *habitus* “by which man is perfected so as to obey the Holy Spirit readily.”⁴³

This brief summary of Aquinas’s teaching on the gifts suffices to consider a particular gift that may assist the Church to undertake the task of interreligious outreach with an eye toward her advancing the new evangelization. Which gift displays the most personal account of the virtue of religion? Pope Francis offers a suggestion. “Piety,” he says, “is synonymous with the genuine religious spirit, with filial trust in God, with that capacity to pray to him with the love and simplicity that belongs to those who are humble of heart.”⁴⁴

The Gift of Piety.

The gift of Piety occupies a stable niche in the architecture of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. One finds Piety in each of the various arrangements

⁴⁰ Pope Francis, General Audience, September 25, 2013: “Who is the driving force of the Church’s unity? It is the Holy Spirit, whom we have all received at Baptism and also in the Sacrament of Confirmation. . . . The Holy Spirit is the mover” (accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130925_udienza-generale.html).

⁴¹ *ST* I-II, q. 68, a. 1.

⁴² For further information, see O’Connor, *Gifts*, appendix 5 (131–41).

⁴³ *ST* I-II, q. 68, a. 3.

⁴⁴ Pope Francis, General Audience, June 4, 2014, accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140604_udienza-generale.html.

of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that Aquinas presents: in his *Sentences* commentary and in both the *prima-secundae* and *secunda-secundae* of the *Summa theologiae*. In the *Sentence* commentary, Aquinas associates piety with the needs of the active life. Piety directs the execution of our actions that regard other people, whereas Fortitude and Fear direct the emotional life of man. In the *prima-secundae*, Aquinas leaves Piety as a gift that aids our dealings with other people, although he signals the gift's relationship to the workings of the rational appetite or the will.⁴⁵ Some opine that Aquinas's understanding of moral psychology underwent a certain development.⁴⁶ In the *secunda-secundae*, where Aquinas's pairing of gifts with the virtues dominates the landscape, he places the gift of Piety at the service of the virtue of justice.⁴⁷ The definition that Aquinas sets down in the *secunda-secundae* affords a comprehensive statement about his intuition into piety. "The distinctive meaning of piety," he writes, "involves offering service and honour to a father and so it follows that the Piety whereby these are offered to God as our father under the special prompting [*per instinctum*] of the Holy Spirit is a Gift of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁸ Aquinas is quite straightforward about the specific context in which the gift of Piety operates, as Horst Seidl has shown in his study of John of Saint Thomas.⁴⁹ First of all, Aquinas distinguishes the gift from the virtue—whether acquired or infused—of piety. One finds this latter virtuous quality of soul in the person who honors and serves a natural father. Because something of a moral debt governs child–parent relationships, piety ranks among the potential parts of the cardinal virtue of justice, which is the virtue that concerns our rendering the *justum*, or the just thing.⁵⁰ As a virtue, piety is distinguished from both religion and what Aquinas calls respect or observance.⁵¹ The gift of Piety belongs to those who practice the virtues of veneration and who, in a word, also have been taught by God to pray the Our Father.

⁴⁵ *ST* I-II, q. 68, a. 4.

⁴⁶ O'Connor, *Gifts*, 119.

⁴⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 121. Because of the lengthier treatment given to each gift in the *secunda-secundae*, one may appreciate why Aquinas's commentators took these texts as his fully developed position on the gifts. Labourdette, as we have seen, prefers to see the several presentations as complementary. For an account of the several arrangements, see O'Connor, *Gifts*, 130.

⁴⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 121, a. 1, trans. T. C. O'Brien, in *Virtues of Justice in the Human Community*, *Summa Theologiae* 41, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972).

⁴⁹ Seidl, "Osservazioni," 157–60.

⁵⁰ The commentatorial tradition includes piety among the virtues of veneration.

⁵¹ See *ST* II-II, q. 80, a. 1.

Aquinas situates the gift of Piety close to the virtue of religion. He distinguishes between acquired and infused religion. Religion surpasses the virtue of piety, inasmuch as to show reverence toward God excels our showing reverence toward an earthly father. At the same time, the gift of Piety, which offers reverence to God precisely as the Heavenly Father (whom Christ alone reveals), surpasses the virtue of religion, inasmuch as religion, conceived of as a human virtue, reveres God as creator and lord. As one commentator has observed, “a natural virtue of religion, based on a metaphysics of divine causality, however rare it might be, is still conceivable.”⁵² To qualify as a virtue, however, natural religion can embrace nothing of the unreasonable, as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI has reminded us.⁵³ At the same time, even reasonable religion fades in comparison with how the gift of Piety ennobles the Christian believer. Father Labourdette draws on the commentary of Cardinal Cajetan: the gift of Piety “makes us regard things and persons ‘ut filios et res Patris’—as children and the belongings of the Heavenly Father.”⁵⁴

To return to our Jesuit author, Meschler, one notes again that his discussion of the gift of Piety places the gifts squarely within the context of the believer’s achieving Christian perfection. Although the effort to restrict the gifts to the service of a special class of Christians has been corrected by post-conciliar moral theologians such as Father Pinckaers, what a spiritual author of the casuist period wrote about the gift of Piety still merits our consideration. In accord with his overall perspectives on the spiritual life, Father Meschler instructs

⁵² T. C. O’Brien, *Virtues*, 287n“d.”

⁵³ See Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with the Representatives of Science, Lecture of the Holy Father, Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg, 12 September 2006: “‘God,’ he [Manuel II Paleologus] says, ‘is not pleased by blood—and not acting reasonably (σὺν λόγῳ) is contrary to God’s nature.’ . . . Is the conviction that acting unreasonably contradicts God’s nature merely a Greek idea, or is it always and intrinsically true? I believe that here we can see the profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the biblical understanding of faith in God” (accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html).

⁵⁴ Marie-Michel Labourdette, O.P., *Cours de Théologie Morale: Vertus Rattachées À La Justice (IIa-IIae, 80–120)*, (Toulouse, FR: Province dominicaine, 1960–1961), vol. 2, p. 467. Pope Francis makes the same observation in his General Audience of June 4, 2014: “If the gift of piety makes us grow in relation to and in communion with God and leads us to live as his children, at the same time, it helps us to pass this love on to others as well and to recognize them as our brothers and sisters.”

that those intent on achieving perfection must “cultivate” the gift of Piety.⁵⁵ Why? He offers five reasons: first, the gift of Piety helps one pray frequently and much because it makes of prayer a familiar conversation between child and Father; second, the gift of Piety gives encouragement to the believer, inasmuch as nothing sustains a person in difficult circumstances as does the knowledge of a father’s love; third, since filial love spawns generosity, Piety disposes the Christian to make sacrifices; fourth, while the road to perfection brings crosses and sufferings, gift-prompted filial Piety eases these sufferings inasmuch as we recognize in them the will of a heavenly Father and not faceless misfortune; fifth, the gift of Piety brings a liberty of spirit, a self-forgetfulness that prospers our movement toward perfection.⁵⁶ Liberty of spirit and self-forgetfulness, says Meschler, stand out as the happy prerogatives of being a child. Our author’s insight into the gift of Piety reveals a synthesis that coheres with what Saint Thomas teaches about the paradigm for Christian living. Today, we again associate the gift of Piety with those dedicated to holiness by their perseverance in the life of charity. In other words, no Christian life gets along well without the aforementioned five spiritual qualities.

In conclusion, I should like briefly to remark that Pope Francis has emphasized each of the same five qualities of Christian living that Meschler set down in 1882. First is the importance of praying a lot: “Insistence, courage. It is tiring, true, but this is prayer. This is what receiving a grace from God is.”⁵⁷ Second is the need for courage: “Along the way, the wise men encountered many difficulties . . . which they manage to overcome thanks to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, who speaks through the prophecies of sacred Scripture.”⁵⁸ Third is the need for generosity to embrace sufferings: “They

⁵⁵ For what follows in this paragraph, see Meschler, *The Gift*, 280.

⁵⁶ Charles Journet captures this thought about bearing hardships: “In times of difficulty or sadness, in times of suffering, if you frequently call to mind that God is in you to give you his love, you will not be alone, you will find the Guest within you, and he will answer you” (*The Meaning of Grace* [New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1960], 14).

⁵⁷ Pope Francis, Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, July 1, 2013, “Praying bravely to the Lord,” accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130701_praying-bravely.html.

⁵⁸ Pope Francis, Homily, Holy Mass on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, January 6, 2015, accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150106_omelia-epifania.html.

[the Korean martyrs] were willing to make great sacrifices and let themselves be stripped of whatever kept them from Christ—possessions and land, prestige and honor—for they knew that Christ alone was their true treasure.”⁵⁹ Fourth is the ability to sustain crosses and difficulties: “The mystery of the Cross. It can only be understood, a little bit, by kneeling, in prayer, but also through tears: they are the tears that bring us close to this mystery.”⁶⁰ Lastly is freedom from self-absorption and a liberty of spirit: “It is so difficult to listen to the voice of Jesus, the voice of God, when you believe that the whole world revolves around you: there is no horizon, because you become your own horizon. And there is more behind all of this, something far deeper: fear of generosity. We are afraid of God’s generosity. He is so great that we fear Him.”⁶¹ Do we not see in these expressions a fulfillment of what Pope Saint John XXIII asserted hopefully at the start of the Second Vatican Council? “Est enim aliud ipsum depositum Fidei, seu veritates, quae veneranda doctrina nostra continentur, aliud modus, quo eadem enuntiantur, eodem tamen sensu eademque sententia.”⁶²

When the members of the Church cherish these characteristics—and they can be developed only within the confines of the Church’s sacramental administration—and, under the leadership of their

⁵⁹ Pope Francis, Homily, Holy Mass for the Beatification of Paul Yun Ji-chung and 123 Martyr Companions, (Seoul) Gwanghwamun Gate, August 16, 2014, accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140816_corea-omelia-beatificazione.html.

⁶⁰ Pope Francis, Homily, Holy Mass on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 14, 2013, accessed August 5, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140914_omelia-rito-matrimonio.html.

⁶¹ Pope Francis, Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, November 4, 2014, “God’s Gift is Free,” accessed August 5, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20141104_god-s-gift-is-free.html.

⁶² Pope John XXIII, Opening Speech to the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (October 11, 1962), in *Enchiridion Vaticanum Documneti il Concilio Vaticano II* (Bologna: EDB, 1971), 44. This passage is a Golden Apple of Discord of sorts, and one can see why, when considering the project of translating it into English, it is a telling fact that the Vatican does not seem to have provided anywhere an official English translation, although they do provide translations in some Romance languages. The battle rages over words like *sensu* and *sententia* and *aliud modus, quo eadem enuntiantur*: how does one translate them into English?

Pastors, work together, then one will witness the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially Piety, for the new evangelization. Or as Pope Francis puts it, “The gift of piety which the Holy Spirit gives us makes us gentle, makes us calm, patient, at peace with God, at the service of others with gentleness.”⁶³ 

⁶³ Pope Francis, General Audience, June 4, 2014.