

Communicatio imperfecta:
**The Dominican Order and Thomism in the Service of
the Church's Intellectual Life and Universal Mission**

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“‘Tradition,’ taken in a broad sense, and ‘progress’ are not opposites, but necessary components of the life and vital function of the Church.”

–H. Jedin¹

“The same men are not good rememberers and good recollectors.”

–Thomas Aquinas²

THE TOPICS SUGGESTED for this essay, the Dominican Order, Thomism, the Church, her intellectual life and universal mission, will be

¹ Hubert Jedin, *Vaticanum II und Tridentinum. Tradition und Fortschritt in der Kirchengeschichte*, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. Geisteswissenschaften 146, ed. Leo Brandt (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1968), 25.

² Twice citing Aristotle's text on *mneme* and *anamnesis*, 449b4–8; Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Libri De sensu et sensato, cuius secundus tractatus est De memoria et reminiscencia*, lectio 8, no. 1: “Postquam philosophus ostendit modum reminiscendi, nunc ostendit differentiam memoriae et reminiscenciae. Innuit autem tres differentias: quarum prima est ex aptitudine ad utrumque. Dictum est enim supra quod non iidem homines sunt bene memorativi et reminiscitivi.” The Latin follows the 1949 “editio Taurini” as represented in the electronic online *Corpus Thomisticum* of Roberto Busa and Enrique Alarcón. The final sentence cited here is from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentaries on Aristotle's “On Sense and What Is Sensed” and “On Memory and Recollection,”* trans. Kevin White and Edward M. Macierowski (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 230. Cf. *ibid.*, lectio 1, no. 4: “Non enim iidem homines inveniuntur ita bene memorativi et bene reminiscitivi”; *ibid.*, 185: “For we do not find that *the same* men have good *memories* and good powers of *recollection*.” Cf. the helpful introduction in *ibid.*, 169–82.

reduced here to three questions, still broad in scope: what is the Church sent to be and do for humankind, what is the Dominican Order sent to be and do for the Church, and what is Thomism still called to be and do with and for the Order today? Given the complexity of these three issues, we begin with something simple, not *quoad nos*, but *in se*: “the doctrine of God, one and triune,” or better, an idea that Thomas Aquinas referenced without making it, as had William of Auxerre,³ the center of his thought: the notion of the Trinity as *communicatio perfecta*. The two times in his commentary on the first book of the *Sentences*, where the young *baccalaureus* Thomas first makes explicit use of this figure, he explicates the contrast to us. There could be no complete sharing by God of his goodness—the otherwise absolute good could never be fully and absolutely good, fully *diffusivum sui*—were this goodness shared only with creatures, who can take part in the divine goodness in at best fragmentary ways.⁴ “The good cannot be perfectly shared with creatures,”⁵ even though this imperfect sharing is better than all else that creatures could hope for, an imperfect sharing that perfects the ultimate human hopes. Thomas thus echoes William on the plausibility of the Trinity, while accentuating the consequent freedom of God’s creating that follows from this insight into the diffusive character of goodness. The communication of the good to creatures, while not perfect, is also not necessary, but a free decision. God has always been and had relationality and perfect sharing or *communicatio boni* in himself. The diffusion of goodness into its imperfect communication with creatures was a free choice and remains one of the best reasons for us not to despair of it, given his foreknowledge

³ Cf. esp. Johannes Arnold, “*Perfecta communicatio*”: *Die Trinitätstheologie Wilhelms von Auxerre*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge 42 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1995), 17–19; on the reception of these ideas before Thomas, cf. Gilles Emery, *Trinity in Aquinas* (Ypsilanti, MI: Sapientia, 2003), 18–21.

⁴ *In I Sent.* d. 2, q. 1 a. 4, s.c. 1: “Sed in creaturis non summe se communicat, quia non recipiunt totam bonitatem suam. Ergo oportet quod sit communicatio perfecta, ut scilicet totam suam bonitatem alii communicet. Hoc autem non potest esse in diversitate essentiae.” The Latin follows the 1856 Parma edition as represented in the electronic online Corpus Thomisticum of Roberto Busa and Enrique Alarcón.

⁵ *In I Sent.* d. 10, q. 1, a. 5, arg. 3: “Sed propter summam bonitatem et liberalitatem convenit patri quod naturam suam communicet alii, quia bonum est communicativum sui. Ergo eadem ratione spiritus sanctus communicabit naturam suam perfectae communicatione. Sed non perfecte communicat creaturae.”

of the final outcome. Thomas thematizes at greater length and far more programatically than the place of *communicatio* in the immanent Trinity this subsequent point: that God's desire to share his goodness also leaves him with and leads him to the option of sharing his life with creatures, in particular with created persons, who can receive and respond to it in ways that, if imperfect, are graced, moving them beyond some of their creaturely limitations and making a blessing of still other of the limitations that remain. It is this key and for Thomas characteristic insight into *caritas* as friendship that will lead him to his most extensive theological reflection on *communicatio*, located for the most part in the theology of how the Trinity shares its beatitude even with less receptive persons. It belongs to the original and programmatic insights of the young Thomas into the potential significance of a theological reception of Aristotle—sometimes, as here, an Aristotle read against the grain—that charity between God and humans—*pace* Aristotle—could indeed be understood as friendship based on shared goods, a *communicatio boni* of unique character. It is this sapiential view of divine-human friendship that will lead Thomas to treat the theme of communication most extensively. It is also this original and lasting insight of Thomas into charity as friendship based on free if imperfect *communicatio* that can also generate answers to the three questions posed here, the answers to which all have to do with *communicatio*.

The Church's Universal Mission, Her Intellectual Life, and the Postconciliar Place of Thomistic Studies

The historical situation for understanding our three questions can be located on the map of possibilities in good part by attention to the co-ordinates of the Second Vatican Council. The twin difficulties in accessing the Council or assessing its reception locate the difficulties for the renewal of Thomism as well, namely the deceptive sense of "Been there, done that,"⁶ and the understandable desire to avoid the ideological wars associated with the Council, its prehistory and its re-

⁶ Despite the unnecessary narrowness of the term as it is used here, cf. the specific and—in academic communities—all-too-familiar sense of *Zweideutigkeit* in Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 19th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2006), §37, 173–75: the mere suggestion that an idea is not altogether novel can provide a pretext to ignore it.

ception. Both sorts of difficulties regarding the impression of exhausted polemic are qualified by the cogency of a relatively new “hermeneutic of reform.” This reading of the Council and postconciliar developments, suggested by Benedict XVI in the first year of his pontificate⁷ and articulated and nuanced since then by many authors, notably by Cardinal Kurt Koch,⁸ as an alternative to reading the Council through a hermeneutics of rupture or a hermeneutics of mere continuity. The third possibility, a hermeneutics of reform, can profit much from the historical research of the last twenty years into the genesis of the conciliar documents and the identification of the *de facto* inclusion in all sixteen documents of the opposed moments of innovation and reaffirmation. The hermeneutics of reform adds to the historical identification of the debates and differences at the Council the normative value of acknowledging *de iure* both movements as necessary components of noncontradictory complementarity, recalling elements from both in a synthesis of mere contraries: for example, strengthening the episcopacy not through the weaknesses but through the strengths of papal and priestly service; enlivening the laity by an extension but also by the renewal of religious and priestly life; embracing inner Christian ecumenism and the value of non-Christian religions by a renewed affirmation of Roman Catholic identity; a greater appreciative solidarity with the *gaudium et spes* of today’s world by greater critical attention to contemporary *luctus et angor*, knowing that the Church is nearer to the world when she is also sensitive to its weaknesses; contributing to the humanity-wide task of education by also developing Catholic schools and universities; or enhancing the actual participation of the laity in the liturgy by a greater awareness of Christ, not the communi-

⁷ The text of Benedict’s address to the Roman curia on December 22, 2005, can be found at the website of the Holy See (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html) as well as in print, e.g., in the relevant excerpt by Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering, eds., *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), ix–xv.

⁸ Benedict XVI with his *Schülerkreis* and Kurt Koch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2012), again including the relevant passages from the cited address by Benedict XVI (9–19) and Koch’s clearer positioning of “the hermeneutic of reform between the hermeneutic of a rupture-like discontinuity and the hermeneutic of a-historical continuity” (22–50).

ty, as the principal subject of Eucharistic intercession. The significance of national and regional rights to development articulated immediately after the Council by its reception in the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) will be nuanced, not diminished, by the increasing awareness from the 1970s onward of the complexity of “sustainable development” and the limits of technological progress. More than the documentation of the debates still evident in the texts, the normative synthesis of majority and minority passages from the agreed upon Vatican documents is at the center of a hermeneutics of reform.

Fifty years after the Council itself, the ongoing need for a more adequate reception and development of the Council than what could be achieved by the polemical prolongation of its all too real antitheses confirms the basic lessons of hermeneutical philosophy on the necessity and the difficulties of recollective narrative, on the potential use and misuse both of memory⁹ and of the forgetting necessary for it; indeed, “remembering is possible only on the basis of forgetting.”¹⁰ As H. G. Gadamer elucidated:

In ways that are largely overlooked, forgetting belongs to the relation between retaining and remembering. Forgetting means not merely loss and privation, but, as F. Nietzsche stressed, it is a necessary condition for the life of our mind. It is only by forgetting that our mind receives the possibility of a thorough-going renewal, the ability to see things anew with a fresh look, so that what was old and familiar now blends with what is newly seen into a multidimensional unity.¹¹

⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2000). Here in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), esp. Part I, 1–130, and Part III, chap. 3 with epilogue, 412–506.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §68 a, 339.

¹¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1975), 13, with reference to the same source that would be recalled by Ricoeur as well: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben, here in: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie. Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen I-IV. Nachgelassene Schriften 1870-1873*, Kritische Studienausgabe, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München, Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag; Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 1980), 243–334.

In the context of our overall topic,¹² the question will be, what about Thomas was forgotten fifty years ago, and what did that forgetting help us meanwhile to recall? Because a certain kind of forgetting is necessary for there to be genuine recollection,¹³ and because forgetting, therefore, like remembering, needs direction and self-examination,¹⁴ it is not surprising that time had to pass before the all too real, often scarring, conflicts

¹² One of the signature theological defenses of memory in recent years seems at first to work from a simple contrast between the good of anamnestic reason and the evil of cultural amnesia; cf. Johann Baptist Metz, *Memoria passionis: Ein provozierendes Gedächtnis in pluralistischer Gesellschaft* (Freiburg: Herder, 2006), 41–43. A closer examination of Metz's recollection—say, of traditions of apocalyptic thought or religious life—shows him to be adept at genuinely anamnestic refigurement. Even without referring to Aristotle's insistence that recollection—*anamnesis*, unlike *mneme*—presupposes forgetting, Metz develops a phrase from Ernst Bloch to distinguish “productive noncontemporaneity” from two deficient forms of “unproductive noncontemporaneity.” The fixation on the past, to which Metz consigns “neoscholasticism” without further distinction, and an *Aufholmentalität*, the habitually felt need to catch up with and surpass the latest development, seem in both cases of unproductive noncontemporaneity to lack the imagination of how recollection refigures contexts to read the remembered texts of the past with new promise; cf. J. B. Metz, “Produktive Ungleichzeitigkeit,” in *Stichworte zur 'Geistigen Situation der Zeit' 2. Band: Politik und Kultur*, ed. Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979/1980), 529–38 (J. B. Metz, “Productive Noncontemporaneity,” in *Observations on “The Spiritual Situation of the Age,”* ed. Jürgen Habermas, trans. Andrew Buchwalter [Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1984], 169–77). What Metz is proposing, resembles anamnestic more than mnemonic reason.

¹³ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 42, 593ff, recalled this insight into forgetting as the prerequisite of recollection and, while passing over Gadamer's development of this shared observation, expressed his surprise that the positive potentiality of forgetting is not more programmatic in Heidegger's own magnum opus. In a series of essays published just prior to *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricoeur had identified the weakness of Heidegger's concept of history as looking only for the unrealized potential of the past, leading to an indifference toward those elements of the past that could not be considered easily for inclusion in a desirable future identity. The strength of the self can be judged on its ability to face a difficult past. For this warning against the improper forgetting by revisionist forms of history (a warning of note also for efforts at Thomistic renewal), cf. P. Ricoeur, “La marque du passé,” in *Mémoire, Histoire*, *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 1 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), and P. Ricoeur, *Das Rätsel der Vergangenheit: Erinnern—Vergessen—Verzeihen*, trans. Burkhard Liebsch, Andris Breitling, and Henrik Richard Lesaar (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998).

¹⁴ For the importance to the self of relationships to that other that is not made or remade but acknowledged by the self, cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1990), here according to Kathleen Blamey, trans., *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

at the Council and in the years following it could be “forgotten” enough, to allow the scribes who had become disciples to imitate “the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old” (Mt 13:52). Locating the question of the Church’s universal mission within a hermeneutic of conciliar reform is made easier by the Council’s own focus on the Church *ad intra et ad extra*. In both directions, the immediate conflictual reality of the Council needed to become historical before the implicit, synthetic possibilities of the Church’s mission could unfold, with a renewal *ad intra* as both the prerequisite and the fruit of a new engagement *ad extra*. The reading of the Council and the renewal of Thomism both require for the desired synthesis of *nova et vetera* the twin arts of intentional forgetting and intentional recollection.¹⁵

The importance of the conciliar context for the study of St. Thomas is not only and not principally to be sought “in recto” in the roughly twenty express references to Thomas Aquinas to be found at the Council. That holds true even for the most overt controversies, such as in the Decree on Priestly Training, *Optatam totius* 16, with its reference, inter alia, to the study of St. Thomas as a guide and aid to the kind of speculation that can illumine and interconnect, “as completely as possible,” the mysteries of salvation; likewise for the Declaration on Education, *Gravissimum educationis* 10, where universities, in particular Catholic universities and faculties, are encouraged to pursue “questions that are new and current . . . according to the example of the doctors of the Church and especially of St. Thomas Aquinas,” in pursuit of “a deeper realization of the harmony of faith and science.” The harmonizing or compromise character of the explicit conciliar references to St. Thomas becomes clearer when one considers, notably in the case of priestly training, the skeptical reception of the submissions by the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities (signed only by its Secretary, Dino Staffa) and—as Fr. Thomas Joseph White discusses in his contribution in this volume—

¹⁵ For examples of dysfunctional relationality in the Thomistic tradition that should not be completely forgotten but provide little positive exemplarity for the future, cf. Claudia Heimann, “*Quis proprie hereticus est?* Nicolaus Eymerichs Häresiebegriff und dessen Anwendung auf die Juden,” in *Praedicatores Inquisitores I*, *Dissertationes Historicae* XXIX, ed. Arturo Bernal Palacios (Rome: Instituto Storico Domenicano, 2004), 595–624, and R. Schenk, “Johannes de Montesono Valentinus,” in *Marienlexikon III*, ed. Remigius Bäumer and Leo Scheffczyk (St. Ottilien: Eos, 1991), 407–8.

by the Lateran University (Cornelio Fabro), calling for the return of St. Thomas and his leadership in the course of studies.¹⁶ The moment of discontinuity is to be found in the Council's rejection of these strongly pro-Thomistic suggestions and concomitantly in the forgetting or relativizing of Thomas as *doctor communis*, that is, in the search for far wider resources both for *ressourcement* und *aggiornamento*. While this partial but perceptible forgetting of the *doctor communis* can be documented in the quantitative reduction of the presence of Thomism in postconciliar theological education and discourse, the recollection of Thomas as a quite uncommon pioneer of theological and philosophical renewal has been enhanced. The roughly one thousand titles that the bibliography of the *Corpus thomisticum* records annually for Thomistic studies (without claiming to be comprehensive) is still less impressive than the success in the last fifty years of attempts to locate Thomas in the context of, including his differences from, many of his and our contemporaries. The previous norms on Thomistic studies had led many "Thomistic" ventriloquists into the temptation to place the appealing ideas of a Fichte or a Hegel into the mouth of Thomas himself rather than placing him in the give-and-take of open discourse with these later thinkers. Attention to the developments within Thomas's own thought, once the topic of Thomistic research in the middle ages and early modernity, documenting, for example, "where Thomas spoke better in the Summa than in the Sentences,"¹⁷ has been retrieved and enhanced in the last fifty years. To begin now to ignore the shifts and development of thought within Thomas's own corpus of writings would be regressive, a violation of what in J. H. Newman's terms could be called the "logical sequence" of the Thomistic tradition. The scope of *genera* in Thomas's theological and philosophical works, including homiletic and biblical work, has won new attention.

¹⁶ Cf. the reference to this programmatic volume of *Aquinas* (vol. III, 1960) by Ottmar Fuchs and Peter Hünemann, "Theologischer Kommentar zur Ausbildung der Priester *Optatam totius*," in *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, ed. Peter Hünemann and Bernd-Jochen Hilberath (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), III:349ff.

¹⁷ Cf. Martin Grabmann, "Hilfsmittel des Thomasstudiums aus alter Zeit (Abbreviationes, Concordantiae, Tabulae): Auf Grund handschriftlicher Forschungen dargestellt," in *Divus Thomas*, vol. 1 (Fribourg: Paulusverlag, 1923), according to Martin Grabmann, *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben* (Munich: Hueber, 1936; reprint, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1984), II: 424–89.

Appreciation has grown for the particular, theological programmatic of Thomas, including but not reduced to the theological impetus behind the properly philosophical work not just of his early, but, tellingly, precisely of his later years; Thomas's work became increasingly philosophical toward the end of his life. Attempts to locate the essence of "Thomism" either chiefly in a philosophical system or, at the other extreme, without any significant reference to Thomas's philosophical work fail to preserve the "type" of Thomas's historical achievement and many of the possibilities of its systematic retrieval. The once stylish dismissal *in globo* of later Thomists in contrast to Thomas himself shows signs of yielding to a more historical, more Newman-like sense of the necessity and fragility of genuine organic development, confirming for the growth of Thomism the applicability of Newman's seven notes of genuine development and its navigation between the Sylla of mere repetition or self-referentiality and the Charybdis of the lost grasp of seminal truths. Thomistic scholarship can be identified as a genuine development of Thomas's thought only when it evidences a "preservation of type" (e.g., regarding creator/creature, grace/nature, faith/reason, innovation/convention, self-reflection/dialogue, theology/philosophy) in novel forms and instances of appearance, discourse and debate; the "continuity of (Thomistic) principles" in their application to doctrines and issues not yet known in Thomas's day or in previous phases of his historical reception; the "power to assimilate" non-Thomistic sources without being assimilated by them; identifying in Thomas's writings their "anticipation of the future," including our future, and the "logical sequence" that precludes both the abstraction from Thomas's own internal development and the glib dismissal of Thomas in favor of patristic simplicity or even the dismissal of later Thomism in favor of an ahistorical, even anachronistic, return to the writings of Thomas alone, testing Thomism's "conservative action" upon its Thomasian sources precisely by its "chronic vigour" in addressing without stagnation or fad-driven abruptness ever new challenges to the believability of the faith.

All this points to the significance for Thomistic studies of the controversial reception of Thomas's legacy in its epochal development, from the *Defensiones* and *Commentatores* to the post-Tridentine *Disputationes*, here of course with attention to God's prevenient grace and much more, followed by the Barock scholasticism and the various neo-Thom-

isms of the last century.¹⁸ Each epoch and method can be judged in comparison to the others by Newman's seven notes; each will have forgotten many aspects of Thomas, recalled and thematized others, and assimilated outside sources and issues. The postconciliar trend to a more historical and particular reading of the uncommon Thomas and his reception, the shift in focus from the *doctor communis* to *frater Thomas* and his later readers, continues to prepare and enable a systematic appropriation that can surprise and enrich us, no longer representing just the moment of continuity, but offering unfamiliar resources for the postconciliar synthetic project of a hermeneutics of reform and its refiguring the unity-in-tension of the conciliar legacy. Where fifty years ago the *doctor communis* was forgotten, *frater Thomas* and his uncommon tradition(s) have increasingly been remembered as a concrete reality of the past and as a distinct, often never yet realized possibility of our future.

The ability to step back from the letter of the commentatorial traditions (in themselves richly diverse and, like today, often adversarial among themselves) has enriched even its understanding. To take just two examples: Thomas Hibbs's use of contemporary narrative and rhetorical studies, including Alasdair MacIntyre's nontraditional retrievals of pre-Thomistic, Aristotelian insights, has improved our ability to read both the *Summa contra gentiles* and its commentators so as to renew our sense of the possibilities of contemporary *protrepsis*.¹⁹ There would be no serious advantage to construing an antithesis between Hibbs and, say, Francesco Silvestri. A detailed *relecture* of the latter in light of the former would be hard but welcome work. A second example: Michael J. Dodds's dissertation, prepared at Fribourg in large part under the direction of Coleman O'Neil, has helped provide an intelligible Thomistic answer, drawing on Thomas's own rich sense of divine motion, to closely

¹⁸ Cf. the remarks on the "Customary Divisions in the History of Thomism" and the "New Reading" of Thomism as a "continuum" in Romanus Cessario, *A Short History of Thomism* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), esp. 28–39. Contrast in the many works of Gerard McCool the surprisingly linear narration of the evolution of diverse Thomisms toward post-Thomistic transcendentalism, e.g., *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989), *The Neo-Thomists* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994).

¹⁹ Cf. Thomas S. Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas: An Interpretation of the Summa Contra Gentiles* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1995).

read texts of Whitehead and Hartshorne and so liberate us and our contemporaries—even among sympathetic readers of Thomas—both from process theology’s popular picture of a God who by necessity or choice is dependent upon human suffering for his own flourishing²⁰ and, more recently, from the false, indeed fatal, alternative between atheistic evolutionism and fundamentalistic forms of creative design.²¹ The examples of postconciliar progress in Thomistic studies could be multiplied at great length to show their abiding potential for the Church’s mission and intellectual life. The classical commentators themselves, including Melchior Cano on nine of his eleven *loci theologici* or John of St. Thomas when assigning significance to the changed liturgical practice at Rome in the celebration of the Immaculate Conception,²² point to the need for and the power of Thomistic traditions to assimilate sources outside themselves in order to develop in a genuine way. After 1854, the mere repetition of texts from Thomas or, say, Johannes de Turrecremata could easily forfeit the continuity of their principles. The venue of this Dominican conference at the Faculty of the Immaculate Conception with its windows opening toward the Basilica and National Shrine of the same

²⁰ While the great majority of premodern authors defended the impassibility of God for God’s sake, before an increasing number of writers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries placed it in question for the supposed good of humankind, recent decades have tended to defend the impassibility of God for the good of humankind: cf. James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White, O.P., eds., *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); R. Schenk, “Daedalus medii aevi? Die Labyrinthe der Theodizee im Mittelalter,” in R. Schenk and P. Koslowski, eds., *Jahrbuch für Philosophie des Forschungsinstituts für Philosophie Hannover*, vol. 9, 1998 (Vienna: Passagen, 1997), 15–35; R. Schenk, “Ist die Rede vom leidenden Gott theologisch zu vermeiden? Reflexionen über den Streit von K. Rahner und H.U. von Balthasar,” in *Der leidende Gott: Eine philosophische und theologische Kritik*, ed. Friedrich Hermann and Peter Koslowski (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2001), 225–39.

²¹ Cf. Michael J. Dodds, O.P., *The Unchanging God of Love: Thomas Aquinas and Contemporary Theology on Divine Immutability*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008); Michael J. Dodds, O.P., *Unlocking Divine Action: Contemporary Science and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012). For a parallel engagement of analytic thought, cf. Anselm Tilman Ramelow, O.P., *Beyond Modernism? George Lindbeck and the Linguistic Turn in Theology* (Neuried: Ars Una, 2005). For the comparison of the thought of B. Lonergan with the development and early reception of Thomas’s doctrine of prevenient grace, cf. Joseph Wawrykow, *God’s Grace and Human Action: “Merit” in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

²² Cf. R. Schenk, O.P., “Johannes a Sancto Thoma,” in *Marienlexikon III*, 414–16.

name is a reminder of what needs to be partially forgotten about the Thomistic tradition in order to recall its fuller vitality.²³

In reference to the Church's universal mission, the Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation provides us with a further example. Already Joseph Ratzinger's commentary on *Dei Verbum* in the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*,²⁴ distinguishing the still unsynthesized, conflicting positions of the minority and the majority within the agreed text of *Dei Verbum*, refers to the uneven character in the final texts and to "logical gaps that are covered over only with difficulty."²⁵ Still harsher is the verdict of Thomas expert Otto-Hermann Pesch: "The Constitution is arguably the most uneven text of the Council, including 'logical gaps that are covered over only with difficulty,' or better said, contradictions, a paradigm of that kind of compromise which is 'contradictory pluralism.'"²⁶ Even if Pesch goes too far here: in each chapter of the text the tension is palpable between on the one hand a salvific historical sense of the self-revelation of God and on the other references by the written words of Scripture and tradition to the paths and precepts best serving humanity. A hermeneutic of reform would seek to disprove the charge of self-contradiction and to find meaning in an argued synthesis, affirming the foundational and teleological reality of God's self-communication *and* our need for verbal expressions of it. Such a synthesis could profit from the first two and twinned articles in the *Secunda Secundae*, pointing first to the simple and ineffable first truth as the primary object

²³ In a letter of September 12, 1869, J. H. Newman thanked E. B. Pusey for his new edition, dedicated to the coming work of the First Vatican Council, of the 1436 treatise of Johannes of Turrecremata, O.P., against the Immaculate Conception, calling the gift "a great addition to our library," and yet the pages of the volume were subsequently cut open only to page 9; cf. R. Schenk, O.P., "Johannes de Turrecremata," in *Marienlexikon III*, 424–26.

²⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, "Dei Verbum," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, vol. 2, Dokumente und Kommentare, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler et al. (Freiburg: Herder, 1967), 498–527.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 504.

²⁶ Otto Hermann Pesch, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Vorgeschichte—Verlauf—Ergebnisse—Nachgeschichte* (Würzburg: Echter, 2001), 272–73; cf. 150–54, appropriating the judgment expressed in an essay of 1972 by another authority on Thomas Aquinas: Max Seckler, "Über den Kompromiss in Sachen der Lehre," in *Im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Kirche: Theologie als schöpferische Auslegung der Wirklichkeit* (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 99–103, 212–15.

of faith and then adding immediately that we would be further from this simple truth if we lacked any ability to speak about it with the complexities required by our imperfect forms of knowledge, language and community. The reference in *Dei Verbum* (DV 2) to divine love with the friendship and the fellowship in Christ, which it makes possible by the Spirit, is certainly not in conflict with majority intentions. Although the rejection of the schema *De fontibus*, a rejection argued effectively by a very young Joseph Ratzinger,²⁷ included the critique of its reliance on R. Garrigou-Lagrangé's *De revelatione*, Eberhard Schockenhoff has pointed out the affinity between the DV's notion of God's self communication and Thomas's programmatic interpretation of charity as a friendship based on a graced *communicatio* or the prevenient sharing in God's life:

The expression *communicatio*, understood in its dynamical-ly transitive aspect, could best be translated into a concept familiar to today's theological language as the self-revelation of God. Thomas's accomplishment as a thinker is to be found here. Against the background of the biblical view of God, Thomas interpreted the concept of *communicatio*, which stands for the Greek word *koinonia*, in such a way that it can help us to conceive a kind of similarity, the lack of which had led Aristotle to exclude the possibility of friendship between gods and human beings.²⁸

The parallel is of interest not so much as an anticipation of the contemporary theology of divine self-communication, but for its ability to suggest a synthesis needed for a plausible hermeneutic of reform. As the retrieval of the *communicatio* of *caritas* by authors such as Joseph Bobik²⁹ and Guy Mansini³⁰ has shown, friendship according to this rath-

²⁷ Cf. Jared Wicks, S.J., "Six Texts by Prof. Joseph Ratzinger as *peritus* before and during Vatican Council II," *Gregorianum* 89 (2008): 233–311.

²⁸ Eberhard Schockenhoff, "Die Liebe als Freundschaft des Menschen mit Gott: Das Proprium der Caritas-Lehre des Thomas von Aquin," *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift "Communio"* 36 (2007): 232–46, here at 238 (translation mine).

²⁹ Joseph Bobik, "Aquinas on 'Communicatio': The Foundation of Friendship and 'caritas,'" *Modern Schoolman* 64 (1986): 1–18; "Aquinas on Friendship with God," *New Scholasticism* 60, no. 3 (1986): 257–71.

³⁰ Guy Mansini, O.S.B., "*Similitudo, Communcatio* and the Friendship of Charity in

er free but programmatic appropriation of Aristotle's *Ethics* is based on and articulated by the goods shared, here not as a cause but as a result of God's—prevenient—love and grace. The likeness that follows calls for the mutuality of acknowledgement proper to persons. The *communicatio* of shared love cannot be fulfilled in mute or blind feeling (*pace* Schleiermacher and his late Catholic reception). One might say that the Christians of tomorrow must not only be mystics, but must be able to confess and express their faith, or they will not be Christians at all. Far from a return to “informational notions of revelation,” such a cry for language, the search for the proper words, is a mark of the interpersonal nature of God's self-revelatory love. Personal revelation includes the understanding and response of the receiver, the person spoken to; revelation is fully given only when it is received and answered. The responsibility that God intends is, as Thomas tells us, rooted in the communication of divine beatitude that expresses itself in faith. The Church's universal mission as a sacrament of divine revelation is to aid human beings of every age in this quest for their response to God's self-revelation of his love for humankind.

***Communicatio* as the Task of the Preacher**

Although the opening words of the Decree on the Adaption and Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae caritatis*, recall St. Thomas's theology of a life consecrated by vows to God, the tension characteristic of the Council appears in the dialectical title: *Renovatio accommodata*, a retrieval of beginnings into the now.³¹ The Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (LG) had already indicated the hopes of the Council that the extension of spiritual and apostolic ideals previously associated with religious vows would be extended beyond the classical orders. LG's placement of the chapter on the laity before its chapters on the universal call to holiness and on

Aquinas,” in *Thomistica*, Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale: Supplémenta 1, ed. E. Manning (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 1–26.

³¹ For an earlier and more extensive version of these reflections on the importance of the dialectic of forgetting and recollection for the renewal of the Order of Preachers, cf. R. Schenk, O.P., “Creative Fidelity: Remembrance and Forgetting, Renewal and Accommodation. On the 800th Anniversary of the Foundation at Prouille,” *Dominican Studies* (2007): 4–16.

religious orders was a reflection of this at best partially fulfilled hope to extend, not evacuate, the richness of consecrated life. The postconciliar *Renovatio accommodata* also indicates the only partially realized method for renewal, looking back to the founder in order to refigure previous paths for the near future.

In the case of the Order of Preachers, the task of *renovatio* first leads two generations behind St. Thomas back to St. Dominic. An analysis of the unusually frequent contemporary testimonies to the prayers of St. Dominic would reveal the centrality in his life of mercy regarding the pain of not being able to believe or to believe aright in the Gospel. Dominic's prayers are with few exceptions either directly for those so suffering or for the means to aid them by a preaching prepared by forms of contemplative study rooted in a kind of *communicatio*, notably the life of voluntary poverty. In "Study as *Misericordia veritatis*," the prologue to the document on intellectual life drafted 2001 at the Elective General Chapter held at Providence College, the link is identified between Dominic's sense of mercy and his concern for academic study:

Thanks to St. Dominic's innovative spirit, study ordered to the salvation of souls was involved intimately in the purpose and regular life of the Order.

St. Dominic himself led the brethren to places of learning in the largest cities, so that they might prepare for their mission. "Our study must aim principally, ardently, and with the greatest care at what can be useful for the souls of our neighbors" (LCO 77,1).

From then on, study would be linked essentially to the apostolic mission of the Order and to preaching the Word of God.³²

Preaching and the study necessary to prepare for it had for Dominic "paracletic" character, aiding by human words the Spirit's internal work of communication, which is at the heart of the Church's universal mission. This work of spiritual advocacy is enunciated in the text just cited:

³² *Acts of the Elective General Chapter of the Friars of the Order of Preachers: Providence, Rhode Island 2001* (Rome: Curia Generalitia ad S. Sabinam, 2001), 45–49, here at 45, no. 104.

This questioning of human value is an intrinsic part of today's most pressing *quaestiones disputatae*. The self-doubt about human dignity colors the three ancient questions which since Kant have been said to constitute together the encompassing question, What is a human being? These three questions, What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope for? raising interrelated doubts about the capacity of human beings for truth, for freedom, and for eternal life, call for the intellectual compassion acquired in good part by the labor of study. Assiduous study of today's *quaestiones disputatae* should lead us to understand the pressures to doubt, without submitting to the despair about human dignity: "*Credidi, etiam cum locutus sum, ego humiliatus sum nimis; ego dixi in trepidatione mea: omnis homo mendax*" (Psalm 116/115, 10–11). Feeling the trepidation of our times, especially about our capacity for truth, and seeing the manifold humiliation of human life as our own, and yet bringing to the world the confidence of the Gospel together with its concomitant demand for justice and peace, Dominican study is to be marked by both a habit of humility and a confidence in the "paracletic" mission of the church, defending the dignity proclaimed in creation and redemption and helping to make faith believable in our day. In this way Dominican study can and must serve the *misericordia veritatis*.³³

St. Thomas conceived the *communicatio* that founds friendship as a sharing of a common good; in the case of charity, that good, as was said, is the perspective of shared beatitude. But, in his reflections on mercy, Thomas notes a further kind of *communicatio*:

From the very fact that a person takes pity on anyone, it follows that another's distress grieves him. And since sorrow or grief is about one's own ills, one grieves or sorrows for another's distress, in so far as one looks upon another's distress as one's own. Now this happens in two ways: first, through union of the affec-

³³ Ibid., 47–48, no. 111–12.

tions, which is the effect of love. For, since he who loves another looks upon his friend as another self, he counts his friend's hurt as his own, so that he grieves for his friend's hurt as though he were hurt himself.³⁴

This identification with the suffering other can come from a sheer "union of the affections, which is the effect of love," or from insight into a commonality of the suffering involved. Thomas names here a second way by which one comes to look upon another's distress as one's own.

Secondly, it happens through real union, for instance when another's evil comes near to us, so as to pass to us from him. Hence the Philosopher says (*Rhet.* ii, 8) that men pity such as are akin to them and the like, because it makes them realize that the same may happen to themselves. This also explains why the old and the wise who consider that they may fall upon evil times, as also feeble and timorous persons, are more inclined to pity: whereas those who deem themselves happy, and so far powerful as to think themselves in no danger of suffering any hurt, are not so inclined to pity.³⁵

Thomas recognizes this kind of communication in the salvific-historical *conversatio Christi*, in which he finds the mission and manner of Dominican life exemplified in Christ's own manner of a life lived among those whose burdens are to be borne by those who bring the Gospel to them.³⁶ And indeed: Dominic's initial advocational task of preaching as a defense of human hope against the twin dangers, in Church and society, of collective or individual presumption and collective or individual despair, must—as a paracletic task—be "accommodated," brought into today, communicated and lived with others without losing the Order's own sense of urgent calling. It remains to be asked in a third section

³⁴ *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 30, a. 2, as translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Cf. Ulrich Horst, "Christ, *Exemplar Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum* according to Saint Thomas Aquinas," in *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, ed. Kent Emery and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1998), 256–70, esp. 263–66.

what it is about the thought of St. Thomas that makes it conducive to the *misericordia veritatis*, to the shared paracletic task of intellectual compassion that led St. Dominic to found the Order of Preachers.

The Tasks of Thomistic Studies

Thomas's aside, that mercy is impossible for those who think they have no faults and for those who think they have no hope,³⁷ reflects two key advocational dimensions of his theological and philosophical program, localized in his historical struggles with neo-Augustinianism and radical Aristotelianism. His remarks also reflect the differences between mercy and selflessness. The earliest critiques of Thomas provide us with one measure of what contemporaries of Thomas saw as his innovations. William de la Mare's *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, arguably the first articulation of "Thomism" as a broad presentation of Thomas's chief themes, charges Thomas with ignoring the censures of 1241 and 1244 to continue Dominican support for Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite and his privileging created structure over graced event.³⁸ William sees the Parisian censures of 1270 and 1277 as concretizing this critique of Thomas's theological-philosophical anthropology; and it was William's critique that elicited varied Dominican responses in the correctories dispute. From these Dominican responses grew something like the early Thomistic schools, e.g. with the insular realism of Thomas Sutton or the continental attention to human spontaneity in Hervaeus Natalis. Each of these Thomists had developed Thomas's texts to answer the challenges posed to his thought from Henry of Ghent onward. And yet among these various Thomists there remained some common themes that justify the common adjective, Thomist. The secondary and necessarily generalizing character of knowledge vis-à-vis sensation, the secondary character of choice vis-à-vis passions and the will of the good in general, the seeming challenges to eternal hopes arising from the newly stressed unity of body and soul are repeated targets of William de la Mare's critique, matching well the censure by Robert Kilwardby in the previous year of the theolog-

³⁷ ST II-II, q. 30, a. 2, ad 2.

³⁸ Cf. Bernhard Blankenhorn's 2012 doctoral dissertation, completed at Fribourg under the direction of Gilles Emery and forthcoming in Catholic University Press: *Dionysian Mysticism in the Early Albertus Magnus and in Thomas Aquinas*.

ical implications of the unicity of the substantial form in humans.³⁹ The criticism by John Peckham and Bonaventure of Thomas's assertion of an antinomy of weak reason, even when coached by faith, in the question of the eternity or beginning of the world is a further sign of the novelty attached in his own day to Thomas's attempts to integrate into a theological synthesis the new limits of graced human life, even of Christ's life and passion.⁴⁰ Those attempts, however, underlined Thomas's concern about and for those who were tempted to deny the abiding limits of those already blessed with the gift of Christian hope.

These attempts were paralleled and complemented by Thomas's critique of philosophical arguments trying to cast doubt on even this more nuanced expression of hope. The reassertion of personal human intelligence and freedom and the possibility of cogent God talk, albeit within undeniable limits, together with the new plausibility of resurrection flowing from new insights into the corporality of human existence show Thomas's sympathy with those who struggled against too brutish and nontranscendent a picture of human animality. It was Thomas's share in the tears and fears of "radical Aristotelianism" that allowed him to share in unconventional ways in the joys and hopes of the "neo-Augustinians." Thomas acknowledged the weakness of human nature, while seeing in those weaknesses an occasion for new friendship with God, preparing the community and communication that first make possible for the *Mängelwesen Mensch* otherwise impossible gifts. Asserting the need

³⁹ Cf. Friedrich J. Roensch, O.P., *Early Thomistic School* (Dubuque, IA: Priory Press, 1964); Theodor Schneider, *Die Einheit des Menschen: Die anthropologische Formel "Anima Forma Corporis" im sogenannten Korrektorienstreit und bei Petrus Johannis Olivi. Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte des Konzils von Vienne*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge 8 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1973); and José Filipe Silva, *Robert Kilwardby on the Human Soul: Plurality of Forms and Censorship in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill 2012), 281–305.

⁴⁰ For the increasingly recognized significance of Thomas's reading of Patristic literature for the development of his Christology, cf. Jean-Pierre Torrell's commentary on Thomas d'Aquin, *Le Verbe incarné en ses mystères*, Somme théologique IIIa, questions 27–59 (esp. vol. 2, *La vie du Christ en ce monde*, questions 40–45) (Paris: Cerf, 2005); Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge 61 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002); and Corey Ladd Barnes, *Christ's Two Wills in Scholastic Thought: The Christology of Aquinas and Its Historical Contexts* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012).

and the capacity for grace, affirming the charitological and Christological perfections that make beatitude more than a distant dream, Thomas provided a paradigm of paracletic thought that continues to fascinate us today. Perhaps less keen on harmony than is often suggested (one thinks already in his young years of his vocational choice against family and emperor, his choice of topic for his inception, and his option for the Dominican reading of Dionysius), Thomas provided an enduring basis for the advocacy of a hope that can both understand and withstand doubts. Because Thomas recognized in human weakness a prerequisite of this community of grace, it would be a Pyrrhic victory and a performative self-contradiction for us to exclude in principle from Thomistic studies the kind of critique that acknowledges the *Grandeur et misère* of passages such as *ST* II-II, q. 10, a. 8 on the forbearance or compulsion of nonbelievers and former believers.

I would like to conclude with reference to other kinds of communities in which a form of graced if necessarily imperfect *communicatio* is needed for Thomistic studies. Given the complex role of the Order of Preachers in the Church's service of the Word, it is neither possible nor desirable that every preacher be an accomplished and convinced Thomist. What is important is that the study of Thomas be encouraged and enabled in the Order as a key part of its legacy and office and that even brothers devoting their lives to other theological and academic projects or to other aspects of the Order's paracletic mission have a thorough acquaintance with Thomas's thought and heritage. At times there is academic cross-fertilization. To cite but three examples: Paul Syngave on the justification of historical exegesis,⁴¹ the engagement of early modern and contemporary science by William Wallace,⁴² or Antonio Moreno's reconsideration of psychoanalytic and depth psychological theory and practice.⁴³ But whether or not such interdisciplinarity occurs, without a

⁴¹ Paul Synave and Pierre Benoit, *Prophecy and Inspiration: A Commentary on the Summa theologica II-II, questions 171-178* (New York: Desclee, 1961).

⁴² William A. Wallace, O.P., *From a Realist Point of View: Essays on the Philosophy of Science* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

⁴³ Cf. Antonio Moreno, *Jung, Gods and Modern Man* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame 1970); Victor White, *God and the Unconscious* (Chicago: Regnery 1953), as well as Anna A. A. Terruwe and Conrad W. Baars, *Loving and Curing the Neurotic: A New Look at Emotional Illness* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1972).

common familiarity with Thomas, much would be lost for the *communicatio*, the commonality, fellowship and friendship of the Dominican family and thus for its life and mission. The cultivation of this fraternal community of remembrance and forgetting will require more intentionality, increased personal and financial resources and a greater expansion of institutional creativity and international cooperation than what has become the norm over the last fifty years.

Given the complex character of the topic, it is not surprising that there is a plurality of methodological approaches to the study of St. Thomas. Recent attempts to map the topology of Thomistic methods have distinguished *inter alia* Leonine, existential, transcendental, analytic, *ressourcement* and neo-Thomistic methods.⁴⁴ Some divisions are associated with places like Salamanca and the Saulchoir (Kain), Lublin and Cracow, Toulouse, Laval or River Forest. Text editions, the analysis of Thomas's own development as evidenced in his diverse texts and genres, Thomas's sources, contemporaries, followers and critics, his potential relevance in debates not yet begun in his day or even developed in ours, the discourse of Thomism with natural science, political theory or international law and human rights, with religions and atheisms, with variant Catholic and Christian traditions: these methodologies and conversations are in themselves all legitimate undertakings, the complexity of which has led to a certain understandable division of labor within the study of St. Thomas and his legacy. The insight, cited at the beginning of this essay, which Thomas takes directly from Aristotle's treatise *De memoria et reminiscencia*, points out: "The same men are not good rememberers and good recollectors."⁴⁵ The now-classic text on the topic, Paul Ricoeur's *Memory, History, Forgetting*, begins by tracing the advances made by Aristotle over Plato in distinguishing recollection from mem-

⁴⁴ Among the many relevant titles, cf. (alongside note 15 above) Fergus Kerr, O.P., *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002); *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation* (SCM: London, 2003); Brian J. Shanley, O.P., "Twentieth Century Thomisms," in *The Thomist Tradition* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 1–20; and Nicholas S. Case, "Thomisms: Methodological Plurality in the Study of Thomas Aquinas," MA diss., Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, 2012.

⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas, as above, *De memoria et reminiscencia*, *lectio* 8, no. 1; translated in *Commentaries*, 230.

ory.⁴⁶ Individual friars with different methods developed in different schools show a greater facility at remembering the texts of Thomas and Thomism or, alternatively, more conscious of what has been forgotten, at searching for the lost meaning of Thomas by recounting his sources, his opponents, his first steps, his self-corrections, and in learning from later thinkers by similarity or contrast what the importance of Thomism can be:

Now, lest recollecting and remembering appear identical, he [Aristotle] indicates their difference: they are each found in different sorts of men. For we do not find that the same men have good memories and good powers of recollection. Rather, as frequently happens, those who are slow at discovering and learning have better memories, whereas those who are quick-witted at discovering things on their own and in learning things from others are better at recollecting.⁴⁷

The greater the methodological diversity between Thomistic methods, the more urgent becomes the sapiential task of ordering these methodologies to one another, neglecting neither the historical past nor the future of Church, society, academy, and environment. A vibrant Thomism may not take for granted or neglect either memory or recollection; though it goes beyond what is possible in the context of these reflections, Thomism must study the uses and abuses of their recovery and their loss. To carry out this sapiential task of complementarity and self-critique, a community is needed, and in many ways such a community has already formed over the last fifty years, ending at the chief centers of Dominican Thomism many of its earlier antitheses between systematic and historical approaches to the study of St. Thomas. The heirs to the legacy of Labourdette, for example, have long made their own the historical skills of

⁴⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 7–21. For a late ancient attempt to find an original path between Plato and Aristotle, cf. the reference by Gerard O'Daly, "Remembering and Forgetting in Augustine, *Confessions* X," in *Memoria—vergesen und erinnern*, Poetik und Hermeneutik 15, ed. Anselm Haverkamp and Renate Lachmann (Munich: Fink, 1993), 31–46.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Commentaries*, 185, with direct reference to Aristotle's text at 449b.

the Saulchoir.⁴⁸ The notions mentioned above of the desired expanse of the reality of revelation, of the uncommon doctor, of the unity-in-tension of a hermeneutic of reform, of the search for new voices in *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*,⁴⁹ and of many fruitful dialogues between Thomas and “N.N.” are all indications of the wider communities with which Thomism will seek conversation and will show many of its qualities; a “Thomism” restricted to itself and its own internal study, if not intended to rejoin other forms of research and discourse, would forfeit the “type,” goal, and several key principles of Thomas’s thinking. Richard Schäffler has shown that theological conceptions of *sapientia* differ from one another by the space they allow or deny to *scientia*, *intellectus* and *prudentia*.⁵⁰ The Thomistic notion of *sapientia* has from the beginning looked forward to communication between sciences that are not deduced from one another or from theological insights. To borrow a notion put forward by Francisco Mūniz in a special printing of *The Thomist*,⁵¹ theology itself, and more so historical and systematic branches of theology, and finally, as we might add, Thomistically oriented work in history and systematics can all be conceived as parts of potential wholes, wholes made up of heterogeneous parts in need of one another but varying and vying with one another in what they contribute to that whole in which they communicate.⁵² It would be logically and performatively

⁴⁸ Cf. Aidan Nichols, O.P., “Thomism and the Nouvelle Théologie,” *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 1–19.

⁴⁹ Note that the ideas of *renovatio*, *ressourcement*, and *aggiornamento*, in their recognition of what has been forgotten and by their stress of the activity of the search necessary for renewal, are works more of recollection than of reproductive memory.

⁵⁰ Richard Schaeffler, “*Spiritus sapientiae et intellectus—spiritus scientiae et pietatis*. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Weisheit, Wissenschaft und Frömmigkeit und ihrer Zuordnung zum Geiste,” in *Weisheit Gottes—Weisheit der Welt: Festschrift für Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Walter Baier, u. a. (St. Ottilien: Eos, 1987), II:15–35.

⁵¹ Francisco P. Mūniz, O.P., *The Work of Theology* (Washington, DC: Thomist Press, 1958); cf. also Ludger Oeing-Hanhoff, *Ens et unum convertuntur*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 37 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1953). For the mereology of nonindependent (heterogeneous) parts, cf. also Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, rev. ed. trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 1973).

⁵² For a learned and reflective example of the passionate defense of one position within Dominican Thomism against another, cf. Michael D. Torre, *God’s Permission of Sin: Negative or Conditioned Decree? A Defense of the Doctrine of F. Marín-Sola*, O.P.,

inconsistent to resist distinguishing epochs and methods of Thomism in the interest of a postulated Thomistic continuum, only then to dismiss at will other epochs and methodologies of Thomistic research. Along the lines of Newman's seven notes, there must be plausible criteria for arguable preferences among epochs, objects, methods and goals of Thomistic research and therefore, prior to them, the initial acknowledgement of the contemporary and historical diversity they presuppose and of the need for a sapiential ordering of the heterogeneous parts of the Thomistic whole. The common material object of studies centered on the works of Thomas Aquinas knows many formal objects and the corresponding formal methods that make them possible. The undeniable variety of Thomistic methods and subdisciplines, including pointedly mnemonic and pointedly recollective approaches, corresponds to the complexity of the objects and the goals of Thomistic studies: "Whoever may be tempted to conclude that Thomism imposes a monochromatic view of reality, natural or supernatural, should read more of the mainline Thomists."⁵³ Despite or because of the legitimacy of specialization within the study of Thomas, Thomism as a whole cannot live without a vibrant communication with what is outside it, nor will it flourish without a reflective diversity of methods within it. Thomism is necessarily collaborative.⁵⁴

Based on the Principles of Thomas Aquinas (Fribourg: Academic, 2009); *Do Not Resist the Spirit's Call: Francisco Marín-Sola on Sufficient Grace* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013). Despite the author's warning against seeing the opposed positions as two sides of the perennial theological antinomy of predestination and freedom, it is difficult for the reader to deny the cogency of either claim.

⁵³ This statement by Romanus Cessario, O.P., "Hommage au Père Servais-Théodore Pinckaers, O.P.: The Significance of His Work," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 5, no. 1 (2007): 1–16, here at 11, was confirmed by the entire Festakt for Father Pinckaers that it opened: Michael S. Sherwin and Craig Steven Titus, eds., *Renouveler toutes choses en Christ: Vers un renouveau thomiste de la théologie*, Etudes d'éthique chrétienne, Nouvelle Série, 5 (Fribourg: Academic, 2009). By contrast, the loose inclusion of A. MacIntyre and H. McCabe into a distinctively commentatorial tradition raised more questions than it answered.

⁵⁴ Already in his first set of formal disputations as a young professor, Thomas stressed the importance of the individual *intellectus agens* for learning. In the context of our problematic—and in contrast to reflections *de magistro* stemming from Augustine, Anselm, and Avicenna—Thomas's early programmatic stressed what we may call the recollective moment of learning, in which the learner departs from the merely general forms of "natural" memory and the memory of the precise specifications supplied by the human teacher in order to make the newer associations in which knowledge is first brought forth by and for the learner; cf. *De veritate* q. 11, a.1 co. Thomas's shift

In a later edition of his chief work on philosophical anthropology, Arnold Gehlen acknowledged an observation by Josef Pieper, referring to Gehlen's central theme of the compensatory strengths of culture and community stemming from the initially deficient instinctual system of the individual as a *Mängelwesen*. Pieper pointed out to Gehlen, who concurred and recorded his agreement, that these insights are close to those presented by Thomas Aquinas in the *Prima pars* and famously at the beginning of *De regno*, with references back to Avicenna and Aristotle. What the human lacks in refined instincts and physical prowess is more than made up for by diachronic and synchronic communities made possible by language.⁵⁵ Such strengths of a linguistic community with collective memory and progressive experience are similar to those sought in graced community with God. Out of initial, individual weakness grows the strength of *communicatio*. To seek community with both God and his creatures is to follow the grace to draw new strengths from acknowledged weaknesses.

What Thomas says of human beings in general also holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, for those who pursue the study of St. Thomas. That implies both a necessity and an opportunity for Thomists: First, the necessity, rooted in the impossibility to excel in all fields of Thomistic research:

It is natural for man, more than for any other animal, to be a social and political animal, to live in a group . . . Man has a natural knowledge of the things which are essential for his life only in a general fashion, inasmuch as he is able to attain knowledge

during the brief two decades of his academic career from Avicenna to Averroes as the key chosen opponent for his reflections on this question only increased his stress on the individual and preeminently active role of the *intellectus agens*; cf. *ST I*, q. 117, and Wolfgang Schmidl, *Homo discens: Studien zur Pädagogischen Anthropologie bei Thomas von Aquin* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987). Thomas's preference in the analysis of learning for *Rezeptionsgeschichte* over *Traditionsgeschichte* (also in his reading of the neo-Platonic axiom *quidquid recipitur*) corresponds to a preference for recollective over mnemonic reason.

⁵⁵ Arnold Gehlen, *Der Mensch, seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt*, 13th ed. (Weisbaden: AULA, 1986), 35, with reference to *ST I*, q. 76, a. 5, ad 4 and the beginning of *De regno*. Thomas himself had woven this Avicennan development of Aristotle into his defense of Dominican academic life in *Liber contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* (cap. V, ad 1 in contrarium, *Omnia opera*, Ed. Leonina XLI, Rome 1970, A 90–91).

of the particular things necessary for human life by reasoning from natural principles. But it is not possible for one man to arrive at a knowledge of all these things by his own individual reason. It is therefore necessary for man to live in a multitude so that each one may assist his fellows, and different men may be occupied in seeking, by their reason, to make different discoveries—one, for example, in medicine, one in this and another in that.⁵⁶

But out of an initial weakness and necessity can grow new kinds of strength, taking the opportunity provided by the communication and discourse among students of St. Thomas:

This point is further and most plainly evidenced by the fact that the use of speech is a prerogative proper to man. By this means, one man is able fully to express his conceptions to others. Other animals, it is true, express their feelings to one another in a general way, as a dog may express anger by barking and other animals give vent to other feelings in various fashions. But man communicates with his kind more completely than any other animal known to be gregarious, such as the crane, the ant or the bee. (*Magis igitur homo est communicativus alteri quam quodcumque aliud animal, quod gregale videtur, ut grus, formica et apis.*)—With this in mind, Solomon says: “It is better that there be two than one; for they have the advantage of their company.”⁵⁷

In referring to merely three of the four animals that Aristotle singles out as examples of community and collaboration,⁵⁸ Thomas also recalls non- and post-Aristotelian allegories⁵⁹ suggestive of the sharing

⁵⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *De regno ad regem Cypri*, in *Opera omnia* (Editio Leonina, XLII, Rome 1979), 449–50 (cf. there the note to l. 28–64), here in Gerald B. Phelan, trans., *On Kingship to the King of Cyprus* (Toronto: PIMS, 1949), 3–5, n. 2–5.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *History of Animals*, I 1, 488 a 9.

⁵⁹ The allegorical intention is suggested by the omission of Aristotle's fourth example: the wasp, which Thomas of Cantimpré by 1241 had described as *inutilis* and moribund in comparison to bees: *Liber de natura rerum*, 9, II, ed. Helmut Boese (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973), 311. His contrast to bees, which seek out flowers, was no less

necessary and useful for the Dominican students of his thought: to be more collaborative and communicative than ants, which even in summer prepare for the winter, bringing home without internal rivalry and for common assimilation heavy grains they have not produced, even while preferring wheat to barley;⁶⁰ to be more collaborative and communicative than bees, less earth-bound than ants in their origins and movements, producing intramurally not only their own translucent food but with it that wax that bears paschal and Eucharistic light to the world;⁶¹ and to be more collaborative and communicative than cranes, thought to model Dominican governance and mission by taking shifts in leading the aerial formation of their flying “V,” to take shifts in bearing exhausted colleagues on their backs during prolonged flights and to take shifts in sleeping and guarding one another when the flock is resting on the ground.⁶²

That even Dominican Thomists are not born or reborn at religious profession with an infused knowledge of Thomas’s thought should be obvious; and even the most emphatic claims to connaturality have their all too evident limits. A friar, too, “has only reason and his hands,”⁶³ the chance and need to think and to work with the legacy of this genuine son of St. Dominic in the service of the Church and the world for which the Gospel is meant. Especially for Dominicans, it is the chance and the need to imitate friar Thomas in thinking, speaking and working with

allegorical in intent: *Vita earum circa stercus est*. Unlike the apparently leaderless co-operation of ants (*politia*), the alternating leadership of cranes (*aristocratia*), or the steady, productive leadership of bees (*regnum*), the wasp symbolizes for Thomas of Cantimpré no positive form of human governance. Its omission by Thomas Aquinas underscores his reference to the three positive models of sociality and governance. Thomas did not make of his omission an explicit admonition about what might best be avoided in Dominican and Thomistic studies.

⁶⁰ Cf. Pr 6:6–8 and inter alia Thomas Cantimpratensis, *Liber de natura rerum*, 9, XXI (ed. cit. 303).

⁶¹ Cf. inter alia Thomas Cantimpratensis, *Liber de natura rerum*, 9, II (ed. cit. 293–98). Thomas of Cantimpré will return to his fascination with the governmental symbolism of bees in *Bonum universale de apibus*.

⁶² Cf. inter alia Thomas Cantimpratensis, *Liber de natura rerum*, 5, LV (ed. cit. 203–4). It is this flying formation that especially fascinated not just this medieval author: “Grues aves sunt, que volant ordine litterato”; cf. the reference to Rusticus Monachus in *Decretum Gratiani*, C. 7, q. 1, c. 41.

⁶³ Cf. Thomas’s frequent references to *De anima III*, including one in the text Pieper pointed out to Gehlen, *ST I*, q. 76, a. 5, ad 4.

others. It is a chance that merits (pace formicis) the support and care of Dominican leadership. As already for Thomas himself, that high calling which was expressed in initial deficiency (the call from and to grace as the sapiential reason for the finitude of natural gifts⁶⁴) inserts the friar dedicated to the study of Thomas and Thomism into larger communities of diachronic and synchronic communication. The observations of *De regno* and its parallels lose here their merely metaphoric dimensions, calling and recalling the friar Thomist to communication with the whole Church, with the whole of humanity and for their sake with the *communicatio perfecta* of Trinitarian life. 

⁶⁴ Ibid.