

Union and Indwelling

ELEONORE STUMP

Saint Louis University

St. Louis, MO

Introduction

In this paper,¹ I want to explore the nature of union between God and a human person. I will first consider the nature of union possible between two human persons who love each other as friends. Union between God and a human person will be something analogous to such a union between two human friends. But because God is metaphysically greater than human beings, union with God will also be something metaphysically greater than the union between two human friends. Traditionally, in Christian theology, this metaphysically greater union is constituted at least in part by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Although the notion of indwelling at issue here is a commonplace of theological discussion, it is remarkably difficult to say what it comes to. In this paper, I will try to shed light on this Christian notion by first elucidating the notion of union between two human persons, then considering the analogous condition in God, and finally examining the additional element in Christian theology of God's indwelling a human person. The resulting account will give us some insight into the nature of union between God and a human person.

It is important to begin with a brief account of the nature of love, and

¹ Substantial parts of this paper are drawn from various parts of my book *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), but a significant amount of new material has also been added.

the best account I know is that of Thomas Aquinas. For Aquinas,² love requires two interconnected desires:³

(1) the desire for the good of the beloved,⁴

and

(2) the desire for union with the beloved.⁵

Certain things are worth noting with regard to each of these desires.

To begin with the second desire first, it is worth pointing out that the desire for union is not equivalent to the desire to be in the company of the beloved.⁶ Other philosophers have remarked that one can love a person without desiring to be in that person's company,⁷ and being in someone's

² Aquinas uses four words for love; in Latin, they are: *amor*, *dilectio*, *amicitia*, and *caritas* (see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] I-II, q. 26, a. 3). The first of these is love in its most generic sense, which is included in all the other kinds; for Aquinas, even a rock falling from a higher to a lower place can be said to have love for the place to which it falls, in this generic sense of "love" (see ST I-II, q. 26, a. 1). The second, *dilectio*, emphasizes the element of voluntariness in the love of rational persons; and the third, *amicitia*, picks out the dispositions of love in friendship. But, for Aquinas, the fourth, *caritas*, is the word for love in its real or complete sense. Since Aquinas privileges *caritas* in this way, I will focus on *caritas* in explaining his account of love, although I will understand his views of *caritas* in light of what he says about the more generic *amor*.

³ See ST II-II, q. 25, a. 3.

⁴ See ST I-II, q. 26, a. 4, where Aquinas says that to love is to will good to someone. See also ST I-II, q. 28, a. 4, where Aquinas explains the zeal or intensity of love in terms of the strength of a lover's desire for the good of the beloved.

⁵ See, e.g., ST I-II, q. 26, a. 2, ad 2, and q. 28, a. 1, sc, where Aquinas quotes approvingly Dionysius's line that love is the unitive force. Cf. also ST I-II, q. 66, a. 6, where Aquinas explains the superiority of charity to the other virtues by saying that every lover is drawn by desire to union with the beloved, and ST I-II, q. 70, a. 3, where Aquinas explains the connection between joy and love by saying that every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved. For an interesting recent attempt to defend a position that has some resemblance to Aquinas's, see Robert Adams, "Pure Love," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 8 (1980): 83–99. Adams says: "It is a striking fact that while benevolence (the desire for another person's well-being) and Eros, as a desire for relationship with another person, seem to be quite distinct desires, we use a single name, 'love' or 'Agape,' for an attitude that includes both of them, at least in typical cases" (97).

⁶ For Aquinas's views on the nature of this union, cf., e.g., ST I-II, q. 28, a. 1, where real union is described as a matter of presence between lover and beloved.

⁷ David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109 (1999): 353.

company is obviously not equivalent to being united to her. It is manifestly possible to be in the company of someone when one is alienated from her, rather than united to her.

With regard to the first desire, the goodness in question is not to be identified with moral goodness only. It is goodness in the broader sense that encompasses beauty, elegance or efficiency, and metaphysical as well as moral goodness.⁸ Furthermore, because Aquinas holds that there is an objective standard of goodness, the measure of value for the goodness at issue in love is also objective. Given Aquinas's ethical views, then, the good of the beloved has to be understood as that which truly is in the interest of the beloved and which truly does conduce to the beloved's flourishing.

It is important to see here also that, because of the strong connection Aquinas maintains between God and goodness,⁹ anything that contributes to the objective good for a person also brings her closer to God. The beloved's closeness to God and her flourishing as the best person she can be will therefore be co-variant, for Aquinas. So to desire the good of the beloved, on the standard of goodness Aquinas accepts, is to desire for the beloved those things that in fact contribute to the beloved's flourishing, and these will also increase the beloved's closeness to God.

Finally, it is important to see that, for Aquinas, the two desires of love are not independent of each other but rather interrelated. And when the two desires of love appear to conflict, Aquinas's claim that the ultimate good for human beings is union with God gives a method for harmonizing them. Union with God is shareable, and persons united with God are also united with each other. *Ultimately*, then, the same thing—namely, union with God—constitutes both the final good¹⁰ for each of the persons in a loving relationship and also their deepest union with each other. The two desires of love are therefore interrelated in mutually governing ways.

For Aquinas, then, love is, as it were, a systems-level feature, emerging from two interconnected, mutually governing desires, for the good of the beloved and for union with the beloved.

⁸ For detailed discussion of Aquinas's views of goodness, understood in this broad sense, see my *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), ch. 2.

⁹ On the doctrine of simplicity, which Aquinas accepts, God is both goodness itself and also a good being. For explanation and some defense of this claim, see my "God's Simplicity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 135–46.

¹⁰ By "final good" here, I mean the good for the sake of which all other goods are desirable. I do not mean to imply that this final good is the only good or that all other goods are only apparent goods.

We can conclude this very brief presentation of Aquinas's account of love by considering the way in which it applies to the special case of God's love of human persons.

On traditional Christian doctrine, God is perfectly loving to all human beings. And so, on Aquinas's account of love, God desires the good of each human person and union with her.¹¹ But, for God, the two desires of love converge. That is because, as I explained above, the ultimate good of a human person, her ultimate flourishing, just is union with God. So in desiring the good for a human person and union with a human person, God is desiring the same thing, at least where the ultimate good is concerned.

In addition, there is this difference between the love of one human being for another and God's love for a human being. In the case of love between human beings, when one person Paula desires union with another person Jerome, Paula needs to be responsive to Jerome. Suppose, for example, that Jerome is incurably musically illiterate (because of a right-hemisphere stroke, for example), but that Paula is a composer. Then, if Paula understands Jerome's condition, it would be cruel of her, not loving, to insist on trying to share her musical creativity with him. But in God's case things are the other way around. When God loves Jerome, God's love is not responsive to goodness in Jerome. Instead, God's love is the source of whatever goodness or excellence there is in Jerome.

On Aquinas's view and on all resolutely anti-Pelagian views, any goodness whatsoever in creatures is derived from God directly or indirectly. Like many others in this tradition, Aquinas supposes that there is nothing good in any creature, including human persons, which is not in one way or another a gift of God, whereby God enables creatures to imitate something in God's nature.¹² On this view, in loving Jerome and desiring the good for Jerome, God is offering goodness to Jerome. If Jerome does not resist God's love, then God's love is productive of goodness in Jerome, not responsive to the goodness Jerome has already produced in himself by himself.¹³

¹¹ See, e.g., *ST* I, q. 20, a. 2.

¹² If Pelagianism is understood as the position that there can be something good in a human person which is *not* a gift of God's, then Aquinas is resolutely, vehemently anti-Pelagian. For further discussion of these elements of Aquinas's philosophical theology, see my *Aquinas*, ch. 12.

¹³ On Aquinas's views, God gives grace to every person who does not reject grace, but God does not give grace to a person who rejects grace, since doing so would violate that person's will. God's giving of grace to a person is therefore responsive to whether that person rejects grace or not. But it is always open to a human being to reject God's grace or to cease rejecting God's grace. With regard to

For these reasons, anything good in Jerome and any closeness to God on Jerome's part is brought about in Jerome entirely by God, but it is also true that Jerome is ultimately responsible for whether or not he is in union with God. Even on Aquinas's resolutely anti-Pelagian views, because Jerome can always resist the love of God, God's bringing about goodness in Jerome is responsive to *something* in Jerome.¹⁴ It is always open to Jerome to resist God's love and grace or to cease resisting it; and so, even on anti-Pelagian views, Jerome has alternative possibilities for willing with regard to God's giving him grace.

So, *mutatis mutandis*, Aquinas's account of love applies also to God's love for human beings. Although God's love for human beings is in some respects a special case, nonetheless Aquinas's account of love as consisting in two mutually governing desires, for the good of the beloved and for union with the beloved, holds with regard to God's love, too.

With this much summary of the nature of love, we can now turn to the notion of the union that is desired in love.

Mutual Closeness and Significant Personal Presence

In my view, the sort of union of love possible among mentally fully functioning adult human beings¹⁵ who are friends requires two things: personal presence and mutual closeness. Mutual closeness is necessary for union; but two persons could be close to each other and still not united to each other because something separates them even while they remain close during the separation. Such a situation is a staple of romantic literature, for example. What is missing for the separated friends is the presence of one to the other, and so presence is also an element of union.

God's giving of grace, then, alternative possibilities are always available to a human person.

¹⁴ I have argued elsewhere that God can bring about goodness in a person without thereby violating her free will, where free will is to be understood in a libertarian sense. Nothing about God's love of a human person or God's giving goodness to her takes away her free will. It is therefore possible both that anything good in a human person, on which closeness to God is based, is brought about in her entirely by God *and* also that a human person is ultimately responsible for whether or not she is in union with God. Since this is so, the love of God has to be responsive to *something* in the beloved, even on Aquinas's resolutely anti-Pelagian views. For more discussion of these issues, see my *Aquinas*, ch. 13.

¹⁵ It may be that these things are also required for friendship between human persons one or more of whom is not adult or not mentally fully functioning or both; but in the interest of brevity I am concentrating on the simplest case of friendship.

It is clear that there are various kinds of presence, for human beings and for God with human beings.¹⁶ So, for example, Paula's being present with regard to Jerome can be nothing more than a matter of her being *here now* where and when Jerome is located. Analogously, even for immaterial God, there is a kind of presence that involves relations to both space and time. The relations involved in presence with regard to space and time are typically characterized as presence *in* or presence *at*. In addition, however, there is another kind of presence, a second-personal presence that one person can have to another; and it is the kind of presence crucial for union.

Personal presence is the kind of presence we have in mind when we say, for example,

"She read the paper all through dinner and was never present to any of the rest of us"

or,

"He sat with me at the defendant's table, but he was never really present with me during the trial."

In these examples, there is presence at a time and in a place, but some kind of presence, characterized by one or another kind of second-personal psychological connection, is missing. Typically, this kind of presence is characterized as presence *with* or presence *to* another person.

This is a kind of unilateral personal presence, but mutual personal presence is also possible. It is mediated by a certain kind of mutual awareness, of the kind that arises, for example, when one person meets the eyes of another. This kind of mutual personal presence manifestly comes in degrees. There is the minimal kind that can arise when one momentarily catches the eye of a stranger on a bus. At the other end of the scale, there is the kind of intense and intimate mutual personal presence that is possible between two persons who are mutually close to each other and engaged in mutual gaze. This kind of presence is significant personal presence.¹⁷

¹⁶ God's omnipresence is the subject of an increasing literature in contemporary philosophy. For a representative excellent example, see Hud Hudson, "Omnipresence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, ed. Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 199–216. My focus in this paper is on a side of omnipresence not often investigated in the standard treatments of it.

¹⁷ I have discussed the nature of the second-personal at length in my *Wandering in Darkness*, chs. 4 and 6.

Although mutual closeness is necessary for this kind of intense presence, it is not sufficient; what else is needed is shared attention. It is hard to overemphasize the importance of shared attention for human life and development. It is currently the subject of much discussion among philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists, but all attempts to give a clear and adequate account of it seem at best incomplete.¹⁸ Still, it is a phenomenon everyone recognizes, and clear examples of it are easy to find. When a mother looks into the eyes of her baby and the baby looks back, they are sharing attention. As between adults, shared attention is partly a matter of mutual knowledge, of the sort that prompts philosophical worry about the possibility of unstoppable infinite regress: Paula is aware of Jerome's being aware of Paula's being of Jerome's being aware, and so on. The object of awareness for Paula is simultaneously Jerome and their mutual awareness—Jerome's awareness of her awareness of his awareness and so on—and the object of awareness for Jerome is simultaneously Paula and their mutual awareness.¹⁹ These lines are misleading in multiple ways and inadequate to capture the phenomenon of shared attention, but they help to give some idea of it.

Shared attention is also required for significant personal presence. If Jerome were to say of Paula, "She was distracted all through dinner and was never really present to me," one of the things he would be complaining about would be Paula's failure to share her attention with him.

Presence between Human Persons: Empathy, Mind-Reading, and Union in Love

So in addition to presence at a place or in a time, as between persons yet another kind of presence is possible, in which one person Paula is personally present to another person Jerome. In this condition, Paula has a kind of direct access to Jerome's mind. Such access enables a knowledge of persons that is part of presence between persons, too. Paula cannot be present to

¹⁸ Even the terminology is fluid. What I am calling "shared attention" or "joint attention" here is a dyadic relation. Some writers reserve these terms for a triadic relation, between two persons and a third object. In what follows here, by "shared attention" I mean only the dyadic relation.

¹⁹ Shared attention can be more or less deep and rich. In order for shared attention to be rich, there has to be a relation of mutual closeness between the persons sharing attention. A shared glance between relative strangers may be potent and exciting. But it is also possible for there to be sustained shared attention between two people, involving insightful mental seeing (as it were) of one another, and this can occur only between people who are close to each other. The shared attention at issue in what follows is the kind that is dependent on mutual closeness.

Jerome if Jerome somehow blocks her from having such access to him. And without mutual presence with mutual access, there cannot be union of love between Paula and Jerome.

The mental access in question is a function both of empathy and of what contemporary neuroscientists and psychologists call “mind-reading.” When Paula mind-reads Jerome or has empathy with Jerome, she has a kind of personal presence to Jerome which has something of the character that telepathy would have if telepathy were real, as it is not. In empathy, for example, Paula can feel within herself Jerome’s feeling, for example. And in mind-reading Jerome, Paula somehow has within herself something of Jerome’s mind. In mind-reading him, Paula can sense as internal in her own psychology Jerome’s intentions or emotions. Consequently, when Paula mind-reads Jerome, Paula is in some sense *there*, present with or present to Jerome.

We now know much more about empathy and mind-reading than we did only a few decades ago; and we recognize that cognitive capacities afforded by certain recently discovered neurological systems also enable the ability for empathy and mind-reading more generally. Because of recent work in neuroscience and developmental psychology, especially work on the impairments of development among autistic children, we have learned a great deal about the neurological systems that make empathy and mind-reading possible and the kind of cognition these systems produce. Whatever ties together the different clinical signs of all the degrees of autism spectrum disorder, the most salient feature of the disorder is an impairment in the cognitive capacities enabling mind-reading.²⁰

²⁰ Among philosophers, there is not one universally accepted understanding of the notion of mind-reading. It seems to me to be taken ambiguously, in a way analogous to the ambiguity in the notion of perception. The notion of perception can be taken as (i) perception, (ii) perception as, and (iii) perceptual belief. To say that Max has a perception of a cup can be understood to mean

- i. the cup is an object of perception for Max,
- ii. Max perceives the cup as a cup,
- iii. Max perceives that *that* is a cup.

The notion of mind-reading seems to me ambiguous in the same way. The reason for the ambiguity is that, in ordinary cases in which a cognitive capacity is operating normally, it operates as part of a whole system to give information available to consciousness, connected with other information stored in the system, and formulable in beliefs. For reasons I have given elsewhere, it seems to me better to take perception in sense (ii) than in sense (i) or sense (iii). (See my *Aquinas*, ch.

The knowledge which is impaired for an autistic child, however, cannot be taken as knowledge *that* something or other is the case. A non-autistic pre-linguistic infant is capable of mind-reading; she can know her mother, and to one extent or another she can also know some of her mother's mental states. But she is not capable of knowledge *that* a particular person is her mother or *that* she is sad. Conversely, an autistic child can know *that* his mother is sad—say, because she has told him so and she is a reliable authority on such matters for the child. But the impairment characteristic of autism can leave the child without the direct and immediate knowledge of the sadness of his mother.²¹ What is impaired for the autistic child is just a non-propositional knowledge of persons and a direct intuitive awareness of their mental states. In typically functioning human beings, mind-read-

8, especially the section on perception.) In this paper, I am taking mind-reading analogously, in sense (ii), rather than sense (i) or sense (iii).

In this respect, I dissent from Alvin Goldman's use of the term "mind-reading." His use of the term is a variant on (iii). He says: "By 'mindreading' I mean the attribution of a mental state to self or other. In other words, to mindread is to form a judgment, belief, or representation that a designate person occupies or undergoes (in the past, present, or future) a specified mental state or experience" ("Mirroring, Mindreading, and Simulation," in *Mirror Neuron Systems: The Role of Mirroring Processes in Social Cognition*, ed. Jamie Pineda [New York: Springer, 2009], 312). On Goldman's usage, it would not be true to say that autistic children are impaired with respect to mind-reading, since it is possible for them to form judgments about the mental states of others. But in order to explain what is impaired in autism, we need a term like "mind-reading" in sense (ii). Since "mind-reading" is the term already employed for this purpose by many philosophers and researchers on autism, it seems to me better to continue to use the term in that way rather than in Goldman's way. Goldman's goal is to interpret mind-reading in such a way as to make the new results in neurobiology compatible with his own attempts to understand mind-reading in terms of simulation theory. For arguments against Goldman's position on this score, see Shaun Gallagher, "Neural Simulation and Social Cognition," in Pineda, *Mirror Neuron Systems*, 355–71.

- ²¹ Although early work on autism emphasized its impairments, much recent research has called attention not only to the cognitive strengths possible for autistic human beings but also the way in which, by alternate systems, they can flourish in human relationship and human community. It is important to me to make sure that this point is not lost, even if for my purposes here the impairments of autism are to the fore. For my purpose in this paper, autism is helpful because it highlights human cognitive capacities that we might otherwise overlook or be skeptical of. My purpose here is not a full description or discussion of autism. But if autism were a main subject for me, then I would be at pains to highlight the way in which the human spirit can flourish and be luminescent for others in a way well worth honoring, no matter what difficulties or brokenness it must shine through. For detailed discussion of this issue, see my *Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ch. 9.

ing yields a non-propositional, direct and immediate intuitive knowledge of persons and their mental states.²²

One neurobiologist doing research on mind-reading, Vittorio Gallese, tries to explain the relevant neural mechanisms involved in mind-reading and the knowledge of persons this way:

[The brain maps] representation across different spaces inhabited by different actors. These spaces are blended within a unified common intersubjective space, which paradoxically does not segregate any subject. This space is “*we*” *centric*. . . . The shared intentional space underpinned by the . . . [relevant neural] mechanism is not meant to distinguish the agent from the observer.²³

And he goes on to explain empathy in this way:

Self–other identity goes beyond the domain of action. It incorporates sensations, affect, and emotions. . . . The shared intersubjective space in which we live from birth continues long afterward to constitute a substantial part of our semantic space. When we observe other individuals acting, facing their full range of expressive power (the way they act, the emotions and feelings they display), a meaningful embodied link among individuals is automatically established. . . . Sensation and emotions displayed by others can also be empathized with, and therefore implicitly understood, through a mirror matching mechanism [in the brain].²⁴

In other words, in mind-reading between human beings, there is a sense in which, through the use of the neural systems Gallese describes, one person has a kind of intuitive entrance to the thought, affect, or intention in the mind of another person. And so because of the intermingling of minds made possible by the relevant neural systems, one person can be present to another in virtue of having a kind of direct access to the mind

²² Mind-reading or some analogue of it can be found in species other than human beings and also between members of different species, including between human beings and other animals; and so the qualification “in human beings” is necessary here.

²³ Vittorio Gallese, “‘Being Like Me’: Self–Other Identity, Mirror Neurons, and Empathy,” in *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science*, ed. Susan Hurley and Nick Chater (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 111.

²⁴ Gallese, “‘Being Like Me,’” 111 and 114.

of that other.

If Paula is riding the subway next to Jerome, then she is minimally present to Jerome in virtue of being at a time and at a place where Jerome is also, so that she is available for shared attention with him, if he should happen to look at her while she is looking at him, for example. But if he is a blank book to her, if his mind is closed to her, then to that extent she is not able to be present to him with the personal presence at issue here. In virtue of the fact that his mind is closed to her, she is distant from him even while standing next to him.

On the other hand, if Jerome's mind is open to Paula, then the kind of presence *to* a person made possible by the relevant neural mechanisms is greatly enhanced. When Paula mind-reads Jerome, the relevant neural systems in Paula give Paula a direct, quasi-perceptual awareness of something in Jerome's thoughts, emotions, or intentions. This awareness arises in Paula because in mind-reading Jerome she is in effect experiencing something of Jerome's mental states. In this experience and awareness, she is also present *with* Jerome, with personal presence, in a way she could not be if his mind were closed to her.

There is a limited degree of this kind of personal presence when Paula winces as she sees Jerome slice his finger with his steak knife, even if Jerome is unaware that Paula is observing him. This is a kind of presence of one person with another that is possible even if the two people involved are strangers to each other or know and heartily dislike each other. (Paula can wince at Jerome's pain even while she thinks that his suffering that pain serves him right.) And if Paula is close to Jerome, then her shared attention with Jerome will yield her significant personal presence to him also.

But there is a much greater degree of personal presence when two people who are mutually close to each other in a loving relationship are mutually mind-reading each other in intense shared attention. In mutual personal presence of this intimate kind, there can be something stronger than the asymmetrical relation of Paula's being present to Jerome. There can be a mutual "in-ness" between the persons who are mutually close to each other, in a way that yields a powerful personal presence of each to the other. When this kind of mutual and shared second-personal presence occurs, one way to describe the connection between the two people in question is to say that they are united in love.²⁵ This kind of experience is

²⁵ As many researchers working on these topics testify, it is very hard to capture the notion of sharing at issue in this claim. Attention, closeness, and presence can be mutual as between two persons Paula and Jerome and yet not yield union because they are not shared. For example, Paula can be mind-reading Jerome without

common between human beings, as, for example, between a mother and her child or between a sick person and her loving caretaker.

God's Presence with Human Persons: Empathy and Mind-Reading

With these background reflections on the nature of union between two human persons, we can turn to the nature of union between God and a human person; and we can start with the issue of mind-reading and empathy on God's part.

Since on orthodox theological doctrine God is omniscient, God knows all truths; and so God has propositional knowledge (or the divine equivalent of propositional knowledge²⁶) as regards all the mental states of all human beings. God knows *that* Paula is sad or *that* Jerome intends to go out. But it seems that with respect to human persons, God cannot have empathy or the mind-reading kind of knowledge. And so it seems that one kind of presence with a person, of the sort prized by human beings, is not possible for God to have with respect to human beings.

When Paula has empathy with Jerome, she feels within herself what Jerome feels. But in virtue of having no body, God has no feelings either. This is the point of the Scholastic doctrine that God is impassible. Strictly speaking, a *passio*, which is the thing an *impassible* God does not have, is a feeling; and a feeling at least includes bodily sensations. Nothing immaterial can have bodily sensations, and so immaterial God has no feelings either, in this sense of "feeling." (This claim is very different from the claim with which it is often confused, namely, the theologically unacceptable claim that God has no emotions.)

Mind-reading extends to more than knowledge of the feelings of another person, but all mind-reading is like empathy in having a shared character and a qualitative feel. When Paula mind-reads Jerome, she shares something of Jerome's mental state in virtue of somehow feeling that mental state in herself. Paula knows Jerome's intention to shake her hand, say, because her brain forms the neural pattern it would form if *Paula* were going to move her arm to shake someone's hand; and so, by feeling it within herself, she knows Jerome's intention to shake her hand. An immaterial God cannot form an intention to move his arm, however, because he

Jerome's being aware that she is doing so while Jerome is mind-reading Paula without Paula's being aware that Jerome is doing so. So mutuality does not imply sharedness. But sharedness is what is crucial for union.

²⁶ The doctrine of simplicity complicates any attribution to God, so that God's knowledge of truths may need to be explained in a way only analogical to human propositional knowledge.

has no arm to move. And so although God can know *that* Jerome intends to shake Paula's hand, it seems that he cannot mind-read Jerome's intention in the direct and intuitive way Paula can.

And the point generalizes. A human psyche is too small and God's mind is too great, one might say, for God to contain human mental states within himself in the shared way the relevant neural system enables as between human beings. And so, it seems, the sharing and the presence with a person that is the hallmark of the knowledge of persons is ruled out for God.

But appearances are misleading here. In this respect, Christianity has special resources because of the doctrine that God became incarnate in Christ. The Chalcedonian formula for the incarnate Christ stipulates that Christ is one person with two natures. The one person is the second person of the Trinity and is thus God, and the two natures are the divine and the human. It is one of the consequences of the Chalcedonian formula that there are in Christ two minds, one human and one divine, but only one person—a divine person—who is the possessor of these two minds.²⁷

For this reason, through the assumed human nature of Christ, God can have empathy with human persons and can also mind-read them, since God can use the human mind of the assumed human nature to know human persons in the knowledge of persons way. Therefore, for every human person, God can also be present with her in this way.

So, the Chalcedonian formula for the incarnate Christ gives a way of explaining and defending God's knowledge of persons through mind-reading and the presence with a human person that God's mind-reading enables God to have.

Second-Personal Presence: Union in Love and Indwelling

The kind of presence mediated by the mind-reading that God can have with all human persons in consequence of the Incarnation falls short of the second-personal presence obtaining between persons united in love, however. When Christ mind-reads in ordinary ways or miraculously, he does so because of the power of his human capacity for mind-reading, divinely enhanced or not. But, miraculous or merely human, by itself this kind of mind-reading produces a unilateral, not a mutual, presence. And

²⁷ Some people might suppose that this description of Christ is incoherent and that philosophical reason can demonstrate that there could be nothing meeting this description. In my *Aquinas*, ch. 14, I have examined the doctrine of the Incarnation and attempted to defend it against at least some of the major arguments meant to show its incoherence.

so there is an asymmetry about it that limits mutual presence between persons.

It is part of orthodox theological doctrine, though, that when a person Paula comes to faith, she opens herself up to God in love. In an act of free will that is part of faith, Paula accepts God's grace and begins a relation of mutual love with God. In entering into this relationship, Paula accepts not only God's grace but also God himself.

On orthodox Christian doctrine, when Paula comes to faith in this way, the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, comes to dwell in her.²⁸ However exactly it is to be understood, on the theological claims involving the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit puts the mind of God within Paula's psyche. On Trinitarian doctrine, there is only one mind and one will in God, and this one mind and one will are common to all three persons of the Trinity. In consequence of the strong and intimate connection established by the Holy Spirit's indwelling Paula, the relationship of love between God and Paula yields maximal second-personal presence of God with Paula.

But how are we to understand the theological claim about the Holy Spirit's indwelling?

We can start by saying what it is not. God's indwelling in Paula is not merely a matter of God's having direct and immediate causal and cognitive access to Paula's mind. Since God is omnipotent and omniscient, God has this kind of access to the mind of every human being, with regard to propositional knowledge (or the divine analogue to propositional knowledge). Through the human mind of Christ, God also has access to every human mind with the non-propositional knowledge garnered by mind-reading. For every person, it is possible for God to know the mind of that person with direct and unmediated awareness of the mind-reading kind. (For similar reasons, it is also possible for God to communicate in a direct and unmediated way with the mind of every person.) These kinds of cognitive relations between God and human beings hold, then, for every human person. But the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is found only in those people who have faith and are in grace. And so these kinds of cognitive relations alone are insufficient as an explanation of the nature of the Holy Spirit's indwelling.

We might try understanding indwelling as an analogue to the psychic relation between human persons who are united in love. The psychic relation between mutually loving human beings is a particularly intimate kind

²⁸ For a helpful discussion seeking to explain the effects of the indwelling Holy Spirit, see Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles* IV, ch. 21–22.

of mind-reading accompanied by shared attention between persons when those persons are mutually close to each other. And so we might suppose that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the analogous set of relations between God and a human person. But this approach to explaining the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not quite right either. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is meant to be something ontologically more powerful than mutual closeness accompanied by intense shared attention. In the Holy Spirit's indwelling, God himself is supposed somehow to be within each person in grace. Although immaterial God cannot be contained within a material container, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit does include God's being somehow within the psyches of those who are in grace.

At this point, it may help to return to Gallese's attempt to describe the kind of relations that are involved in mind-reading. According to Gallese, when Paula mind-reads Jerome's intention to shake her hand, for example, her mind goes into the configuration it would have if she were Jerome and preparing to shake hands. But this configuration is in Paula off-line that is, not actually connected in an active way to her muscles. She has the motor configuration for shaking hands, but on her part no hand-shaking occurs. So, the configuration of Jerome's intention is in Paula; and because it is, it is Paula's; but it is in Paula as Jerome's intention, and not as hers. This complicated state is what Gallese is trying to describe when he says that there is a "we-centric" part of the human brain that enables a real sharing of mental states.

Gallese is talking about brain systems in order to make a point about mental states. Aquinas makes a very roughly analogous point about the mechanisms of cognition for perception. For Aquinas, when a person Paula sees an object, such as a coffee cup, the configuration or form inhering in the cup which makes the matter of the cup be a cup is transferred to Paula's mind. The form that is in the cup is then also in Paula's mind, only in an encoded state. Or, as we might say, the configuration of the cup is transferred through a certain pattern of firing by Paula's retinal cells to Paula's visual cortex. In theory, it would be possible for a competent neuroscientist, who understands the neural coding involved, to look at the configuration in Paula's visual cortex and infer correctly that what is impacting her visual cortex is a cup. So, in some sense, the configuration of the cup is in both the cup and Paula, only in differing ways. Analogously, we might say, when Paula mind-reads Jerome's intention, there is a form or configuration in Jerome's brain that is found also in Paula's. She mind-reads him because she shares this form or configuration with him. The same configuration is in each of them, only differently insofar as it is

off-line in Paula.²⁹

Furthermore, although the configuration of the cup is really in Paula's mind when she sees the cup, that configuration is processed in Paula in such a way as to enable Paula to have cognition of the cup. Analogously, when the configuration of Jerome's intention is in Paula's mind, that configuration is in her mind in such a way as to enable Paula to have cognition of Jerome's intention, not hers. So, the configuration of Jerome's mind is in Jerome's mind and in Paula's at once, but Jerome feels it as his and Paula feels it as belonging to Jerome. It is possible, then, for a person Paula to have neurologically and psychologically within her mind something that is her own and yet also part of another person Jerome.

Furthermore, it is also possible for Paula to feel this dichotomy, so that it is subjectively accessible to her. Paula can consciously identify a mental state as within her own mind and yet somehow not hers but Jerome's. It is easiest to see this point in connection with empathy. If Paula sees Jerome impale his bare foot on a nail in the garden, she will wince with pain. So, something of Jerome's pain is in Paula; she winces because she feels it within herself. But even while she feels this pain in herself, she also is conscious that what she feels with pain is Jerome's pain and not her own. She is sharing with Jerome what is Jerome's.

Neurological research suggests that the brain has multiple systems for identifying parts of oneself as one's own—body parts, thoughts, and the self in general.³⁰ If there are brain systems enabling social cognition and intersubjectivity, by means of "we-centric" space that enables shared mental states or by some other means, there are also brain systems enabling the distinction between self and other. When something goes wrong with these latter brain systems, dysfunctional mental conditions involving delusions can result. For example, in consequence of an injury, a patient can suffer the delusion that some part of his body is not his own.³¹ In the view of some researchers, the psychological delusion of thought intrusion is also

²⁹ I am grateful to John Foley, who suggested to me this way of explaining the point and its usefulness for understanding the nature of God's indwelling in a person of faith.

³⁰ As recent work in metaphysics highlights, there are also criteria for determining that a person's mind is his own, that it belongs to him, in ways hard to specify with precision, but crucial for issues of moral responsibility and freedom of will. For a discussion of some of the issues, see, for example, my "Persons: Identification and Freedom," *Philosophical Topics* 24 (1996): 183–214.

³¹ For a vivid and popular description of such a case, see Oliver Sacks, *A Leg to Stand On* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

a result of the malfunctioning of these brain systems.³²

Because of these systems in the human brain for recognizing some mental states as one's own, it is also possible for a person Jerome to have a sense of the mind operative in him as not his own but someone else's. Since this is so, it is possible for the intersubjectivity of mental states enabled by the mirror neuron system and evident in mind-reading to transform from a mere psychological sharing to something that is metaphysical and ontological. It is possible, that is, that what is in Jerome's mind is not just another person's thought or affect, but in fact that other person's mind. If such a thing is possible, then "indwelling" is not a bad word for this kind of relationship of one mind to another. It does seem appropriate to say that in such a case the other person's mind indwells Jerome's mind.

Science fiction is replete with stories in which malevolent non-human beings indwell a human mind,³³ and folklore has sometimes tended to explain certain kinds of mental illness along the same lines.³⁴ Such stories and the correlative folklore are frightening and repulsive because in them the indwelling mind invades the mind of a vulnerable human person

³² In Fregoli's syndrome, a patient has the intractable delusion that he knows familiar people when he looks at the faces of strangers. In Capgras syndrome, a patient has the intractable delusion that he does not know the people he is looking at when he looks at the faces of persons who are in fact familiar to him. For discussion of such syndromes, see, for example, Sandra Blakeslee and Vilayandur Ramachandran, *Phantoms in the Brain* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), ch. 8. Both Fregoli's syndrome and Capgras syndrome are a kind of loss, after neurological damage, of the capacity to know something *as* the thing it is. Although these syndromes have been described largely as they affect the knowledge of persons, there are also reported cases in which the lost capacity extends to the knowledge of familiar things other than persons. So, for example, some researchers describe "a patient who claimed his actual home was not his 'real' home, although he recognized that the facsimile home has the same ornaments and bedside items as the original" (Todd Feinberg, John Deluca, Joseph T. Giacino, David M. Roane, and Mark Solms, "Right-Hemisphere Pathology and the Self: Delusional Misidentification and Reduplication," in *The Lost Self: Pathologies of the Brain and Identity*, ed. Todd Feinberg and Julian Paul Keenan [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 103; see also 105–6 and 114–25).

³³ In such science fiction stories, the mind of one intelligent being can be within the mind of another one. The two minds can interact within the mind of one being, without either mind losing its identity. In the science fiction literature depicting a human being in such a condition, the indwelling mind is typically that of an alien. The alien is generally portrayed as smarter and more powerful than the human being in whom the alien mind indwells. Robert Heinlein's *The Puppetmasters* is an example of such a story.

³⁴ If one Googles "schizophrenia and demon possession," one will find that this sort of belief is still prevalent in some communities today.

against the human person's will or at least without his consent. Typically, in such cases, the invader has only hatred and contempt for its human victim.

On the other hand, when two people Paula and Jerome are psychically united to one another in love with the sharing of attention that union requires, the interweaving of their psyches occurs only with the willingness of each to each. Paula's psyche is open to Jerome's because Paula wants it to be, and the same is true of Jerome's psyche with respect to Paula. The resulting shared openness is wanted by each of them; and when they have it, it yields gladness and peace. Furthermore, insofar as they love each other, each of them wishes for the good of the other. And so the vulnerability of each of them to the other in the openness of love is acceptable to each of them because of the trust each is rightly willing to place in the other.³⁵ In the fullest expression of such uniting in love between Paula and Jerome, each of them is as second-personally present with the other as is possible between two human beings. Depiction of human persons united in love in a variety of relationships is a perennial theme in great literature, and hardly anyone is completely immune to its attractions.

But an even more powerful second-personal presence of shared love is possible for God in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As in the case of two human persons united in love, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit requires welcome on the part of a human person Paula. When Paula comes to faith and accepts God's grace in love, then and only then the Holy Spirit comes to indwell in Paula. In coming to faith, Paula freely accepts God, and the consequent union between Paula and God is characterized by shared love, freely given and freely accepted. In the union of love between God and a human person, then, what is within the psyche of a human person Paula is not just the thoughts and intentions of God, but God himself. Nonetheless, nothing of Paula's own individual personhood is lost in the process. Paula's mind remains her own, and her awareness of her mind as her own also remains. Nonetheless, when the Holy Spirit indwells in her mind, Paula will be aware of the Spirit's mind within her own, and there will be shared mind-reading between them.³⁶

³⁵ It probably needs to be said that it is possible for two people to love each other but not to be united in that love. They might instead love each other in ways that are conflicted or mutually self-destructive. But in those cases they are not united to each other, not least because each of them, in being conflicted, is divided against himself. For a discussion of such cases, see my *Wandering in Darkness*, ch. 6.

³⁶ For more explanation of the nature of this mutual mind-reading between a human person and God, see my "Faith, Wisdom, and the Transmission of Knowledge through Testimony," in *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*, ed. Laura Frances

In consequence, Paula will have as present as possible, not only with herself but even within herself, the God who is her beloved. That is why the list of the fruits of this union begins with love, joy, and peace—love, because her beloved, who loves her, is present to her; joy, because of the dynamic interaction with her beloved, who is present to her in second-personal ways; and peace, because her heart already has what it most desires, her beloved, present to her.³⁷ On orthodox theological doctrine, there is no faith, no life of grace, without the indwelling Holy Spirit, with its concomitant love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of this union.³⁸

Conclusion

On the Christian theology, then, the Holy Spirit comes to every person of faith, and it remains in that person as long as he remains in faith. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a person of faith establishes a union that makes the two of them one without merging one into the other or in any other way depriving the human person of his own self, his own mind and will. The selfhood of the person of faith is kept entirely intact. In the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then, God is more powerfully present in love and more united with a human person of faith than any other human person could be. And so, for a person of faith with the indwelling Holy Spirit, in union with God, God is Emmanuel, that is, “God with us,” not only psychologically but also literally, that is, spiritually and ontologically.

N.V.

Callahan and Timothy O'Connor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 204–30.

³⁷ For an excellent discussion of this subject in connection with Aquinas's ethics, see Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), especially ch. 4, in which Pinsent likens the fruition of second-person relatedness, an “abiding in” the other, to a state of resonance.

³⁸ There are twelve traditionally recognized fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, long-suffering, goodness, mildness, fidelity, modesty, continence, chastity, and gentleness.