

Contemplatio Sapientialis and Sacra Doctrina

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Rik van Nieuwenhove's monograph *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*¹ is without a doubt an important contribution to the literature on what has for a long time been a sadly neglected area of Thomas's thought.² Bernhard Blankenhorn, in a review of this book, writes that it "should restart and move forward important debates among philosophers, dogmatists, moralists, historians, and scholars of spirituality on medieval and Thomistic theories of contemplation."³ This article aims to contribute to one such debate by discussing the role, if any, that the Gift of wisdom plays in the life of theological contemplation.

Van Nieuwenhove contends, with respect to the *Summa theologiae* [ST], that Thomas is in fact "decidedly reluctant to adopt a sapiential notion of theological contemplation—although he underscores the significance of the gift of wisdom in the life of the ordinary Christian."⁴ While Thomas is clear that the theologian requires the theoretical virtues of *sapientia*, *intellectus*, and *scientia*, he nowhere claims that he needs the corresponding Gifts of the Holy Spirit, van Nieuwenhove notes, a fact that "should give us pause for thought and make us hesitant about attributing a sapiential

¹ Rik van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

² See van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 1–2; van Nieuwenhove, "Aquinas and Contemplation: A Neglected Topic," *Jaarboek Thomas Instituut te Utrecht* 35 (2016): 9–11.

³ Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P., review of *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation* by Rik van Nieuwenhove, *The Thomist* 87 (2023), 157.

⁴ Van Nieuwenhove *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 174.

(in the sense of *sapientia*) notion of theological wisdom to Aquinas.”⁵ There is, moreover, the distinction that Thomas draws between the Gift of wisdom, on the one hand, and wisdom as an acquired cognitive virtue, on the other hand. Only the acquired cognitive virtue is mentioned by Thomas in relation to *sacra doctrina*,⁶ which he says is acquired by study even though its principles are furnished by revelation.⁷ Elsewhere Thomas writes that, while the Gift of wisdom is caused by charity, which has the will as its subject, its essence is nevertheless in the intellect, “whose act is to judge aright.”⁸

On this basis, van Nieuwenhove rightly comments that “even the gift of wisdom—never mind *theological* wisdom—is not essentially affective,”⁹ in spite of the experiential overtones that attend descriptions of the Gift of

⁵ Van Nieuwenhove *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 175. Van Nieuwenhove is here alluding to *In III sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 1, qc. 3, ad 1, and to *ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 2, obj. 2 (and ad 2). In the latter text, the objection reads thus: “Further, it is written (Ecclus. vi. 23): *The wisdom of doctrine is according to her name*, for wisdom [*sapientia*] may be described as *sweet-tasting science* [*sapida scientia*], and this would seem to regard the appetite, to which it belongs to taste spiritual pleasure or sweetness. Therefore wisdom is in affection [*affectus*] rather than in the intellect” (trans. slightly emended; all translations of the *ST* are drawn from *Summa Theologiae*, 5 vols., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1948], unless otherwise indicated.) Thomas’s response presupposes his treatment of the first objection: “Augustine is speaking of wisdom as to its cause, whence also wisdom [*sapientia*] takes its name, insofar as it denotes a certain sweetness [*saporem*]. Hence the reply to the second objection is evident, that is if this be the true meaning of the text quoted. For, apparently this is not the case, because such an exposition of the text would fit only the Latin word for “wisdom,” whereas it does not apply to the Greek, and perhaps not in other languages. Hence it would seem that, in the text quoted wisdom stands for the renown of doctrine, for which it is praised by all.” Thomas’s comments do not however undermine the claim that the conduct of *sacra doctrina* is sapiential in character. This interpretation in no way vitiates his claim that the Gift of wisdom and the act of contemplation both have their essence in the intellect (*ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 2, and q. 180, a. 1, respectively).

⁶ See Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 3–4: “*Sacra doctrina*, necessary for salvation, is a much broader reality than theology alone: in fact, in addition to revelation, which, properly speaking, is transmitted in sacred scripture, *sacra doctrina* incorporates all forms of Christian teaching at all levels, Theology is therefore not identical with *sacra doctrina*, but is rather its scientifically developed form.” Notwithstanding the precise meaning of *sacra doctrina*, this article will employ the expression more loosely as equating to theology.

⁷ See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3. See also *In III sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 1, q. 1; *ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 1, ad 2; a. 3, ad 1; a. 4, ad 2.

⁸ *ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 2.

⁹ Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 178.

wisdom, which is caused by charity and pronounces right judgment about divine things on account of a certain connaturality with them.¹⁰ In his commentary on the *De Divinis Nominibus* of the Pseudo-Dionysius, Thomas makes it clear, moreover, that the knowledge imparted by this union of faith and love with divine things is unteachable (*indocibilem*), that is to say, it cannot be imparted by a human master.¹¹ It is rather mystical (*mysticam*), that is to say, hidden (*occultam*), since it surpasses the confines of natural knowledge. This commentary, remarks van Nieuwenhove, provides further grounds for hesitating about making any association between the connatural union proper to the Gift of wisdom and the wisdom that pertains to *sacra doctrina*.¹² He nevertheless allows, toward the end of his exposition, that theologians who are enslaved by fleshly desires will be hindered in their pursuit of truth, notwithstanding the fact that Thomas did not allow the Gifts an essential role in the academic pursuit of theology.¹³

This final comment intimates a concession toward what I understand to be a sapiential construal of theological contemplation. The purpose of this article is in part to propose such a construal afresh. In order to do so, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between the two modes of wisdom that are central to this discussion, namely the wisdom that is a Gift of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom that characterizes *sacra doctrina*, because, while this article emphasizes their dynamic interaction in the concrete unfolding of their operations, it in no way intends to conflate them. Thomas explains the Gift of the Holy Spirit by way of analogy with the virtuous man who judges correctly concerning the object of his virtue by his inclination towards it. The wisdom that pertains to *sacra doctrina*, for its part, is the fruit of discursive reason, albeit its principles are furnished by the articles of faith, which derive from the divine knowledge.

After this clarification of the notion of a twofold manner of judging, I turn to Thomas's treatment of contemplation, which I argue is intimately bound up with his construal of the Gift of wisdom. While the Gift of wisdom and the act of contemplation are of course to be distinguished, in the concrete reality of their operation they are nevertheless intimately connected. Thus, charity is the cause both of the Gift of wisdom and of graced contemplation, while the essence of both wisdom and contemplation

¹⁰ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2. Thus, writes van Nieuwenhove in an early footnote, "it appears to follow that the faith of the theologian does not necessarily have to be a living faith (i.e., informed by charity)" (*Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 7n29).

¹¹ See *In de div. nom.* II, lec. 4 [no. 192].

¹² See van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 179.

¹³ See van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 180.

resides in the intellect elevated by faith. Wisdom and contemplation are moreover predicated on a dynamic interaction between intellect and will. In brief, the Gift of wisdom and infused contemplation engage the same faculties and the same theological virtues. They also share in common a certain dependence on moral virtue, most especially chastity with respect to the concupiscible appetite, as well as justice with respect to the will.

The act of contemplation, the culmination of the contemplative life, regards "the simple act of gazing on the truth" (*simplex intuitus veritatis*).¹⁴ There are however many acts that lead up to it.¹⁵ Meditation, which is intrinsic to theological contemplation, counts among these acts. Meditation in general deduces truth from principles, while the meditation proper to *sacra doctrina* is founded on principles revealed by God,¹⁶ namely the articles of faith taught by the Church and which are derived from Sacred Scripture. Since faith itself grants the believer a certain participation in divine truth, so too does *sacra doctrina* inasmuch as it is a subalternate science whose principles are held by faith. The study of *sacra doctrina* grasps the truths of the faith *per modum cognitionis* (by way of discursive enquiry),¹⁷ a kind of meditation that leads to contemplation, which pertains to this "simple act of gazing on the truth." Living faith is of course animated by charity which, for its part, is the cause of wisdom whose essence is in the intellect. By this Gift of wisdom, the believer knows the truths of the faith *per modum inclinationis* (by inclination).¹⁸ While it is important to distinguish these two modes of knowing, they nonetheless come together to form a single dynamism in the case of the believing theologian. This synthesis is, moreover, epistemically significant. Hence the assertion that, seemingly, "the faith of the theologian does not necessarily have to be a living faith (i.e., informed by charity),"¹⁹ needs nuancing.

Distinguishing Between Two Kinds of Wisdom

In the very first question of the *Summa theologiae*, where he deals with the nature and extent of *sacra doctrina*, Thomas argues that it "is especially called wisdom."²⁰ He explains in this regard that it pertains to the wise

¹⁴ ST II-II, q. 180, a. 3, ad 1.

¹⁵ See ST II-II, q. 180, a. 3.

¹⁶ See ST I, q. 1, a. 2.

¹⁷ See ST I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

¹⁸ See ST I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

¹⁹ Van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 7n29.

²⁰ ST I, q. 1, a. 6.

man to arrange and to judge and that, since it is proper for lesser matters to be judged from the perspective of a higher principle or cause (*causa*), “he is said to be wise in any one order who considers the highest principle [*causa*] in that order.”²¹ Two analogies—one drawn from the activity of building, the other from the realm of moral virtue—serve to illustrate this point. Thus, the man who designs a house “is called wise and architect”²² in relation to the lower craftsmen such as carpenters and stone masons. Again, bearing in mind that the end is the first principle of moral conduct, the prudent man is considered wise insofar as he directs his acts to an appropriate end.²³ *Sacra doctrina*, however, treats of God as *simpliciter* the highest cause of the entire universe.²⁴ This treatment pertains not only to God as the object of philosophical knowledge—that is to say, insofar as he can be known by means of creatures (quoting Rom 1:9²⁵)—but also inasmuch as “he is known to himself alone and revealed to others.”²⁶ Indeed, the former is subordinated to the latter.²⁷ *Sacra doctrina*, which affords knowledge (*cognitio*) of divine things is therefore especially (*maxime*) regarded as wisdom,²⁸ and the man who engages in this discipline is especially (*maxime*) deemed to be wise.²⁹

Among the objections to this thesis is the idea that wisdom is possessed by divine inspiration and therefore counts among the Gifts of the Holy

²¹ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6. Thomas repeats this line of reasoning in his treatment of wisdom as a Gift of the Holy Spirit; see *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 1.

²² *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6.

²³ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6. Both these examples are inspired by Sacred Scripture, as indicated by Thomas’s citation of 1 Cor 3:10 (“As a wise architect, I have laid the foundation”) and Prov. 10:23 (“Wisdom is prudence to a man”).

²⁴ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6.

²⁵ Cf. *Super Rom* 1, lec. 6, nos. 113–16.

²⁶ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6. Metaphysics, which considers first causes of the universe, constitutes the former kind of wisdom. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.1.1,981b–982a1 and 1.2.983a4–11, trans. W. D. Ross, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). See also Thomas’s commentary thereon: *In I metaphys.*, lec. 1, no. 35; lec. 2, nos. 64–65. Joshua Revelle comments thus: “Metaphysics, however, attains to this divine science indirectly by abstracting from naturally known things, whereas *sacra doctrina* is a participation in divine science through principles given directly by God which cannot be known apart from revelation” (Joshua Revelle, “I Prayed, and Understanding Was Given Me; I Called upon God, and the Spirit of Wisdom Came to Me’: The Role of Prayer in Theology According to the Life and Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas” [PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2020], 195).

²⁷ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 1.

²⁸ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6.

²⁹ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6.

Spirit, whereas *sacra doctrina* is acquired by dint of study.³⁰ This objection provides Thomas with the opportunity to distinguish between a twofold manner of judging (*duplex modus iudicandi*) that corresponds to a twofold manner in which wisdom is learned or received (*duplicitur sapientia accipitur*).³¹ In doing so, as Rafael-Tomás Caldera notes, Thomas focuses neither on the source of each of these modes of knowing nor on their content, but rather on the activity proper to the wise man and on the possible ways of exercising that activity.³² The first manner of judging is “by way of inclination” (*per modum inclinationis*),³³ as whoever possesses the habit of virtue judges rightly concerning those things that are to be done according to virtue inasmuch as he is inclined to them. In the other key passage that deals with this notion, Thomas employs the term “connaturality”: rectitude of judgment is “on account of a certain connaturality” (*propter connaturalitatem quandam*)³⁴ with those things about which one has to judge. The Aristotelian provenance of this notion is readily apparent.³⁵ Thomas quotes *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.5 on various occasions throughout the *Summa theologiae*: “According as a man is, such does the end seem to him” (“qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei”).³⁶ Here the kind of man in question is virtuous and is thus “the measure and rule” (*mensura et regula*) of human acts.³⁷ Virtue perfects and solidifies affective inclination, the means whereby a man renders right judgment with respect to the object

³⁰ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, obj. 3.

³¹ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

³² See Rafael-Tomás Caldera, “Le jugement par inclination chez saint Thomas d’Aquin” (PhD diss., Université de Fribourg, 1974), 77.

³³ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3. Francisco Marín-Sola, O.P., lists the following expressions, employed by Thomas, that also refer to this mode of cognition: (1) *per connaturalitatem*; (2) *cognitio affectiva*; (3) *notitia experimentalis*; (4) *per affinitatem ad divina*; (5) *per modum naturae*; (6) *per viam voluntatis*; (7) *per contactum*; (8) *per unionem ad Deum*; (9) *per amorem*; (10) *ex intimo sui*; (11) *per deiformem contemplationem*; (12) *ad modum primorum principiorum*; (13) *sine discursu*; (14) *ex instinctu divino*; (15) *cognitio absoluta et simplex*; (16) *quasi habitu* (*La evolución homogénea del dogma católico* [Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1963], 367).

³⁴ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

³⁵ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.5.1176a15–19: “That which appears to the good man is thought to be really so. If this is correct, as it seems to be, and excellence and the good man as such are the measure of each thing, those also will be pleasures which appear so to him, and those things pleasant which he enjoys” (trans. W. D. Ross, rev. J. O. Urmson, in Barnes, *Complete Works*).

³⁶ *ST* I-II, q. 9, a. 2. See also I, q. 83, a. 1, obj. 5; I-II, q. 10, a. 3, obj. 2; q. 58, a. 5; II-II, q. 24, a. 11.

³⁷ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

of his judgment.³⁸ Thus, for example, the habit of chastity renders a man capable of judging about matters that relate to this virtue “by a kind of connaturality” (*per quandam connaturalitatem*).³⁹

This manner of judging *per modum inclinationis* also applies in the case of the Gift of wisdom, as Thomas indicates in his article on whether *sacra doctrina* is the same as wisdom. His guiding light with regard to this Gift is 1 Cor 2:15: “The spiritual man judgeth all things.”⁴⁰ In the first article that he devotes to the Gift of wisdom (*ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 1), he repeats this verse but also adds 1 Cor 2:10—“the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God”—in order to clarify further the notion of judgment through connaturality. In his commentary on this verse, Thomas states that the deep things of God to which St. Paul refers “are those which are hidden in him and not those which are known about him through creatures, which are, as it were, on the surface.”⁴¹ The love of charity causes “sympathy or connaturality” (*compassio sive connaturalitas*) for divine things,⁴² thereby constituting the Gift of wisdom, while wisdom’s essence is in the intellect, to which it pertains to judge correctly.⁴³

Once again, this time in a question devoted to the Gift of wisdom, the Aristotelian notion of the virtuous man informs Thomas’s thinking:⁴⁴ affective inclination perfected by charity makes him capable of judging rightly concerning the object of his judgment, namely divine things that are the object of faith. This wisdom, while it is intimately related to faith, is nevertheless to be distinguished from it: whereas faith assents to the divine truth in itself, it pertains to wisdom as a Gift to judge according to this truth.⁴⁵ Faith, as an infused virtue, is to be distinguished from the light

³⁸ On this point, see Marco d’Avenia, *La conoscenza per connaturalità in S. Tommaso d’Aquino* (Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 1992), 143. As Caldera explains, judgment by inclination or by connaturality is “a right judgment by means of the affective reaction that the subject experiences with respect to it” (“Le jugement par inclination,” 143 [trans. mine]).

³⁹ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

⁴⁰ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

⁴¹ *Super I Cor* 2, lec. 2, no. 102.

⁴² *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2. Charity, which is in the believer by the infusion of the Holy Spirit (see *ST* III, q. 24, a. 2), is regulated by God’s wisdom, which transcends the rule of human reason (see *ST* III, q. 24, a. 1, ad 2).

⁴³ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

⁴⁴ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2. On this point, see Caldera, “Le jugement par inclination,” 88–89. Caldera notes that, while the source and content, as well as the end, of the judgment through connaturality proper to the Gift of wisdom are divine, the manner of effecting this judgment remains human (89).

⁴⁵ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 1, ad 2. Wisdom as a Gift differs of course from the acquired

of grace inasmuch as it both flows from it and is ordered thereto.⁴⁶ Along with hope and charity, it establishes the soul's first union with God.⁴⁷ The theological virtues in turn furnish the principles of the Gifts.⁴⁸ In other words, they are presupposed by the Gifts, which are, as it were, rooted in them.⁴⁹ Thus, wisdom that is a Gift presupposes both charity as its cause and faith inasmuch as faith assents to the divine truth, according to which wisdom judges.⁵⁰

A man's knowledge of divine things is transformed by the Gift of wisdom, which, since it has its essence in the intellect, possesses a properly intellectual character,⁵¹ as the term "affective knowledge" (*cognitio*

intellectual virtue, inasmuch as it is divinely inspired whereas the acquired virtue is attained by dint of human effort.

⁴⁶ Thomas explains this point with respect to the infused virtues (which include faith) as follows: "Even as the natural light of reason is something besides the acquired virtues, which are ordained to this natural light, so also the light of grace which is a participation of the Divine Nature is something besides the infused virtues which are derived from and are ordained to this light, hence the Apostle says (Eph. v. 8): *For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk then as children of the light.* For as the acquired virtues enable a man to walk, in accordance with the natural light of reason, so do the infused virtues enable a man to walk as befits the light of grace" (*ST I-II*, q. 110, a. 3).

⁴⁷ See *ST I-II*, q. 68, a. 4, ad 3.

⁴⁸ *ST II-II*, q. 19, a. 9, ad 4. For an in-depth treatment of grace and the distinction between the Gifts and virtues, see John M. Meinert, *The Love of God Poured Out: Grace and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2018), esp. 77–88. The complexities of Meinert's discussion far exceed the confines of this article. Thus, while the theological virtues furnish the principles of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, there is a sense, Meinert argues, in which "the gifts are more excellent than the theological virtues" (153).

⁴⁹ See *ST I-II*, q. 68, a. 4, ad 3; a. 1, ad 3.

⁵⁰ See *ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 1, ad 1. Wisdom also presupposes faith, inasmuch as the latter precedes charity in the order of generation. See *ST I-II*, q. 62, a. 4: "By order of generation, in respect of which matter precedes form, and the imperfect precedes the perfect, in one same subject faith precedes hope, and hope charity, as to their acts: because habits are all infused together. For the movement of the appetite cannot tend to anything, either by hoping or loving, unless that thing be apprehended by the sense or by the intellect. Now it is by faith that the intellect apprehends the object of hope and love. Hence in the order of generation, faith precedes hope and charity." For completeness, it should be noted that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are, for their part, "the origin of the [infused] intellectual and moral virtues" (*ST II-II*, q. 19, a. 9, ad 4; see also *I-II*, q. 68, a. 4). Hence, as Meinert puts it, "the theological virtues, the infused cardinal virtues, the gifts, and grace are all distinct because a principle and that which proceeds are distinct in all cases" (*Love of God Poured Out*, 87).

⁵¹ See *Summa contra gentiles* [*SCG*] I, chap. 6, no. 1, where Thomas speaks about "the inspiration of human minds, so that unlettered and simple persons are filled with the Holy

affectiva)⁵² intimates. One might say that, under the causal impetus of charity as it increases,⁵³ man's faith-elevated intelligence is transported ever more into the ineffable truth of the triune God according to which the Gift of wisdom judges.⁵⁴ By means of this affective or experimental knowledge (*affectiva seu experimentalis*) "a man experiences in himself the taste of God's sweetness, and complacency [*complacentia*] in God's will."⁵⁵ Significantly, Thomas's description of this connatural knowledge is informed by two scriptural texts: "It is written (Ps. xxxiii. 9): *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet*, and (Rom. xii. 2): *That you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.*"⁵⁶ This connatural knowledge, since it does not involve concepts and is non-discursive in nature, is to be distinguished from the manner of judging that is effected according the perfect use of reason (*secundum perfectum usum rationis*).⁵⁷

Judgment *secundum perfectum usum rationis* or *per modum cognitionis* (by knowledge)⁵⁸ is the manner of judging that pertains to *sacra doctrina*, "which is acquired by study, though its principles are obtained by revelation."⁵⁹ Thomas illustrates this manner of judging with the example of a

Spirit, and in one instant are endowed with the most sublime wisdom and eloquence" (trans. Aquinas Institute at aquinas.cc).

⁵² See *ST* I, q. 64 a. 1: "The knowledge of truth is twofold: one which comes of nature, and one which comes of grace. The knowledge which comes of grace is likewise twofold: the first is purely speculative, as when Divine secrets are imparted to an individual; the other is effective, and produces love for God; which knowledge properly belongs to the gift of wisdom." See also *ST* II-II, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2; q. 162, a. 3, ad 1.

⁵³ On increase of charity, see *ST* II-II, q. 24, aa. 4–7. See also q. 24, a. 9, which deals with the three degrees of charity.

⁵⁴ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 1, ad 2. On this point, see Kevin E. O'Reilly, O.P., *The Hermeneutics of Knowing and Willing in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 223–82.

⁵⁵ *ST* II-II, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2. F. E. Crowe summarizes Thomas's construal of complacency thus: "The questions dealing directly with complacency by the very fact that they make it the principle of all movement as well as by other evidence, show that complacency itself is not a movement but a simple change of will" ("Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *Theological Studies* 20 [1959]: 39).

⁵⁶ *ST* II-II, q. 97, a. 2, obj. 2.

⁵⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2. See Taki Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge: Connatural Knowledge According to Thomas Aquinas," *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 63.

⁵⁸ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3. Francisco Marín-Sola, O.P., lists the following expressions, employed by Thomas, that also refer to this mode of cognition: (1) *per usum rationis*; (2) *per rationis inquisitionem*; (3) *cognitio speculativa*; (4) *per studium et doctrinam*; (5) *per modum rationis*; (6) *per viam intellectus*; (7) *secundum humanum modum*; (8) *ex iudicio rationis*; (9) *scientia discursive vel ratiocinativa* (*La evolución homogénea del dogma católico*, 367).

⁵⁹ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

man who has been formed intellectually in the science of morals and who might therefore be able to judge correctly concerning virtuous acts even though he might lack virtue (*etiam si virtutem non haberet*).⁶⁰ In his treatment of the Gift of wisdom, Thomas again offers a concrete example to illustrate this point: the man who has studied moral science judges rightly by means of rational inquiry (*per rationis inquisitionem*) with regard to matters that touch on chastity.⁶¹ This manner of judging, which is posited at the term of a process of reasoning, prescind from affective inclination, inasmuch as it is not posited by means of this inclination. Its starting point insofar as practical reason is concerned is “good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided” (“bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum”),⁶² as well as the other precepts of the natural law that are based on this one. On the basis of these first practical principles, which belong to a special natural habit called *synderesis*, “we proceed to discover, and judge of what we have discovered.”⁶³ Like speculative reason, practical reason proceeds from the knowledge of first principles and, at the term of its inquiry, returns to these principles, in the light of which it judges what it has discovered.⁶⁴

The principles proper to *sacra doctrina* are not derived from human knowledge, but rather from the divine knowledge, which, as the highest wisdom, imparts a right ordering to all human knowledge.⁶⁵ These principles are furnished by the articles of faith, “held by means of a Divine light,”⁶⁶ which distill and communicate the essence of Sacred Scripture.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

⁶¹ See *ST II-II*, q. 45, a. 2.

⁶² *ST I-II*, q. 94, a. 2.

⁶³ *ST I*, q. 79, a. 12.

⁶⁴ See *ST I*, q. 79, a. 8; *De veritate*, q. 15, a. 1. For an extended treatment of the *intellectus-ratio* distinction, see Colm McClements, “The Distinction *intellectus-ratio* in the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas: A Historical and Critical Study” (PhD diss., Université Catholique de Louvain, 1990). For a brief account of the discursive nature of reason, see Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas’s Way of Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 192–96.

⁶⁵ See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 1.

⁶⁶ *ST I-II*, q. 62, a. 3.

⁶⁷ See *ST II-II*, q. 1, a. 9, ad 1: “The truth of faith is contained in Holy Writ, diffusely, under various modes of expression, and sometimes obscurely, so that, in order to gather the truth of faith from Holy Writ, one needs long study and practice, which are unattainable by all those who require to know the truth of faith, many of whom have no time for study, being busy with other affairs. And so it was necessary to gather together a clear summary from the sayings of Holy Writ, to be proposed to the belief of all. This indeed was no addition to Holy Writ, but something taken from it.”

Just as other sciences do not offer proofs of the principles that ground them, but rather take these principles as their point of departure in demonstrating other truths, neither does *sacra doctrina* seek to prove its principles, but rather proceeds from them in order to prove something else.⁶⁸ In other words, although human reason cannot prove what must be received by faith, *sacra doctrina* nevertheless argues from the articles of faith to other articles as conclusions derived therefrom.⁶⁹ These other articles are judged in the light of the first principles of graced reason. By way of illustration Thomas invokes 1 Cor 15, where St. Paul appeals to the resurrection of Christ in order to prove the doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead.⁷⁰ Reason is thus employed in service of the faith, not by proving it (since such proof would destroy the merit of faith), but rather in order to elucidate other things that are contained in its doctrine. In this regard, Thomas compares reason's service in ministering to the faith to the natural bent of the will inasmuch as it ministers to charity.⁷¹

In brief, Thomas argues that *sacra doctrina* is "especially called wisdom,"⁷² and that an exponent of this discipline "is most of all called wise."⁷³ The objection that wisdom is divinely inspired whereas *sacra doctrina* is acquired by study allows Thomas to posit a twofold wisdom, namely *per modum inclinationis / connaturalitatis* and *per modum cognitionis*. The first manner of judging divine things, which pertains to the Gift of wisdom, is illustrated by way of analogy with the Aristotelian virtuous man, whose virtue renders him the rule and measure of virtuous acts. Analogously, as St. Paul teaches in 1 Cor 2:15, "The spiritual man"—that is to say, the man animated by the Gift of wisdom—"judgeth all things."⁷⁴ This wisdom is

⁶⁸ See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 8. On *sacra doctrina* as a subalternate science, see *ST I*, q. 1, a. 2: "Sacred doctrine is a science. We must bear in mind that there are two kinds of sciences. There are some which proceed from a principle known by the natural light of intelligence, such as arithmetic and geometry and the like. There are some which proceed from principles known by the light of a higher science: thus the science of perspective proceeds from principles established by geometry, and music from principles established by arithmetic. So it is that sacred doctrine is a science because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed. Hence, just as the musician accepts on authority the principles taught him by the mathematician, so sacred science is established on principles revealed by God."

⁶⁹ See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 8, ad 1.

⁷⁰ See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 8.

⁷¹ See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 8, ad 1 and ad 2.

⁷² *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6.

⁷³ *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6.

⁷⁴ *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

caused by charity but has its essence in the intellect, and thus possesses a properly intellectual character. Judgment *per modum cognitionis*, for its part, is grounded in the knowledge of first principles, from which reason departs and to which it returns at the term of its inquiry in order to judge what it has discovered in their light. Thomas offers the example of a man learned in moral science judging correctly about virtuous acts even though he himself lack virtue. It is this manner of judging that obtains in the case of *sacra doctrina*. Crucially, however the principles of *sacra doctrina*—namely, the articles of faith—do not derive from human knowledge, but rather from divine knowledge. On the basis of these principles, *sacra doctrina* proceeds to discover other articles which are, as it were, conclusions derived from these principles.

Notwithstanding the distinction between wisdom as a Gift of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom that pertains to *sacra doctrina*, a dynamic interaction obtains between them in the case of the believer who applies himself to the study of this sacred discipline. The final section, which deals with *contemplatio sapientialis* and *sacra doctrina*, will argue in support of this contention. Before executing this task, however, it is necessary first of all to elucidate the dynamics that are operative between graced contemplation and the Gift of wisdom in order to appreciate the significance of the notion of *contemplatio sapientialis*. While one can and must of course distinguish between the Gift of wisdom and the act of contemplation, in practice they are intimately connected. In brief, as the next section seeks to establish, graced contemplation involves a dynamic interaction between intellect and will informed by faith and charity respectively. It is this very same charity that is the cause of the Gift of wisdom, whose essence is in the intellect. Presupposed here is the necessity of the intellect's elevation by faith, which, for its part, shows charity its object. As in the case of contemplation, the life of wisdom thus involves a dynamic interaction between intellect and will.⁷⁵ Graced contemplation and the Gift of wisdom are therefore both grounded in the same faculties and theological virtues. Both moreover require that virtue be established in the soul. Thomas places a particular emphasis on chastity in this regard. Chastity is indispensable in establishing peace, as also is justice. The Gift of wisdom and contemplation are not however to be conflated. Wisdom in effect establishes the conditions for contemplation. In this sense, infused contemplation is fueled by the Gift of wisdom. It is therefore sapiential.

⁷⁵ For an extended elaboration of this point, see O'Reilly, *Hermeneutics*.

Contemplatio Sapientialis

The act of contemplation not only bears a structural similarity to the Gift of wisdom, but is intimately bound up with it. Like the Gift of wisdom, it has its essence in the intellect. Moreover, just as charity, which perfects the will, is the cause of wisdom, so also is it the will that moves all the other powers, including the intellect, to their actions, insofar as the motive cause of the exercise of contemplation is concerned.⁷⁶ As Thomas explains with regard to the contemplative act, “the appetitive power moves one to observe things either with the senses or with the intellect, sometimes for love of the thing seen [*amor rei visae*] because, as it is written (Matt. vi. 21), *where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also*, sometimes for love of the very knowledge [*amor ipsius cognitionis*] that one acquires by observation.”⁷⁷ Thus, although the essence of contemplation in general pertains to the intellect, it is motivated by love. The kind of love that pertains to the contemplative life is the love of charity, as is also the case with the Gift of wisdom. In this regard Thomas quotes Gregory the Great in the *sed contra* of the first article devoted to the contemplative life: “Gregory says (*Hom. xiv in Ezech.*) that *the contemplative life is to cling with our whole mind to the love of God and our neighbor* [*“caritatem Dei et proximi tota mente retinere”*], *and to desire nothing beside our Creator*.”⁷⁸ He explains that Gregory characterizes the contemplative life as being grounded in *caritas Dei* inasmuch as by means of the love the will bears for God (*ex dilectione Dei*) one ardently desires to behold his beauty.⁷⁹ Beauty, Thomas tells us, is that the apprehension of which pleases (*id cuius ipsa apprehensio placet*).⁸⁰

Graced contemplation and the Gift of wisdom are both grounded

⁷⁶ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2, and q. 180, a. 1, for wisdom and contemplation, respectively.

⁷⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 1: See also *ST* I, q. 82, a. 4; I-II, q. 9, a. 1.

⁷⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 1, sc.

⁷⁹ For the distinction among *amor*, *dilectio*, and *caritas*, see *ST* I-II, q. 26, a. 3: “We find four words referring in a way, to the same thing: viz., love, dilection, charity and friendship. They differ, however, in this, that *friendship*, according to the Philosopher (*Ethic.* viii, 5), *is like a habit*, whereas *love* and *dilection* are expressed by way of act or passion; and *charity* can be taken either way. Moreover these three express act in different ways. For love has a wider signification than the others, since every dilection or charity is love, but not vice versa. Because dilection implies, in addition to love, a choice made beforehand, as the very word denotes: and therefore dilection is not in the concupiscible power, but only in the will, and only in the rational nature. Charity denotes, in addition to love, a certain perfection of love, insofar as that which is loved is held to be of great price, as the word itself implies.”

⁸⁰ *ST* I-II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3.

in the same faculties and theological virtues. The intimate connection between them is highlighted by Thomas in an article that argues that wisdom has a practical extension in addition to its speculative aspect.⁸¹ Following Augustine, he posits the higher part of reason as the province of wisdom. The higher part of reason, according to Augustine, "is intent on the consideration and consultation of the heavenly, i.e., Divine, types [*rationes*]."⁸² Thomas adds that it considers the divine types or ideas "insofar as it contemplates Divine things in themselves" (*secundum quod divina in seipsis contemplatur*).⁸³ The higher reason, perfected by the Gift of wisdom, contemplates; it contemplates divine realities. It goes beyond contemplation, however, inasmuch as it "consults" the divine ideas—by which Thomas means that it judges human acts by divine things, directing these acts by the divine rules (*divinas regulas*).⁸⁴

The intimate connection between contemplation and wisdom can also be discerned from a consideration of the moral virtues. Thomas writes explicitly that they play a dispositive role in the contemplative life since they calm both the unruliness of the passions and the disturbance of outward activity.⁸⁵ As already intimated, the motive cause of the contemplative life is charity, the habit of which extends both to the love (*dilectio*) of God and to the love (*dilectio*) of our neighbor,⁸⁶ since the act by which God and neighbor are loved is specifically one. Unruly passions diminish charity's vitality, and can even put its life in the soul at risk, a point that is readily inferred from Thomas's comments concerning the first of the three degrees of charity that he outlines at *ST* II-II, q. 24, a. 9. At this degree of charity, a man must concern himself principally with turning aside from sin and with resisting disordered sensual desires, "which move him in opposition to charity,"⁸⁷ and which consequently undermine contemplation. In contrast, purity of heart (*munditia*), which results from moral virtue, disposes one for the contemplative life.⁸⁸ In correlating the Gift of understanding

⁸¹ Matthew Levering writes: "The ordering accomplished by wisdom as a Gift (as opposed to wisdom as an intellectual virtue) is not only contemplative but also practical, because the Gift of the Holy Spirit, in contrast to the intellectual virtue, directs all aspects of the person" ("Wisdom and the Viability of Thomistic Trinitarian Theology," *Thomist* 64 [2000]: 600–601).

⁸² *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 3.

⁸³ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 3.

⁸⁴ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 3.

⁸⁵ See *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 2.

⁸⁶ See *ST* II-II, q. 25, a. 1.

⁸⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 24, a. 9.

⁸⁸ See *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 2.

with the sixth beatitude—“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God”—in the first objection of *ST* II-II, q. 8, a. 7, Thomas explains that cleanness or purity (*munditia*) is twofold. Inasmuch as it consists in the purgation of inordinate affections, which is the aspect pertinent to the present discussion, purity precedes and disposes one to the vision of God. This purity of heart is effected by the virtues and Gifts that pertain to the appetitive power.⁸⁹

Special mention is due to chastity, which is opposed to the vice of lust.⁹⁰ Chastity is concerned with venereal pleasures,⁹¹ which, Thomas notes, are more impetuous and oppress the reason more than pleasure taken in food.⁹² Reason is especially absorbed by venereal sins.⁹³ Venereal pleasures therefore need to be chastised and restrained to a greater extent than those of the palate, since consent to them increases the force of concupiscence and, correspondingly, weakens the vitality of the mind.⁹⁴ The more powerful and habitual the enjoyment of venereal pleasure, one can infer, the more the life of contemplation is undermined. Thomas in effect makes this same point explicitly in relation to wisdom and folly, the latter being opposed to wisdom inasmuch as it denotes dullness of mind (*sensus*) in judging, with respect to the highest cause, “which is the last end and the sovereign good.”⁹⁵ This state of affairs is occasioned in two ways according to Thomas. The first arises from a natural indisposition, as for example in the case of simpletons. In this case, there can clearly be no sin. The second, however, is the result of immersing the senses in earthly things, thereby rendering understanding incapable of comprehending divine things, as intimated by St. Paul: “The sensual man [*animalis homo*] perceiveth not

⁸⁹ Inasmuch as it perfects, as it were, the vision of God, the second kind of purity of heart mentioned by Thomas denotes the mind that has been purified with regard to phantasms and errors so that it does not receive the truths that are proposed to it about God by means of corporeal phantasms nor according to some heretical distortion or other.

⁹⁰ See *ST* II-II, q. 153, prol.

⁹¹ See *ST* II-II, q. 151, a. 2.

⁹² See *ST* II-II, q. 151, a. 3, ad 2.

⁹³ See *ST* II-II, q. 151, a. 4, ad 3. Thomas states the effects of lust on the virtue of prudence thus: “According to the Philosopher (*Ethic.* vi. 5), intemperance is the chief corruptive of prudence: wherefore the vices opposed to prudence arise chiefly from lust, which is the principal species of intemperance” (*ST* II-II, q. 153, a. 5, ad 1). For a treatment of the effects of lust on the virtue of prudence, see Kevin E. O’Reilly, O.P., “The Psychology of Lust,” *Divinitas*, 2019, 301–11; for the effects of lust on the will, see 312–16.

⁹⁴ See *ST* II-II, q. 151, a. 3, ad 2.

⁹⁵ *ST* II-II, q. 46, a. 2; see also a. 1.

these things that are of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:14).⁹⁶ The foolish man in fact develops a distaste for God and his gifts.⁹⁷ The paradigm case, as it were, of this spiritual blindness is occasioned by lust, since lust is concerned with the most delectable of pleasures which captivate the mind more than any others.⁹⁸ Thomas elucidates this spiritual blindness with the analogy of sweet things which lose their taste for a man who is infected by an evil humor. Unlike a man who contracts this kind of illness and consequent loss of his sense of taste, the subject of this kind of folly, Thomas states, is guilty for the spiritual malaise in which he finds himself.

In addition to those virtues that temper the passions, thereby cultivating holiness and purity of heart, Thomas also mentions the virtue of justice, "the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right,"⁹⁹ in which the luster of virtue appears most especially.¹⁰⁰ Thomas clarifies that "will" as used in this context refers to the act, not to the power.¹⁰¹ As one would expect, the virtue of justice rectifies the will, which is a rational appetite.¹⁰² Justice—which, as already intimated, is concerned with operations—causes peace,¹⁰³ for the one who desists from doing wrong to others removes the occasions for disputes and disturbances which hinder the act of contemplation.¹⁰⁴ This avoidance of doing wrong to others instantiates love (*dilectio*) of one's neighbor,¹⁰⁵ bearing in mind that it is specifically the same act by

⁹⁶ *ST* II-II, q. 46, a. 2.

⁹⁷ See *ST* II-II, q. 46, a. 3, ad 1. Thomas refers here to Gregory the Great, who "mentions two daughters of lust, pertaining to folly, namely, *hatred of God and despair of the life to come*; thus he divides folly into two parts as it were."

⁹⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 46, a. 3.

⁹⁹ *ST* II-II, q. 58, a. 1, obj. 1.

¹⁰⁰ See *ST* II-II, q. 58, a. 3: "A Tully declares (*De Officiis* i. 7), good men are so called chiefly from their justice, wherefore, as he says again (*De Officiis* i. 7) *the luster of virtue appears above all in justice*." Josef Pieper comments thus on this appeal to Cicero: "Like the outer porch to the temple, this pre-Christian wisdom is in harmony with Christian doctrine, for Holy Scripture speaks more than eight hundred times of 'justice' and the 'just man,' by which it means no less than 'the good, the holy man'" (*The Four Cardinal Virtues* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966], 64).

¹⁰¹ See *ST* II-II, q. 58, a. 1, ad 1: "Will here denotes the act, not the power: and it is customary among writers to define habits by their acts: thus Augustine says (*Tract. in Joan.* xl) that *faith is to believe what one sees not*."

¹⁰² See *ST* II-II, q. 58, a. 4.

¹⁰³ See *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 2. Thomas quotes Isa 32:17 in this regard: "The work of justice is peace" ("*opus iustitiae pax*"; trans. mine).

¹⁰⁴ See *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 2.

¹⁰⁵ See *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 1.

which God and one's neighbor are loved (*diligitur*),¹⁰⁶ and that the justice in question here is infused, and therefore animated by charity. In other words, charity is its form inasmuch as charity sets its form on justice, as it does on all the virtues.¹⁰⁷ At any rate, it is clear that a will that has been rightly ordered by justice disposes one to contemplation, inasmuch as it creates the conditions of peace necessary for this act.

Peace is also intimately connected with the Gift of wisdom, to which the seventh beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (see *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 6, obj. 1)—corresponds. In the *sed contra* to the relevant article, Thomas, quoting from Augustine, intimates that the capacity to make peace is predicated on the right ordering of the passions, such that they cultivate rather than undermine the rule of reason: "Augustine says (*De sermone Domini in Monte* 1.4) that *wisdom is becoming to peacemakers, in whom there is no movement of rebellion, but only obedience to reason*."¹⁰⁸ Charity, the cause of wisdom, effects the union of peace both with God—on the basis of man's loving him with his whole heart by directing all things to him—and with man, inasmuch as he loves his neighbor as himself, with the result that he desires to fulfill his neighbor's will as if it were his own.¹⁰⁹ The Gift of wisdom, for its part, makes peace "by setting things in order."¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, while contemplation requires peace, the Gift of wisdom establishes it. Wisdom is thus presupposed to contemplation inasmuch as it creates the conditions of peace necessary for the contemplative act, which is in effect posited by the Gift of wisdom, for as already noted, wisdom considers the divine types or ideas (*rationes*) "insofar as it contemplates Divine things in themselves" ("secundum quod divina in seipsis contemplatur").¹¹¹ The first stage in establishing peace is occupied by the Gift of fear, the beginning of wisdom, which shuns evil. "Hence," Thomas writes, "James said with reason that *the wisdom that is from above* (and this is the gift of the Holy Spirit) *first indeed is chaste*, because it avoids the corruption of sin."¹¹² Peace flows from chastity. Thomas thus writes that wisdom is "then peaceable" (*pacifica*).¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ See *ST* II-II, q. 25, a. 1.

¹⁰⁷ See *ST* II-II, q. 24, a. 8; I-II, q. 62, a. 4.

¹⁰⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 6, sc.

¹⁰⁹ See *ST* II-II, q. 29, a. 3.

¹¹⁰ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 6, ad 1.

¹¹¹ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 6, ad 1.

¹¹² *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 6, ad 3.

¹¹³ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 6, ad 3.

Indeed, peace is the ultimate effect of wisdom, for which reason it is counted among the beatitudes. Wisdom, by liberating man from the psychological disturbance occasioned by venereal pleasures, renders a man apt for contemplation.¹¹⁴

This section has established that wisdom, like contemplation, involves a dynamic interinvolvement between the faculties of intellect and will as informed by the theological virtues of faith and charity, respectively. Like contemplation, moreover, it depends on the establishment of moral virtue in the soul. Thomas emphasizes chastity in particular, insofar as the sensitive appetite is concerned as well as justice, which pertains to the rational appetite or will. Both of these virtues play a crucial role in establishing peace in the soul, albeit the Gift of wisdom is the driving force in creating this indispensable condition for contemplation. On this basis, one can therefore describe infused contemplation as sapiential in character. In other words, infused contemplation is *contemplatio sapientialis*.

The next section seeks to carry forward the argument of this article by considering the study of *sacra doctrina* under the impetus of grace—that is to say, the study of *sacra doctrina* by way of *contemplatio sapientialis*—thus advancing the considerations of the previous sections of this article. Study entails *meditatio*, one of the acts that leads to *contemplatio*. As already explained, the principles on the basis of which the study of unfolds are provided by Sacred Scripture and by the articles of faith, both of which amount to the same thing. For Thomas, moreover, the teaching of Scripture cannot be divorced from the teaching of the Church. *Sacra doctrina*, the ecclesial tradition of explaining Scripture, grants to its exponent a participation in divine *scientia*, albeit in a mode proportioned to human cognition. The articles of faith moreover, which distill and communicate the essence of Sacred Scripture, are not an end in themselves, but rather bring the believer into contact with the realities that they express. The believer's faith, for its part, involves not only the intellect but also the will, since faith entails thinking with assent. The fact that living faith, which elevates the intellect, is animated by charity brings us back once again to the Gift of wisdom, since charity is the cause of this Gift, which has its essence in the intellect—the same intellect in which the essence of contemplation is situated. The intimate connection between contemplation and the Gift of wisdom, which has already been discussed, necessarily has implications for the *meditatio*, which leads to *contemplatio*, proper to *sacra doctrina*.

¹¹⁴ See *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 2.

Contemplatio Sapientialis and Sacra Doctrina

When Thomas considers the various actions that pertain to the contemplative life, he argues that contemplation of the truth constitutes the culmination of many acts that are directed to it. Thus, for example, *meditatio* implies movement inasmuch as it consists in the process whereby reason, beginning with certain principles, advances to the contemplation of some truth. Thomas quotes Richard of St. Victor in this regard, who writes that “meditation is the survey of the mind while occupied in searching for the truth.”¹¹⁵ *Contemplatio*, however, regards the simple consideration of truth (*simplex intuitus veritatis*).¹¹⁶ Contemplation in the strict sense thus appears to be associated primarily with non-discursive, simple understanding.¹¹⁷ It comes to fruition, as van Nieuwenhove tells us, in “the moment of insightful understanding, which remains distinct from, but grounds and fulfils, the ratiocinative process.”¹¹⁸ In the words of Richard of St. Victor, “contemplation is the soul’s clear and free dwelling upon the objects of its gaze.”¹¹⁹ Meditation is in effect related to contemplation as *ratio* is to *intellectus*.

According to Thomas, *meditatio* is required in order to reach knowledge of the truth by means of personal study (*proprium studium*).¹²⁰ The

¹¹⁵ ST II-II, q. 180, a. 3, ad 1.

¹¹⁶ See ST II-II, q. 180, a. 3, ad 1; a. 6, ad 2. While Thomas’s source for the notion of *intuitus simplex* is not at all clear, its neo-Platonic provenance is. On this point, see van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 35–37; van Nieuwenhove, “Contemplation, *Intellectus*, and *Simplex Intuitus* in Aquinas: Recovering a Neoplatonic Theme,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2017): 219–20. For possible (theological) reasons for Thomas’s use of the notion of *intuitus simplex*, see van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 46–48. Of particular note is the issue of inclusivity: “The broad understanding of contemplation as *intuitus simplex* can incorporate the acts of contemplation of the Greek sage, as well as those of the *vetula* who enjoys the benefit of her Christian faith, enabling her to know truths which the philosopher comes to know, if at all, with great difficulty and after laborious reasoning processes” (47–48).

¹¹⁷ See van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 35. Gerald Boersma writes that “Aquinas establishes that the fulfilment of the human person is dependent on this unique intellectual activity” (“Divine Contemplation as ‘Inchoate Beatitude’ in Aquinas,” *Thomist* 86, no. 3 [2022]: 451; see also 466).

¹¹⁸ Van Nieuwenhove, “Contemplation, *Intellectus*, and *Simplex Intuitus* in Aquinas,” 202.

¹¹⁹ ST II-II, q. 180, a. 3, ad 1 (trans. slightly emended). The Aquinas Institute edition at aquinas.cc locates this citation in Richard’s *De gratia contemplationis*.

¹²⁰ See ST II-II, q. 180, a. 3, ad 4. In this article, Thomas relates that man also reaches knowledge of the truth “by means of things received from another.” He continues: “In this way, as regards the things he receives from God, he needs prayer, according to Wis. vii. 7, *I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me*: while as regards the things

personal study with which we are concerned here regards *sacra doctrina*, which, as we have already seen, “is acquired by study, though its principles are obtained by revelation.”¹²¹ Again, let us recall that the principle norms of *sacra doctrina* are furnished by Sacred Scripture or by the articles of the faith, which amounts to the same thing, since they summarize and communicate the essence of the Word of God in Scripture.¹²² Thus, on the one hand, Thomas can refer to “Sacred Scripture or doctrine” (*sacra Scriptura seu doctrina*),¹²³ while, on the other hand, he declares that the principles of *sacra doctrina* are provided by the articles of faith.¹²⁴ For Thomas, moreover, Scripture and Tradition are intertwined in such a way that there is no clear separation between the teaching of Scripture and the teaching of the Church, as already intimated. Thus, as we have seen, “faith adheres to all the articles of faith by reason of one mean, viz. on account of the First Truth proposed to us in the Scriptures, according to the teaching of the Church who has a right understanding of them.”¹²⁵ Wilhelmus G. B. M. Valkenberg explains that Thomas construes the Tradition of the Church as being largely that of explaining Scripture.¹²⁶ In this regard, the Church and her Tradition can be viewed “as vehicles for receiving and transmitting the Scriptures in a liturgical and doctrinal setting.”¹²⁷ The continuous “traditioning” or handing down the words of God, Valkenberg notes, involves appeal to the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, as well as to synods and magisterial documents.¹²⁸ In Thomas’s understanding, the personal study that requires meditation—and that therefore belongs to the contemplative life—is necessarily ensconced in this ecclesial tradition of explaining Scripture.¹²⁹

he receives from man, he needs hearing, insofar as he receives from the spoken word, and reading, insofar as he receives from the tradition of Holy Writ.” For an extended exegesis of this response, see Revelle, “I Prayed,” 474–80.

¹²¹ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

¹²² See *ST* II-II, q. 1, a. 9, ad 1.

¹²³ *ST* I, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2.

¹²⁴ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 7; see also a. 5, ad 1.

¹²⁵ *ST* II-II, q. 5, a. 3, ad 2.

¹²⁶ See Wilhelmus G. B. M. Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God: Place and Function of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 11.

¹²⁷ Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God*.

¹²⁸ See Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God*. For a study of the relationship obtaining between Tradition and Sacred Doctrine in St. Thomas’s thought, see Yves Congar, “Tradition et Sacra Doctrina, chez saint Thomas d’Aquin,” in *Thomas d’Aquin: sa vision de théologie et de l’Eglise* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 157–94.

¹²⁹ As Benedict XVI puts it, “the primary setting for scriptural interpretation is the life of

Thomas deems *sacra doctrina*, this ecclesial tradition of explaining Scripture, to be a science, since it is based on principles that are established in the light of a higher science—namely, “the science of God and the blessed” (see *ST* I, q. 1, a. 2)—and it is based on principles that have been revealed by God. In the second article in the first question of his commentary on Boethius’s *De Trinitate*, Thomas argues that theology is a subalternate science, since the truths held by faith furnish its principles. Faith, he writes, grants “a certain participation in and assimilation to divine knowledge” (*participatio et assimilatio ad cognitionem divinam*),¹³⁰ since by it we adhere to the First Truth for its own sake. Thus, as John I. Jenkins puts it, *sacra doctrina* is “a participation in the highest kind of *scientia* by beings of the lowest, most limited intellectual powers.”¹³¹ In this regard, while the object of faith with regard to the reality itself which is believed—namely, God—is utterly simple, it is necessarily cognized by the human intellect by means of propositions on account of the mode of cognition proper to human beings as psychosomatically constituted.¹³² In other words, the human intellect cannot know God according to his simplicity, but rather comes to know him by way of composition/synthesis and division/analysis.¹³³ Hence, as in the case of all things that are simple in themselves, God can be known by the human intellect only with a certain amount of complexity,¹³⁴ that is to say, in terms of those propositions that constitute the articles of faith. The articles of faith, moreover, are not an

the Church” (Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 29). The document offers an extended elucidation of interpretation of Scripture in the Church. See *ibid.*, 29–49.

¹³⁰ In *Boet. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 2 (trans. mine).

¹³¹ John I. Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 67 (for an account of *scientia* and *sacra doctrina*, see 66–76; for a discussion of *scientia* in the *ST*, see 78–98).

¹³² On this point, see O’Reilly, *Hermeneutics*, 170–71.

¹³³ See *ST* I, q. 85, a. 5: “The human intellect must of necessity understand by composition and division. For since the intellect passes from potentiality to act, it has a likeness to things which are generated, which do not attain to perfection all at once but acquire it by degrees: so likewise the human intellect does not acquire perfect knowledge by the first act of apprehension; but it first apprehends something about its object, such as its quiddity, and this is its first and proper object; and then it understands the properties, accidents, and the various relations of the essence. Thus it necessarily compares one thing with another by composition or division; and from one composition and division it proceeds to another, which is the process of reasoning.”

¹³⁴ See *ST* II-II, q. 1, a. 2. As Brian Shanley puts it, “If by faith we transcend the human horizon and participate in the divine perspective, such sharing nevertheless remains *secundum modum cognoscentis*” (Brian Shanley, O.P., “*Sacra Doctrina* and the Theology of Disclosure,” *Thomist* 61 [1997]: 175).

end in themselves; rather, they bring one into contact with the realities that are the object of faith, "insofar as the act of the believer is terminated in them."¹³⁵ These articles of faith, it ought to be underscored, are saving truths; that is to say, they are necessary for salvation.¹³⁶

Faith, however, as already intimated, inasmuch as it is considered from the point of view of its participation in the believing subject, is not a purely intellectual affair. The act of faith, Thomas explains, engages both the intellect and the will,¹³⁷ inasmuch as "it is proper to the believer to think with assent,"¹³⁸ bearing in mind that assent is an act of the intellect that is determined to one particular object by the will.¹³⁹ The act of the will in effect provides the act of faith, which lacks the perfection of manifest vision,¹⁴⁰ with its certitude. In the words of Brian Shanley, "the will supplies the firmness and certitude that would otherwise be lacking; the faintness of vision is remedied by the influence of love."¹⁴¹ The faith in question is of course a living faith, and is therefore quickened (along with hope) by charity, which itself presupposes the knowledge of faith.¹⁴² Love—or better, charity—as Edward Schillebeeckx puts it, "is the normal environment of Christian faith."¹⁴³ Increase of charity necessarily leads to greater certitude on the part of faith.¹⁴⁴ Just as disordered concupiscence

¹³⁵ *ST* II-II, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2 (trans. mine). The Latin text reads thus: "In symbolo tanguntur ea de quibus est fides in quantum ad ea terminatur actus credentis." As Romanus Cessario, O.P., writes, "the act of faith reaches beyond the formal content of doctrines and attains the very referent—*res ipsa*—of theological faith." (*Christian Faith and the Theological Life* [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996], 71).

¹³⁶ See *ST* II-II, q. 2, a. 3.

¹³⁷ See *ST* II-II, q. 5, a. 4.

¹³⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 2, a. 1.

¹³⁹ See *ST* II-II, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3.

¹⁴⁰ See *ST* II-II, q. 2, a. 1.

¹⁴¹ Shanley, "Sacra Doctrina," 176.

¹⁴² See *ST* I-II, q. 62, a. 4: "But in the order of perfection, charity precedes faith and hope: because both faith and hope are quickened by charity, and receive from charity their full complement as virtues. For thus charity is the mother and the root of all the virtues, inasmuch as it is the form of them all." See also II-II, q. 4, ad 3; q. 23, a. 8. For a treatment of the dynamic interplay between faith and charity, see O'Reilly, *Hermeneutics*, 237–45. In brief, the love of charity transports the believer into the "intimate depths of the inscrutable knowledge of the Trinitarian God."

¹⁴³ Schillebeeckx, *Revelation and Theology*, trans. N. D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 280.

¹⁴⁴ As Matthias Joseph Scheeben puts it, charity makes "makes the mind's eye keener and immerses it in the object of its love" (Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics*, bk. I [*Theological Epistemology*], pt. 2 [*Theological Knowledge Considered In Itself*], trans. Michael J. Miller [Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2019], 195 [no. 1003]).

hinders the use of reason,¹⁴⁵ so too the right ordering of desires effected by increase of charity brings about a certain intellectual illumination.¹⁴⁶

This point brings us to the Gift of wisdom, since charity, according to Thomas, is the cause of this Gift, which has its essence in the (faith-elevated) intellect, “whose act is to judge aright.”¹⁴⁷ Thomas writes in similar terms concerning contemplation, as has already been clearly established: its essence pertains to the intellect.¹⁴⁸ The intellect is thus the seat both of the Gift of wisdom and of contemplation. The Gift of wisdom, which confers “sympathy or connaturality” (*compassio sive connaturalitas*) for divine things and “unites us to God, according to 1 Cor 6:17: *He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit*,”¹⁴⁹ therefore, while it does not constitute the essence of contemplation, nevertheless adds a certain accidental quality to it.¹⁵⁰ Andrew Pinsent describes this wisdom-inspired cognition as “a sharing or participation in God’s stance toward some object.”¹⁵¹ This graced connatural knowledge is predicated on God’s revelation of himself in Scripture as handed down in the tradition of the Church. A person in a state of grace who is engaged in the study of *sacra doctrina* thus, in effect, enjoys a twofold knowledge of divine things. He garners knowledge not only *per modum cognitionis* (by way of discursive enquiry)¹⁵² but also *per modum inclinationis* (by inclination).¹⁵³ By the latter, a man whose affectivity is drawn to divine things receives right judgment about them in a divine manner (*divinitus*), just as a virtuous person, on the basis of the habit of virtue that imparts a right ordering in his affectivity, is thus capable of judging correctly concerning things that pertain to that virtue.¹⁵⁴ The unitary nature of man’s spiritual life precludes any separation of these two

¹⁴⁵ See *ST* I-II, q. 33, a. 3.

¹⁴⁶ On this point, see O’Reilly, *Hermeneutics*, 256–68. Stated negatively, disordered concupiscence hinders the use of reason.

¹⁴⁷ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

¹⁴⁸ See *ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 1.

¹⁴⁹ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

¹⁵⁰ One might propose the analogy of sight to elucidate this important point. Sight does not enter into the essence of man as a rational animal. The life of reason is, however, seriously hampered without it. Indeed, its very quality is different when it is not served by the sense of sight.

¹⁵¹ Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas’s Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 49.

¹⁵² See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

¹⁵³ See *ST* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

¹⁵⁴ See *De divinis nominibus*, chap. 2, lec. 4, no. 192.

modes of knowledge because; while intellect and will are distinct from each other, the relationship between them is one of causal reciprocity.¹⁵⁵

The Gift of wisdom has an impact on the pursuit of *sacra doctrina* precisely on account of this fact, namely that the spiritual dynamism operative in any individual is necessarily unitary in nature. As Thomas explains, the intellect and will “include one another in their acts” so that “the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand.”¹⁵⁶ It follows therefore that, in actual reality, all knowledge involves love and all love involves knowledge—albeit, knowledge and love ought not to be taken to be identical. The activities of intellect and will could be said to overflow into each other or, as Thomas remarks in his *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, they could be described as circling around each other (*se invicem circumeunt*).¹⁵⁷ This dynamic interaction between intellect and will obtains not only on the level of nature but also on the level of nature perfected by grace. Knowledge and love are in effect synthesized in the concrete reality of man’s operation.¹⁵⁸ Theological contemplation in a human mode cannot therefore fail to be influenced by the experience of divine things afforded by the divine contemplation that is fueled by the Gift of wisdom, given that the cause of this Gift is charity while its essence is in the intellect. Thus, one might say that divine contemplation perfects theological contemplation.¹⁵⁹ Thomas expresses this point in his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* in these words: “The gift of wisdom progresses to a sort of Godlike contemplation [*ad quamdam deiformem contemplationem*], and in a certain way to an explication of the articles that faith holds in a certain veiled manner [*sub quodam modo involuto*], according to the human mode.”¹⁶⁰ The articles of faith, Thomas asserts, “are

¹⁵⁵ On this point, see O'Reilly, *Hermeneutics*, 96–105.

¹⁵⁶ *STI*, q. 82, a. 4, ad 1. For an elaboration of this point, see O'Reilly, *Hermeneutics*, 96–105.

¹⁵⁷ Aquinas, *De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 7.

¹⁵⁸ See Ignazio Camporeale, O.P., “La conoscenza affettiva nel pensiero di S. Tommaso,” *Sapienza* 12 (1959): 237–71.

¹⁵⁹ See Boersma, “Divine Contemplation,” 483.

¹⁶⁰ *In III sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1 (trans. Aquinas Institute at aquinas.cc). Schillebeeckx elaborates this point thus: “Assuming that the natural prerequisites of intellectual, philosophical, and historical formation are already satisfied, the best theologian is the Christian who also possesses the affective wisdom of faith because he actively embodies in a holy life the Christian faith” (*Revelation and Theology*, 281–82). See also Kieran Conley, O.S.B., *A Theology of Wisdom: A Study in St. Thomas* (Dubuque, IA: Priority, 1963), 88: “The very first movement of affectivity in faith finds its perfection in charity, as the theologian surrenders himself to his ultimate final cause. If the metaphysician can be involved, engaged, committed to wisdom’s highest object, how much more so can

the principles of the whole of Christian wisdom” (*In III sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1)—arguably the whole of Christian wisdom as acquired both *per modum inclinationis* and *per modum cognitionis* in the synthetic unity of their concrete operation.

Conclusion

A certain dynamic reciprocity obtains between theological contemplation—that is to say, the culmination of engagement with *sacra doctrina* by way of rational enquiry (*per modum cognitionis*)—and divine contemplation, that is to say, the experience of divine things *per modum inclinationis*. The former, since it involves a deepening of one’s knowledge of the content of the faith, should enkindle a more ardent charity—and, by extension, the wisdom that informs divine contemplation. The knowledge through connaturality of divine things that is afforded by divine contemplation, on the other hand, enables the theologian to probe more deeply and more daringly the mysteries of the faith while remaining firmly within the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy. This dynamic reciprocity is expressed well by Heather McAdam Erb: “Theology and the spiritual life are interdependent in Thomas’s writings: theology is the essential condition of the spiritual life, and the spiritual life gives theology its guiding themes, its longing for the eternal light and awareness of its limits as the *theologia viatorum*.”¹⁶¹

This article, however, has concentrated on the influence of the experience of divine things *per modum inclinationis*, afforded by the Gift of wisdom, on the study of *sacra doctrina*. Bernard McGinn rightly notes in this regard that “the *donum sapientiae* does not give us new conceptual information about God and the divine mysteries, but provides us a

the theologian. He confronts man’s ultimate end in the depths, or rather, on the heights of the supernatural, where God’s infinite goodness is seen in the unique substance and distinct personalities of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. the gift of self in charity crowns the contemplation of theology with affectivity [*ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 8, ad 1]. In theology, too, the ‘ultimate perfection of the contemplative life is realized: that divine truth not only be known, but that it also be loved’ [*ST* II-II, q. 180, a. 7, ad 1].” Later on, Conley adds: “If what was said earlier regarding the necessity of charity in theological contemplation has any meaning, then unquestionably theology, for its perfection, requires a living faith. Otherwise, its primary act, the contemplation of God as ultimate supernatural final cause, involving a personal surrender to the object contemplated, cannot be perfectly realized” (92).

¹⁶¹ Heather McAdam Erb, “*Pati Divina*: Mystical Union in Aquinas,” in *Faith, Scholarship, and Culture in the 21st Century*, ed. Alice Ramos and Marie I. George (Washington, DC: American Maritain Association, 2002), 78.

new way of knowing them, a knowing by an *intuitus* that is *connaturalis*, *experimentalis*, and *affectivus*.”¹⁶² According to the argument that has been made in this article, this reorientation of emotions and experiences does, however, make a difference to the practice of *sacra doctrina*. While the Gift of wisdom does not impart any conceptual content, it arguably does provide an experiential impulse for rational enquiry about the truths of the faith. One might venture so far as to argue that the affective tenor of the connatural knowledge that the Gift of wisdom imparts functions as a dispositive cause in protecting and cultivating orthodox Catholic faith and morals.¹⁶³ Expressed otherwise, it furnishes a beacon of light that guides the believer’s judgments with regard to ideas and developments that bear upon Catholic faith and morals.

This point is in effect the instantiation in the case of the individual believer of what Francisco Marín-Sola teaches concerning the development of doctrine. (After all, the development of doctrine within Tradition is a function of its unfolding in the case of individual believers.) There are, he notes, two sources of dogma and of the development of doctrine. On the one hand, there is the material object of faith, namely the revealed doctrines of the faith that are proportioned to the mode of cognition proper to human beings and that are known *per modum cognitionis*.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, there is the formal object of faith, namely God in his simplicity,¹⁶⁵ whom we know *per modum inclinationis*.¹⁶⁶ While these two sources are distinct, they are nevertheless not independent of each other. Neither are the two modes of knowing that correspond to them. With regard to the impact of knowledge *per modum inclinationis* on knowledge *per modum cognitionis*, Marín-Sola quotes Matthias Scheeben, who maintains that the former not only imparts a greater vividness and intimacy (*Innikgeit*) to the latter, but also cultivates its acquisition and perfection.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Bernard McGinn, “*Contemplatio Sapientialis*: Thomas Aquinas’s Contribution to Mystical Theology,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 95 (2019): 328. In the same vein Shanley writes: “By the gracious indwelling of the Trinity we attain a new perspective that is not a disinterested speculative shift, but rather a complete reorientation of emotions and experience” (“*Sacra Doctrina*,” 182).

¹⁶³ This suggestion is admittedly provocative and stands in need of nuanced elaboration. The confines of this article do not permit such an elaboration.

¹⁶⁴ See Marín-Sola, *La evolución homogénea del dogma católico*, 366–37. Marín-Sola employs the equivalent Spanish expression, *vía de raciocinio* (367).

¹⁶⁵ See *ST* II-II, q. 1, a. 2.

¹⁶⁶ See Marín-Sola, *La evolución homogénea del dogma católico*, 367. Marín-Sola speaks here of the *vía afectiva*.

¹⁶⁷ See Marín-Sola, *La evolución homogénea del dogma católico*, 369. See Scheeben, *Handbook*

The tenor of the unfolding of the mysteries of the faith that is the fruit of the *meditatio* proper to *sacra doctrina* arguably varies, moreover, according to the degree to which a theologian is imbued with the Gift of wisdom. Greater wisdom implies more intense charity, and thus a heightened intellectual illumination by the light of grace, thereby enabling the theologian to penetrate more deeply and more faithfully into the mysteries of the faith. Greater wisdom, since it entails a purging of the egocentric blinding effects of sin,¹⁶⁸ cultivates a certain objectivity in theological contemplation. This objectivity, however, is not simply the fruit of what Scheeben describes as the “negative, purifying influence on the eye of reason” effected by “the illumination of the Holy Ghost”;¹⁶⁹ it is also a “positive enlightening”¹⁷⁰ of a connaturality with divine things.¹⁷¹ Thus, it is not possible for one who habitually lacks charity—and who therefore does not enjoy a living faith—to enjoy this kind of objectivity. At any rate, applying what Thomas wrote in his commentary on the *Sentences* to wisdom-inspired *meditatio*, one can say that it “progresses to a sort of Godlike contemplation, and in a certain way to an explication of the articles that faith holds in a certain veiled manner, according to the human mode.”¹⁷² Such is surely the case of Hierotheus cited by the Pseudo-Dionysius and quoted in turn by Thomas: “Thus Dionysius says (*Div. Nom.* ii) that Hierotheus is perfect in divine things, *for he not only learns, but is patient of, divine things*” (“non solum discens, sed et patiens divina”).¹⁷³ In the *Summa theologiae*, the link between the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and theological contemplation are anything but tenuous.¹⁷⁴ On the contrary, an intimate link obtains between

of Catholic Dogmatics, bk I, pt. 2: “Although contemplative and as it were experiential knowledge is so dissimilar from the knowledge obtained by one’s own intellectual activity, especially by strictly scientific ratiocination, that in itself it can exist without the latter, nevertheless as a rule it is very closely interrelated with it. For as long as the former is not communicated through a formal miracle, it must be prepared and supported by the latter. Conversely, the former gives the latter not merely greater vividness and fervor, but also promotes the attainment and development thereof so mightily that the saints with relatively much less study attain a greater perfection therein than others with the greatest natural aptitudes do at the expense of the most diligent work. (Examples are Saints Thomas and Bonaventure.)” (196 [no. 1005]).

¹⁶⁸ See *ST* I-II, q. 33, a. 3; II-II, q. 24, a. 9.

¹⁶⁹ Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics*, bk. 1, pt. 2, p. 194 (no. 998).

¹⁷⁰ See Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics*, bk. 1, pt. 2, p. 194 (no. 998).

¹⁷¹ See *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

¹⁷² *In III sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1.

¹⁷³ *ST* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

¹⁷⁴ For a contrasting view, see van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*, 168: “In the trajectory from his *Commentary on the Sentences* to the *Secunda Secundae*

them. As Matthew Levering puts it, Thomas recognizes that “*sacra doctrina* involves human knowing (created participation in divine Wisdom) that has been supernaturally elevated to participate far more deeply in divine Wisdom by the grace of the Holy Spirit, without ceasing to be profoundly limited human knowing (acquired by study).”¹⁷⁵ NEV

the link between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the contemplation of the theologian becomes more tenuous.”

¹⁷⁵ Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 34. Revelle makes the same point: “For St. Thomas, the generation of theological *scientia* is a certain abundance of Christian life, and its possession cannot be rightly separated from its roots in *gratia gratum faciens*, the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit” (“I Prayed,” 699).