

Book Reviews

The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology by Servais Pinckaers, O.P., edited by John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (*Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005*), xxiii + 430 pp.

SINCE THE PUBLICATION of his magisterial *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (French, 1985; English, 1995), Servais Pinckaers has become widely recognized as a leading voice for renewing Catholic moral theology in the spirit of Vatican II. His voice gained in importance when he became involved in the writing of the moral section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in the late 1980's. But English-speaking readers longing to know more about the contemplative Dominican friar had little access to his large corpus. Readers, like this reviewer, who found *Sources* to be an oasis in the desert of contemporary Catholic moral theology were left thirsting for more.

John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus offer such readers further refreshment with this excellent collection of Pinckaers's essays. The twenty essays span a period of 25 years, primarily representing Pinckaers's mature thought after the French publication of *Sources*. This volume is a coup of translation—twelve of these essays have never appeared in English before—but also of collection and selection. The well-chosen sampling spans the most productive and constructive part of Pinckaers's career. The essays are divided into five sections, on Thomistic method, on beatitude and Christian anthropology, on agency, on passions and virtues, and on law and grace. A helpful introduction and a comprehensive bibliography of Pinckaers's writings assist the reader to situate these essays or to pursue Pinckaers's work further.

Pinckaers's work models a renewed spirit for moral theology, a spirit that drinks deeply from the Fathers, from their engagement with the scriptures, and from the culmination of their thought in the thought of

Aquinas. The essays in the first section explore the wellsprings of such an approach, considering Aquinas's example and characterizing moral theology as an ecclesial and spiritual discipline in conversation with philosophy, a prayerful flowering of the living tradition of the Church. Pinckaers seeks not to imitate Aquinas but to commune in mind and heart with him, through being "nourished by the same spiritual source" (24).

What makes Pinckaers so unique and refreshing, and what makes his moral theology a plausible catalyst of renewal, is his determination not merely to assert Thomistic positions speculatively as if in a vacuum, but to help us recover lost wisdom through a historical account of how far we have strayed. A chapter on Dominican moral theology in the twentieth century tells us that Pinckaers learned what he calls the "historical method" in the Dominican house of study at La Sarte. Rather than reading Thomas through his later commentators, at La Sarte they sought to retrieve the problematics Thomas was addressing by reading him in light of the scriptures, the Fathers, and Thomas's own historical context. Pinckaers discovered that this historical sensitivity went hand-in-hand with grasping the magnitude of the theological and philosophical distance between Aquinas's setting and our own. Since his historical concern is anything but antiquarian, Pinckaers analyzes the chasm between Aquinas and us in order to refresh our vision of the moral life. We cannot appreciate all that Aquinas has to teach us without acknowledging, and seeking in select ways to overcome, that chasm. Pinckaers's ability to keep all this in view lends a contemporary feel to his discussions of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century theologians and keeps his finger on today's pulse: all his arguments engage a modern setting characterized by individualism, secularism, and the separation of many things once held together. This sort of approach, combining a historical method with a theologically motivated concern for retrieval, began to affect dogmatic and scriptural studies earlier in the twentieth century, and Pinckaers now urges moral theology to catch up (187).

As readers familiar with *Sources* will expect, Pinckaers delineates the historical chasm by contrasting two types of morality, moralities of beatitude and moralities of obligation. These two types of morality represent competing anthropologies. By "moralities of obligation" Pinckaers means not all moral systems that privilege law, but moral systems stemming from a nominalist view of human freedom, which necessarily portray the field of moral action as a contest between freedom and law. Moralities of beatitude assume a different view of freedom: human freedom is oriented toward goodness and truth, so that the direction given by law points freedom toward the blessedness for which it longs. *The Pinckaers Reader* may

provoke an experience of déjà vu as Pinckaers invokes this distinction again and again in various contexts and for various audiences. But this deceptively simple tool packs enormous explanatory power.

For example, this distinction clarifies why modern moral theology has tended to shrink the moral witness of scripture to the Decalogue and “passages of the New Testament which could be related to this, such as the teaching on the indissolubility of marriage” (49). What a morality of obligation neglects that a morality of beatitude could recover includes all the passages of scripture that answer to the question, “What is the blessed life?” This question echoes through a much broader array of texts. In particular, if we shift our focus from obligation to beatitude, the Sermon on the Mount recovers the moral limelight the Church Fathers granted it. The Sermon begins with a promise of beatitude, and it concerns not obligation, but exceeding what is called for, not external obedience, but a pure heart. So, Pinckaers explains, it “is ultimately incapable of assimilation by a moral theory centered on legal obligations and external acts” (371). Modern moral theologians have frequently consigned the Sermon to the realm of “spirituality,” but Pinckaers seeks to show how this separation between moral theology and spiritual theology, related to a preference for moralities of obligation, distorts scripture and Christian living.

Although the editors offer this volume as a sort of ‘sequel’ to *Sources*, readers new to Pinckaers could begin with either book. What *Sources* offers that this collection does not is a sustained and comprehensive argument about what moral theology is, covering its nature, its sources, its historical development, and the fundamental orientation it needs for addressing the controverted questions of today. This collection instead is a set of sometimes overlapping essays aimed at distinct audiences and issues. What *The Pinckaers Reader* lacks in continuous scope it makes up for in depth and economy of formulation. In many of these essays, Pinckaers finds a more masterful voice, offering more incisive articulations of his main theses and painting his broad-canvas pictures with even more sure and penetrating strokes.

One of the most striking examples is his brief but adept treatment of “Aquinas on Nature and the Supernatural.” Some readers will contend his position is too reminiscent of de Lubac, on whom Pinckaers wrote his S.T.L. thesis in 1952. But here in ten concise pages Pinckaers brings together his concern to recover Aquinas’s understanding of nature as driven by interior impulse toward the true and the good, his diagnosis of modern extrinsicism as rooted in an Ockhamite reconception of human freedom perched above nature and inclination, and his conviction that our nature and its longings come into clearest focus from the standpoint of its fulfillment through the work of grace.

Pinckaers's concern for an integrated Christian anthropology is evident throughout, as for example in "Reappropriating Aquinas's Account of the Passions." Recovering the positive role of the emotions in the moral life is crucial to Pinckaers's project, since he wants to articulate a view of the human being in which what delights us is not inherently morally suspect, as it is for Kant. Here he contrasts Thomas and most ancient moral philosophy, in which the emotions need guidance but are nonetheless integral to the spiritual nature of the human being, with Descartes and his successors, who divided soul from body and relegated the passions to the lower, physical realm. Pinckaers laments this shift. His analysis remains at the level of the history of ideas, but these ideas have consequences. The upshot here is that Descartes "laid the philosophical foundation of modern experimental psychology. . . . In short, Descartes contributed in a decisive way to dehumanizing the emotions" (281).

In order to recover what Aquinas has to teach us, Pinckaers suggests we need to rehabilitate a number of concepts that have fallen into decline or disfavor. One such concept is the "image of God." "Ethics and the Image of God" explores this concept in Augustine and Aquinas, proposing that for them the term "image of God" connects us to God and implies our orientation toward God, but that in the wake of nominalism the concept evokes our God-like freedom, a freedom that is freer the more it is cut off from God. The same distorted anthropology has also made us distrustful of the language of instinct. We have come to think that "the natural inclinations could only be blind, irrational, and threatening for freedom" and that instincts are "inferior and confined to human animality" (393f.). But Pinckaers rehearses the positive role of spiritual instincts in "Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit: Aquinas's Doctrine of *Instinctus*." As long as we remain on guard against all impulses that originate beyond our own subjectivity, we inhibit our ability to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who makes us cry out to God in a holy instinct.

While Pinckaers is immensely sympathetic with Aquinas, he is no slavish follower. He notes that Christian virtues do not always receive due prominence in Thomas, since Thomas organizes the virtues on a structure borrowed from philosophy (13). He insists that Thomas's rational and precise style must be supplemented by recourse to the scriptures and the Fathers (19). And he visibly struggles to find the intelligibility for modern readers in Aquinas's approach to the death penalty (161).

The essay format affords Pinckaers the focus to explore medieval and modern texts in more illuminating detail than he could in *Sources*. In

“Aquinas’s Pursuit of Beatitude,” for instance, Pinckaers traces the shifting configurations of the question of beatitude from Thomas’s *Commentary on the Sentences* to the *Summa theologiae*. This exercise demonstrates that as Thomas’s thought developed, beatitude gained in importance and that a fundamentally evangelical perspective lies hidden behind the philosophical veneer of the first five questions of the *Summa theologiae*’s *secunda pars*.

The essay format also offers Pinckaers the topical freedom to apply a rich variety of lenses to the momentous historical and theological developments he describes. Some essays let the contemporary context set the agenda—issues include human dignity, autonomy, and intrinsic evil—but then Pinckaers searches his ancient sources in an attempt to let their thoughts reframe the issue. In “Aquinas and Agency: Beyond Autonomy and Heteronomy?”, for example, Pinckaers explains how this false alternative is based on an assumed freedom of indifference at the heart of human subjectivity. The modern dilemma sets autonomy against revelation and universalism against Christian specificity. But Thomas’s universalism lies in the harmony he finds between the natural dynamism of reason’s inclination toward truth and goodness and the universalism of faith’s answer to that inclination. For him the New Law is the height of autonomous action and the fulfillment of universal human aspiration.

Other essays assess recent developments in moral thought. “The Role of Virtue in Moral Theology” cites the rediscovery of virtue and explains Pinckaers’s understanding of virtue ethics and its advantages over more common modern approaches. Specifically, he highlights virtue ethics’ emphasis on internal actions, affectivity, and personal experience. In short, Pinckaers favors virtue-based approaches insofar as they offer a more adequate account of our agency than, say, procedural accounts of justice. In “Revisionist Understandings of Acts in the Wake of Vatican II” Pinckaers gives attention to the proportionalism of Peter Knauer and Louis Janssens. He explains from a historical perspective how these approaches amount to a sort of revolution within the casuistic system of post-Tridentine Catholic moral theology, which all proceeds against the backdrop of nominalism. Having failed to escape the worst aspects of the manualist system against which they rebelled, the proportionalists ended up reducing morality to something depersonalized and extrinsic and worse, distant from the Gospel. A couple of essays also celebrate and explore the moral theology of the *Catechism* and *Veritatis Splendor*. For example, “Conscience and the Virtue of Prudence” takes its cue from *Veritatis Splendor*’s concern to keep conscience and freedom oriented toward truth. Pinckaers asks, “How can conscience be formed so that we

can act according to the truth?" By laying bear the ways conscience and prudence are related, Pinckaers rescues conscience from its tendency to float freely in modern moral theology.

Critics who saw shortcomings in Pinckaers's treatment of scripture in *Sources* will find nothing to change their judgment here. Paul frequently emerges as a model for dealing with cases of conscience, but Pinckaers steers clear of biblical scholarship. Perhaps he aims for a more ecclesial and spiritual mode of interpretation, but in this case some engagement with professional exegetes could have helped Pinckaers intensify his argument for the ecclesial character of the moral life in Paul.

Much of Pinckaers's work is organized around the story of a 'fall' from moralities of beatitude to moralities of obligation. Although the distinction is speculatively powerful and seems historically compelling, more work is needed before the extent of its usefulness can be fully evaluated. *The Pinckaers Reader* helps to fill in the historical details with careful discussions not only of the central figures, Aquinas and Ockham, but also of Aberlard, Peter Lombard, Durandus, Capreolus, Suarez, Billuart, and others. One thing Pinckaers leaves undone is to examine how changing social formations provide the context for these developments.

Pinckaers calls for moral theologians to return to the heart of Catholic moral theology by exploring, with the Fathers and Aquinas, the way the Christian Gospel answers to the human desire for happiness. This is an urgent task, and Pinckaers boldly points the way forward, recovering an ethics of virtue and beatitude in touch with the Gospel and breaking the spell of unsatisfactory modern alternatives. All who thirst for the renewal of moral theology will relish this wonderful book. N V

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The Regensburg Lecture by James V. Schall (*South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's, 2007*), 174 pp.

SINCE HIS ELEVATION to the papacy, Pope Benedict XVI has addressed the nature and identity of God three times in three different media. In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, he told us that God is love; in his academic lecture at the University of Regensburg, he told us that God is reason; in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, he told us that God is historical, manifested in the man Jesus. These are arguably the three teachings about God that only Christianity can bring together coherently. Now in his latest encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, Benedict teaches that the God revealed in

Jesus Christ and explained in his three previous teachings is the only sure hope for man.

James Schall's *The Regensburg Lecture* is part commentary, part meditation, and partially a springboard for Schall to elaborate on some of the issues addressed in the lecture. Schall argues that Benedict speaks at Regensburg on behalf of the proper relation between faith and reason and on the necessary conditions on the parts of both for a proper relationship between them. The lecture is an attempt by Benedict to address what he has called elsewhere "pathologies" of faith and reason, both of which have serious implications for the political order.

The pathologies of reason originate in an unbalanced constriction of the scope of reason. Schall points out that Benedict says that philosophy must be open to "*what is*" (106), which includes that which reason might not be able to know solely from its own resources. In closing itself off to revelation, philosophy denatures itself. Benedict is also concerned about the pathology of reason because, as Schall says, revelation is addressed to reason: "Reason must be reasonable to grasp what revelation is about. This is why . . . that revelation must be itself concerned with not just any philosophic thought, but with philosophy oriented to what is" (19). Reason ought to be open to the fullness of faith, and not just the domesticated social scientific study of religion as advocated by, for instance, Adolf von Harnack (99–103).

Pathological reason seeks to eliminate revelation as a source for the ordering of man's life, while voluntarism or pathological faith seeks to subjugate reason utterly. Pathological reason attempts to eliminate what it considers the illegitimate encroachment of faith on public life. As Schall says, "Any attempt to claim that men by their own powers could create in this world what men really looked for with the aid of grace was not only folly, but dangerous" (72).

On the other hand, pathological faith attempts to secure God's transcendence by freeing him from any bonds, including those imposed by rationality. If God is de-coupled from reason, then he is not bound by his past commands or even his own nature. Pathological faith seeks to impose what it considers to be the absolute word of God, no matter whether it is rational or not. Schall points out, "A religion or ideology that finds the proper political forms outside of reason will, generally speaking, not allow the institutions of reason or of the economy to exist in their most open and free condition" (82). It is this imbalance that leads to violence, terror, and totalitarianism.

Pathological faith, by denying that God is primarily reason, undercuts human reason by removing its divine grounds. Pathological reason also

leads to voluntarism by refusing to consider everything that is, thereby placing the human will over reality. As Schall observes of Benedict's lecture, "Modern philosophy is seen in his lecture as a steady and gradual effort to eliminate any understanding of reason that would prevent man from doing whatever he wills" (16). This voluntaristic willfulness leads to what the pope calls "de-hellenization," which is the removal of the idea, Greek in origin but actually universal, of understanding limited by nature. Schall comments, "I would take this pathology to mean that the pursuits of subjective good, as it has no objective limit, can take up extreme causes as if they were themselves the real human good. Deviant goods command the same enthusiasm and energy as real goods" (109). Dehellenization and voluntarism have the same end: to make the human will the arbiter of the good rather than reason tied to *what is*.

As Benedict points out in *Deus Caritas Est*, the pathologies of reason and faith in the ancient world took two main forms: the divine madness of human eros unbounded by reason in the poets (he cites Vergil's "omnia vincit amor") (DCE 4), and the despair induced by the unerotic Aristotelian divine first principle, which nips human striving in the bud because of its unattainability (DCE 9). Both dehumanize, the first by exploitation, as in the temple prostitutes of the fertility cults, the second by the truncation of real human desires. It is only Christianity that provides a corrective to these pathologies, by grounding both erotic desire and *logos* in God, as Benedict says: "God is the absolute and ultimate source of all being; but this universal principle of creation—the *Logos*, primordial reason—is at the same time a lover with all the passion of a true love" (DCE 10). Reason and *eros* are firmly linked by being one in the divine essence. It is this which allows Benedict to argue for a genuine "autonomy of the temporal order" (DCE 28) in the second part of the encyclical. Reason has its own autonomy, although it must always be open to faith, for "faith liberates reason from its blind spots and therefore helps it to be ever more fully itself" (DCE 28). By way of contrast, Schall notes, "No distinction between God and Caesar exists in Muslim states" (50).

As Schall points out, Benedict proposes a different model: "The Catholic soul is not a divided soul. What is characteristically Catholic is the mind that pays full attention to truths of reason and revelation on the basis of the truth that they both belong to a coherent whole" (1). Speaking of Greek philosophy, Schall says, "There is a 'harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the Biblical understanding of faith in God' (#17). The word 'harmony' already indicates that things not the same somehow belong together in a higher whole" (53). Reason has its own legitimate order, but nonetheless ought not to close itself off from faith. Christianity, on this view,

is neither apolitical nor antipolitical, but properly *transpolitical*. He points out that Christian revelation “does not itself have a political philosophy other than the notion of things of God and things of Caesar. . . . Christianity, by not having a political program, implicitly acknowledged that the proper knowledge of political things, as derived from living experience by the philosophers and politicians, was itself legitimate” (82).

As Schall recognizes, part of what drew attention to Benedict’s lecture was the outcry from Muslims about the content of the talk, particularly having to do with Benedict’s citation of the medieval Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus, who questioned a Muslim interlocutor as to whether Muslims sanctioned violence in spreading Islam. The furious response from the Muslim world to Benedict’s use of Manuel II’s words to reopen his same line of inquiry shows the pertinence of the question in Schall’s view. He is careful to note that, although the aspect of the lecture that received by far the most attention was its engagement with Islam, the lecture is much broader in scope. It touches on the nature of a university, the role of philosophy in society, violence and God’s nature, the character and history of Europe, and a discussion of the three “waves of dehellenization” that, Schall points out, “sound like Leo Strauss’ three ‘waves’ of modernity” (90).

He does not develop the point, but I wonder how apt the comparison to Strauss’s position is. There certainly are similarities; both Benedict and Strauss see that modernity begins with a conscious rejection of the pre-modern. In Strauss’s case, what is rejected is classical political philosophy with its varying degrees of confidence that man can know the good and therefore organize his common life ordered to that good in a regime. For Benedict, the rejection is of the relationship between faith and reason. Strauss does not necessarily see modernity as, at its heart, a rejection of Christianity, but rather as a rejection of the politics of Christendom. Benedict, on the other hand, identifies the beginning of dehellenization with the Reformation project of decoupling faith from philosophy, which the Reformers saw as two “alien system[s] of thought” (#33), which becomes radicalized in Kant, who denies faith “access to reality as a whole” (140). This radical separation denatures Christianity. In seeking to preserve the purity of biblical faith, the dehellenizers of the Reformation pulled the rug out from underneath Christianity. Strauss assumes that there can be no principled connection between Christianity’s account of faith and reason and Christianity’s account of politics. Strauss is closer to the dehellenizing Reformers in thinking that faith and reason are alien systems of thought.

The book is based on a series of articles Schall wrote for the online journal *Ignatius Insight*, and was turned around very quickly. The rush to get the book to press sometimes shows, as the book can be both meandering

and repetitive. Most of the book's apparent flaws can be ascribed to the clearly limited purpose Schall had in writing it: he wanted to start a conversation about a text he considers to be "one of the fundamental tracts of our time" (9). He therefore focuses on drawing out the lecture's argument and only rarely elaborates or contextualizes. As Schall notes, the lecture's brevity is one of its strong points. Still, a lengthier treatment could have served to flesh out the historical details Benedict relied on and alluded to in his argument, including the character of the encounter between apostolic Christianity and Greek philosophy, the history of Islamic-Christian engagement on issues of church and state and faith and reason, and other controverted points.

Schall takes the widely reported Muslim reaction to the lecture as telling. Such rage and occasional violence in response to a university lecture shows, Schall thinks, that the Muslim world does not want to discuss the question of whether Islam is fundamentally rational or irrational. He bemoans the lack of engagement on the same rational level as the Regensburg lecture from the Muslim world. Perhaps because of the book's quick publication, he seems to have missed the rather extraordinary open letter to the pope signed by 38 Muslim scholars and dignitaries sent on October 12, 2006, just three weeks after the Schall's articles on Ignatius Insight appeared. The letter is very respectful, although firm in its attempted rebuttal. The signatories have been described as "a 'who's who' of the learned leaders of" Islam (David Warren, *Ottawa Citizen*, Oct. 22, 2006). Schall's point still might be valid, but the book would have been improved with some engagement of this letter.

Schall's book is good for what it is: a learned conversation starter on an important speech by an important, insightful thinker, on a vitally important issue of our time. N.V.

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Philosophy between Faith and Theology: Addresses to Catholic Intellectuals by Adriaan Theodor Peperzak (*Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005*), 216 pp.

PEPERZAK'S EFFORT to locate philosophy between faith and theology is intended to serve both as an invitation and as a challenge. It is an invitation to the renewal of philosophy by turning less to academic shoptalk and more to basic questions about the meaning of life that provoked philosophic inquiry in the first place. It is a challenge not just to the

culture of intellectual cottage industries but to the cult of an autonomous and universal reason that has been favored by many a philosopher in the modern period.

The invitation and the challenge are deeply connected. Try as some thinkers have done to establish foundations for their theories that are rigorously independent of their times or cultures (for instance, Descartes's use of the idea of methodical doubt to establish an indubitable certitude), Peperzak argues that no philosopher can escape resorting to some sort of faith or trust in someone or something. His point is not that such faith or trust precludes the very possibility of attaining universally valid truths, but that explicit admission of a philosopher's basic orientation and convictions about the meaning of life will provide a surer foundation than not for anyone's claims to offer compelling reasons and cogent answers of a universally valid sort.

The sense of faith that is thus in play for Peperzak is not just religious faith but more generally the trust or submission that we give to some sort of authority, whether it be to God, to another person, to one's culture, or to the reality of one's own experiences. The lived condition of a given philosopher's culture, intellectual traditions, and chosen goals provides a context for any question that is posed, any hypothesis that is raised, and any methods that are used for seeking solutions to the problems that one selects for investigation. Somewhat like Pierre Hadot's inclination to see the various types of ancient philosophy as diverse forms of spirituality, Peperzak argues for the inseparability between one's theoretical work in philosophy and theology and one's lived experience and basal assumptions about the meaning of life. His purpose in making a claim of this sort is not to undermine the possibility of ever reaching transcendent wisdom or timeless truths, but to recommend that there is a genuinely practical wisdom in having a conscious awareness of one's faith commitments when trying to secure philosophy's traditional objectives. For Peperzak, such a stance is simply a matter of truth in advertising. For philosophy to claim to be a matter of autonomous reason amounts to a kind of pretense about the philosophical project that is ultimately false.

The essays brought together for this volume are offered especially for "Catholic intellectuals," but they can be read with profit by a wider audience. While his concern here is generally with faith in the broad sense of one's general orientation and commitments about the meaning of life, he often turns to faith in the narrower sense of Christian and specifically Catholic beliefs, both in the sense of spirituality (the approach to daily living that is implied by one's faith) and of religion (the concrete form that one's faith takes for worship, morality, and ecclesial life). In this

regard, the book is a bit repetitious, for the addresses that are gathered for this volume repeat the same themes again and again. But a number of the essays are strikingly attuned to the concerns of academic life, such as the sections on how to keep a Catholic university Catholic and how to inculcate a university's mission commitment for new faculty who may not personally share the basic commitments that are still in some way professed by the institutional commitment of the university.

In regard to the Peperzak's own commitments in this volume, it is clear that he is a Catholic and a phenomenologist. Phenomenology has often found a home in Catholic universities, and there can be no doubt about its usefulness for certain projects, but presumably it would serve better as a complementary and enriching method rather than exclusively in the role of "first philosophy" that Peperzak urges for it here.

By comparison, one might consider Pope John Paul II's use of his own very distinctive brand of phenomenology to explore the subjectivity of the worker in *Laborem Exercens*, or the way in which he urges us to understand personal responsibility for our choices in *The Acting Person* and *Veritatis Splendor*, or the moral implications of spousal love and human sexuality in *Love and Responsibility* and *Theology of the Body*. Likewise, there are special insights that a phenomenological approach can generate when Dietrich von Hildebrand is investigating the ways in which the call of the virtues summon anyone who ponders them to live up to the essential structure of these ideals, or when Edith Stein is engaged in her marvelous discussions of empathy.

But phenomenology as such, standing alone as a method, does not rise to the heights that a realist metaphysics can reach. There are certain limitations inherent in its strategy of methodologically bracketing off questions about being as independent of intentionality that make it a poor choice for first philosophy. John Paul II, for instance, does adopt a phenomenological approach to understanding cognition in terms of intentionality, but he repudiates the notion that consciousness at large can be grasped through the constructions of intentionality in the way that this idea was championed by, say, Husserl or Scheler. In the second chapter of *Veritatis Splendor*, for instance, one finally sees through the swirls of competing human motivation (phenomenologically described in the first chapter) the girders of Thomistic steel that are necessary to underpin the distinctions needed for moral philosophy. Or, in *Love and Responsibility* and in *Theology of the Body* one finds an attentiveness to the natural and supernatural symbolisms discernible in the body and marital love as well as an alertness to the structures of consciousness that phenomenology is so helpful in describing.

On the other hand, when one's metaphysics is unclear, even one's best phenomenological sensibilities will not be sufficient to come to the rescue. One can see this, for instance, in Edith Stein's more speculative works such as *On Endless and Eternal Being*. The pages of that volume unfortunately manifest a certain confusion on the most pressing question of personhood. Her focus on how intentionality allows us to construct "person" and "nature" allows her to wander into an endless maze when trying to talk of "individual natures" and thereby imperils both the genuine uniqueness of persons and the commonness of human nature.

Peperzak's sallies in this volume against the excesses of secular philosophers and their vaunted claims for reason's autonomy are admirable, especially by the directness of his attack on the efforts of secularists to make any appeal to a transcendent impossible. But the lack of a genuinely metaphysical outlook in this book weakens its constructive possibilities. Where a truly comprehensive metaphysics can secure a basis for compelling arguments for the existence of God through appropriate use of the principles of sufficient reason and causality, Peperzak's apparent unwillingness to go beyond the resources of phenomenology deprives him of the possibility of ever using some of the tools he most needs for the project he so wants to accomplish.

One interesting place to see this problem is in his essay entitled "Provocation: Can God Speak within the Limits of Philosophy? Should Philosophers Speak to God?" where he reflects on divine revelation. He is certainly right when he urges that philosophers should be conscious of the dogmas of their own particular faiths. But Peperzak shows an astonishing optimism that all "faiths" converge on the same truth and the same salvation (see 19, 63, 81–84, 128, 192–93, et al.). It is hard to see how this position escapes relativism or is sufficiently mindful of some of the truly exclusive claims that a religion like Christianity makes, for example, in Christ as the unique mediator and only savior (see *Dominus Jesus*).

Rather, it would seem to be the case that holding certain dogmas as a requirement of one faith may well require that the dogmas of other faiths will need to be regarded as necessarily incompatible with the first. Given Peperzak's insistence from the beginning of this book that philosophers, including religious philosophers, should be mindful of their faith commitments, this stock-taking should presumably include an acknowledgment of those commitments that inescapably exclude other commitments. What is needed for this project certainly does include a careful phenomenological awareness of one's own patterns and predispositions to take certain stances on the meaning of life and other basic questions. But it also requires a metaphysical sensibility to the fact that divine self-revelation (as

coming from the very source of the universe) will have certain universal traits that cannot be simultaneously affirmed and denied.

One might also wonder what place is left for theology when philosophy is described, as it is here, in terms of *fides quaerens intellectum*. Peperzak maintains throughout that the place of philosophy is between faith and theology, but his propensity to reduce theology to “the philosophy of theistic faith” (e.g., 74) seems to risk collapsing some crucial distinctions. **N V**

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Aquinas, Ethics and Philosophy of Religion: Metaphysics and Practice by Thomas Hibbs (*Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007*), xvi + 236 pp.

THOMAS HIBBS’S primary goal is to bring the metaphysical dimensions of Aquinas into dialogue with the revival of interest in the primacy of practice in the fields of ethics and epistemology. He believes that Aquinas offers a distinctively theological contribution to a set of debates over the relationship of theory to practice and further, that the contemporary interest in the Trinity, in creation, and the bestowal of the gift of being, and in the primacy of the virtue of charity, is transforming our understanding of how metaphysics is related to practice. The three central figures in the work are therefore St. Thomas Aquinas, Jean-Luc Marion and Alasdair MacIntyre. The latter has often been accused of being anti-metaphysical, indeed, even a relativist, by those who have just browsed through one or two of his works or who believe, as a matter of principle, that one must always begin the study of ethics with metaphysics and work down to the level of practice. Hibbs’s work is therefore a timely attempt to bring the recent scholarship on metaphysics and virtue ethics into dialogue.

This is not the extent of his diplomatic efforts however. He also seeks to present the reader with a more “erotic” Aquinas than the standard depiction one receives from self-styled Aristotelian Thomists. Rather than getting bogged down in discussions about primary and secondary causality, Hibbs attempts to retrieve the more Platonic and Dionysian dimensions of Thomist metaphysics. He acknowledges that ‘misconceptions of the nature of metaphysical enquiry have infected certain strains of Thomism for many centuries’ and in particular, that there has been an eclipse of the erotic appeal of metaphysics and its pervasive deployment of aesthetic language. As an example of a total misconception he offers the tradition of reading Aquinas’s articulation of a hierarchy of sciences—physics, mathematics, and

metaphysics—as indicating a ranking in accord with degrees of abstraction. He argues that Aquinas says no such thing. While Aquinas lists metaphysics after mathematics this does not mean that for Aquinas mathematics is a path into metaphysics. In relation to the field of ethics more generally, Hibbs quotes with approval the following assessment of Joel Kupperman:

A great deal of ethical philosophy of the last two hundred years looks both oversimple and overintellectualised . . . philosophers have treated morality as if each of us is a computer which needs a program for deciding moral questions. . . . Ethics . . . in this view is at work only at those discrete moments when an input is registered and the moral decision—procedure is applied. (16)

Hibbs therefore takes issue with the reading of Thomist metaphysics (fostered by Eric Voegelin, among others) as a forerunner of modern rationalism. According to Voegelin, the metaphysics of Aquinas lent itself to being ossified into a propositional science of principles, universals and substances. Given the many highly popularized accounts of Thomism as primarily Aristotelianism with Christ brought in as a jig-saw piece to fill in a few aporia, it is not surprising that Voegelin and others started to view Aquinas as the rogue who built the slippery dip to eighteenth century rationalism. However Hibbs believes that this reading omits Aquinas's notion of "reason as participant in an order that encompasses it and exceeds its grasp, the prominent role of erotic and aesthetic discourse throughout his metaphysics; the intimate connection, in his theology, between the Trinity as exemplar of human action and the development of a social ontology of individuals-in-relation, and the construal of ethics itself as a mimetic practice" (2). Hibbs notes that "in the culminating chapters of the first book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, but especially in the treatment of creatures in the second, Thomas makes pervasive use of the language of beauty and that his goal is to inflame rather than satiate the human desire for God." He suggests that this is the profound lesson of Thomas's common and overlooked passages from Scripture: "Far from being an afterthought, they illustrate the inscribing of philosophical investigation into the narrative of Scripture, the passage of discursive reason into the language of prayer and praise as proper responses to the revealed gifts of beauty and goodness" (129).

In short, Hibbs's Aquinas sounds like music to Balthasarian, or at least Augustinian-Bonaventurian, ears. He offers an account of metaphysics which far from being focused on abstractions expressed in mathematical or quasi-mathematical language, is deeply personal. The young Joseph Ratzinger once remarked to a fellow seminarian that a *summum bonum* didn't need a mother, and one suspects, without knowing for sure, that it

was a remark made after a presentation of Thomist metaphysics which left out the more erotic dimensions which Hibbs is endeavoring to retrieve.

One of the strongest examples Hibbs offers of St. Thomas's use of erotic language is taken from the *Summa contra Gentiles* II, 2:

If the goodness, beauty and allurement of creatures thus entices human souls, then the divine font of goodness, compared to the small streams of goodness discovered in particular creatures, will draw totally to himself the aroused souls of human beings. Whence it says in the Psalms: They will become intoxicated from the abundance of your dwelling . . . and you will give them to drink from the torrent of your delight.

Hibbs believes that the *Summa contra Gentiles* contains Aquinas's most important reflections on the source, nature, and limits of metaphysics, and the relationship of metaphysics to practice: "the advantage of the method and structure of the *Summa contra Gentiles* is that it displays the achievements of and limitations to pagan wisdom, that is, of philosophical metaphysics in relation to Christian wisdom." Moreover, its first three books should be seen as "a sustained philosophical moment within a remarkably complex theological pedagogy, as recovery of the created order for the purpose of a greater penetration of the divine" (108).

Specifically, Hibbs proposes a modified account of the relationship between metaphysics and ethics, wherein Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of the Gift is complemented by the practice of what Alasdair MacIntyre, following Aquinas, calls "just generosity" (*miser cordia*). According to MacIntyre the salient features of relationships that are informed by just generosity are "communal relationships that engage our affections." In MacIntyre's more recent works, including *Dependent Rational Animals*, Hibbs believes one can discover a metaphysics of participation and a theological teaching on the internal life of God as self-communicative love. He also believes that the same teaching, though much neglected, provides the foundation for Aquinas's account of the natural law. He acknowledges that while the accent on participation is evident from the definition of natural law as a participation of the rational creature in the eternal law; the Trinitarian foundation is less palpable, until one asks in what sense the eternal law, which is identified as the divine reason itself, is a law. That is to say, how is it promulgated? He notes that Aquinas responds, "Promulgation occurs through word and writing; in both ways, the eternal law is promulgated, because the Divine Word is eternal and the writing of the Book of Life is eternal" (34).

As a consequence, Hibbs argues that Aquinas's emphasis on the access that we have to God through nature "does not set up a comprehensive

and self-satisfied philosophy of God.” Rather it is an acknowledgement of the first gift of creation: “Thomas explicates the ‘twofold mode of truth’ in pedagogical terms, as two ways in which God instructs, one through creation and another through revelation” (127). Thus, contrary to many received interpretations of Aquinas:

The embrace of natural reason is not as an apologetic weapon to be deployed against secular rationalists or skeptics. Instead, it involves a recovery of the natural, created conditions of human knowledge and action. Far from being any sort of threat to faith, philosophy is made possible by the first gift of God in creation. Aquinas describes both supernatural and natural principles as “contained by the divine wisdom.” He speaks in thoroughly pedagogical terms. The knowledge of the teacher contains what is brought forth into the soul of the student by the teacher. . . . The cognition of principles naturally known is divinely given to us, since God himself is the author of our nature. (106)

In this context Hibbs also makes use of the philosophy of Josef Pieper, whose influence is palpable in the first two encyclicals of Pope Benedict XVI. Pieper emphasized that faith has two dimensions: a belief about something and a belief in someone. In the case of religious faith, these two dimensions coalesce: God is both the one trusted and the one about whom we believe something. Hence, “faith is a type of personal knowledge, the goal of which is ‘communion with the eye witness’, a participation in the knowledge of the knower.” In the words of *Deus Caritas Est*: “truth is a person.”

Hibbs also refers extensively to the work of Pieper on the necessity of a retrieval of prudence as a component of Christian moral life and of the proper education and transformation of the passions by the moral virtues. Here Hibbs suggests that Pieper’s Aquinas “offers a corrective and supplement to contemporary virtue ethics itself, which has failed to be sufficiently ambitious, systematic and comprehensive.” In other words, it still lacks what Elizabeth Anscombe called an adequate moral psychology. Hibbs suggests that any such development should include the following two principles: (a) that speculative activities must be conceived in terms of practices involving a set of virtues, and (b) that as one activity among many others in which human beings engage, speculative activities must be integrated by prudential judgment into other activities. Thus, with reference to the work of Marion, he concludes:

As much as it may capture a certain and enduring experience in the religious life, Marion’s “confused bedazzlement” must give way to, or at least be understood within the context of, a set of virtuous practices. The

practice of virtue is a participation in the “form of life” proper to the gospel, which is itself a revelation of the fullness of being as beautiful and loveable. Of course, as Marion is at pains to remind us, these practices and the dispositions they seek to foster in us can never be reduced to habits in the Aristotelian sense. They never become attributes possessed autonomously by human agents. They are rather gifts whose sustaining centre is God. In this context, it would not be misleading to describe charity, which Aquinas identifies with the form of the virtues, as the “communing gap,” that is, in Marion’s terms, as “distance” (134).

Hibbs also believes that in the teaching on God in the first book of the *Summa contra Gentiles* and especially in the use Aquinas makes of the teaching of Dionysius, we can uncover Aquinas’s profound interest in many of the issues that occupy Marion. He praises Marion for opening up neglected issues in Aquinas, especially that of idolatry and of the way in which metaphysics gives way, in theological discourse, to a praxis of praise. However, against Marion, he argues that Aquinas is right to insist that negations themselves will be aimless and utterly uninformative without presupposing some sort of affirmation, however imperfect: “Understanding of negation rests upon a certain affirmation. Unless the human intellect were to know something affirmatively of God, it would not be able to deny anything either.” Hibbs also believes that on the theme of eros, Aquinas is much closer to Dionysius than Marion is, since Marion’s understanding of eros is derived, at least in part, from Heidegger’s conception of the utter alienation of Dasein.

A more erotic Aquinas brings the Thomist tradition into a closer position of engagement with the post-moderns since there are, as the author observes, numerous points of convergence between Aquinas and Nietzsche on aesthetics, metaphysics, and the rôle and limitations of reason. Hibbs suggests that the prominence of the language of eros and the beautiful in both authors has much to do with the sense of reason as enveloped within a larger context in which it participates as an incomplete part. Reason is not autonomous of faith in the sense of bearing no relationship to it.

Similarly, one consequence of the Thomistic approach to eros as filtered through Pieper, is that there can be no autonomous artistic creation, since the artist herself is but a participation in a larger order. Aquinas’s metaphysics of participated actuality renders every creature artistic to some degree. As Norris Clarke writes:

If every being turns out to include a natural dynamism toward self-communication through action, we can say truly, in more than a

metaphorical sense, that every being is naturally a self-symbolizer, an icon or image-maker, in some analogous way like an artist, expressing itself symbolically, whether consciously or unconsciously. . . . The self-symbolizing tendency in all the finite beings we know turns out to be an imperfect participation or imitation of the inner being of God Himself, revealed to be supremely and perfectly self-symbolising in its eternal interior procession of the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit from both. (136)

Hibbs concludes that the different starting points, orientations and conclusions of Nietzsche and Aquinas only make more striking the parallel set of concerns each author investigates. Both authors must face questions concerning the nature and rôle of artistic creation, the sources of aesthetic experience, and the relationship between making and knowing.

Overall this is an exciting work because it represents an attempt from within the Thomist tradition to engage with the dominant themes which flow through the tradition of the German Romantics. While some Thomists have dismissed the need for any such engagement, for as long as the values of the Romantics continue to have such a formative influence on Western culture, it would seem to be a rather urgent intellectual issue with important pastoral consequences.

Readers may quibble with some of Hibbs's judgments, such as whether Marion's account of eros really is that far from Pieper's, or whether Yves Simon had a better understanding of leisure than Pieper, or whether MacIntyre's "wholesale dismissal of liberalism" was "hasty" (all of which are non-foundational judgments made in the work); nonetheless the work is a very timely intervention, beginning the process of retrieving the erotic dimensions of Aquinas. N·V

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Engrafted into Christ: A Critique of the Joint Declaration by Christopher J. Malloy (*New York: Peter Lang, 2005*), 408 pp.

CHRISTOPHER MALLOY presents a harsh critique of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. He writes, "In an effort to achieve full communion . . . neither side must shrink from the rigorous demands of intellectual honesty and confessional fidelity" (103). He suggests that Catholics were not honest enough to acknowledge the "original divide" that has always existed between Lutherans and Catholics and that still remains despite the apparent consensus of the *Joint Declaration*. Union, he maintains, can only

be achieved by Lutherans choosing to disagree with their confessional documents, abandoning the false positions in them, and accepting the true doctrine about justification which has been taught explicitly by the Catholic Church since the Council of Trent. Catholics do not have the option of abandoning anything in their magisterial documents, such as the canons of the Council of Trent. They can only try to explain them better to make them more palatable to their Lutheran brothers.

The *Joint Declaration* is an official agreement on justification signed by representatives of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches in 1999. The fruit of almost forty years of ecumenical dialogue, it claims that a consensus on the basic truths about justification has been reached by Catholics and Lutherans and that remaining differences are not church-dividing. It was signed by Cardinal Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Dr. Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation. The signing received the public approval of Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger (head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith). However, Malloy maintains that this approval of the Pope was “informal and nonauthoritative” (5). He asserts that such a document “short of specific and formal approval by the Papal see . . . command[s] no assent from the faithful” (5). Hence he considers himself as a Catholic theologian free to examine and criticize its claims.

Malloy particularly objects to §41: “The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this Declaration does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration.” He takes this paragraph together with §7—“the churches neither take the condemnations lightly nor do they disavow their own past”—to mean that there was never a substantial conflict between Lutherans and Catholics, but only a lack of understanding and difference of emphasis. Clearly, it is not true that there was never a substantial conflict, and Malloy is at his best with his sharp, clear explanations of the doctrine of the Council of Trent and its differences from Luther and the Lutheran confessional documents.

However, the *Joint Declaration* can be read differently. Reading further in §7, the *Joint Declaration* says: “On the contrary, this Declaration is shaped by the conviction that in their respective histories our churches have come to new insights. Developments have taken place which not only make possible, but also require the churches to examine the divisive questions and condemnations and see them in a new light.” Certainly this statement cannot mean that the Catholic Church has changed anything in her essential doctrine since Trent. However, she has surely come to

some new insights, while a number of influential Lutheran theologians have explicitly distanced themselves from the Lutheran confessional documents. The Finnish school has criticized these documents for the forensic nature of justification and claimed that justification comes from the presence of Christ in the believer by faith. They claim to find this teaching in some of the writings of Luther. Whether or not this teaching is in Luther is surely not as important as the fact that these Christians are approaching the truth of the Catholic faith. There is no reason to hold Lutherans to "confessional loyalty." In §13 the *Joint Declaration* says, "In light of this consensus, the corresponding doctrinal condemnations of the sixteenth century do not apply to *today's partner*." It is certainly tricky to find a truthful and diplomatic way of saying that Lutherans today are willing to disagree with certain things in their confessional documents and to accept what had seemed unacceptable in the Catholic doctrine when it has been explained in terms that they can understand in connection with Scripture texts, while Catholics cannot disagree with anything from their magisterial documents. However, Catholics can distance themselves from certain wrong emphases that Lutherans rightly discern in many Catholic sermons and pious writings.

In part 1, Malloy crisply sketches the Catholic teaching on justification and its differences from Luther and the Lutheran confessional documents. His treatment of formal causality (and of the vital importance of the doctrine that the formal cause of justification is something inhering in the Christian, namely, sanctifying grace) is masterly. Likewise masterly is his summary of the four major points of division: the formal cause of justification (forensic or inherent?); damnable sin (does it remain or not after justification?); good works (can one increase in holiness through good works or not?); eternal life (is it merited in any way, or pure gift?). He describes the debates at the Council of Trent as well as the final document to make its doctrine clearer particularly on the issues of formal causality and double justice.

In part 2, Malloy treats in detail the works of contemporary theologians attempting rapprochement. He discusses Hans Küng, the Finnish School, and Wolfhart Pannenberg. The Finnish school, led by Tuomo Mannermaa, is particularly fascinating. It consciously adopts Peter Lombard's position that charity is the Holy Spirit himself dwelling in the soul, not a created habit. It does speak of grace as the extrinsic declaration by God of the sinner to be just but adds that this grace is always accompanied by Christ himself, as gift, which is an "internal good" (145). This union with Christ, who dwells in the Christian, transforms him into Christ, in a transformation that begins on earth and is perfected in heaven. It also stresses the

need for a continual flow of grace from Christ: "The Christian's own righteousness is sufficient for salvation only when it is linked to the righteousness of Christ and flows as a continuous stream from it" (148). This view fits well with the Catholic doctrine of the mystical body of Christ.

Part 3, the longest section, is Malloy's critical analysis of the *Joint Declaration*. Two forms of hermeneutics were available for Malloy to use in his analysis, a hermeneutics appropriate to magisterial documents ("hermeneutics of the Spirit") and the historical-critical method. He could have chosen to treat the *Joint Declaration* as a magisterial document, a part of the tradition of the Church. Then he would have been justified in explaining it by means of other parts of the tradition, just as Catholic Scripture scholars, following the custom of St. Augustine, use one part of Scripture to interpret another. This hermeneutics of the Spirit presupposes that there is one primary author of Scripture and Tradition, the Holy Spirit. Therefore all the books of Scripture and magisterial documents can be treated as in a deep sense one. Where one statement seems to contradict another, there must be some other way to understand it. Instead, Malloy uses the historical-critical method, situating the *Joint Declaration* only in the dialogues surrounding it, the preliminary documents, and other articles and books by participants and contemporary theologians of both confessions. After analyzing it carefully paragraph by paragraph, he claims that "the JD either deficiently represents or differs in substance from authentic Catholic doctrine" (389). He suggests that the only reason both Catholics and Lutherans could agree to it was its ambiguity. It was (purposely?) made so vague that both confessions could think it expressed their doctrines even though these doctrines are sometimes actually contradictory. Moreover the formulations in the *Joint Declaration* tend to look more like Lutheran than Catholic doctrine. Indeed he reads the *Joint Declaration* to affirm (though not without some ambiguity) the false Lutheran doctrine "that Christ's righteousness [rather than an inhering justice, that is, sanctifying grace] is the sinner's justifying righteousness" (276).

After this serious accusation, part 4 contains Malloy's own reflections on the significance of the differences between the Catholic and Lutheran understanding of justification for many further theological issues such as eschatology, soteriology, Mary, and the sacraments (in particular the issue of consubstantiation).

This section contains an excellent discussion of *happiness*. Some Lutherans find the very desire for happiness sinful and any work for its sake much more so. As Malloy very adroitly shows, this view leads to many contradictions. Christian reality is reduced to trying and failing to obey God's commandments, which have nothing to do with man's fulfillment. Moral-

ity becomes moralism; nominalism follows with God arbitrarily issuing commands which man can never fulfill. Forensic justification makes happiness impossible; it leaves the sinner in hell. If hell is alienation from God because our heart is directed away from God, who is the only good which can satisfy our heart, what good could imputation of righteousness do us? We would still be in hell if our hearts were not united to God. There must be a change in our hearts. As Malloy says, "He restores sinners to life with himself by redirecting the sinner's heart and mind to himself in whom alone the sinner can find true happiness" (321).

In all, the book is brilliant, helpful in understanding the Catholic and original Lutheran positions better, exciting in its summary of the doctrines of the Finnish Lutherans and Pannenberg, penetrating in following the consequences of the original Lutheran doctrine in many further theological issues, but still flawed. It applies only the historical-critical method to analyze the *Joint Declaration* and mildly mocks those Catholic theologians who "undertake hermeneutical gymnastics in order to retrieve this document on behalf of Catholic tradition" (234). The issue is closely related to the status of the *Joint Declaration*. If it belongs to the magisterial teaching of the Church, then it is not "hermeneutical gymnastics" to interpret it in the light of other magisterial documents. Whatever its precise canonical status may be, the *Joint Declaration* can and, in the most charitable construal, ought to be read as part of the ordinary magisterium of the Church. A hermeneutics appropriate for a magisterial document is not out of place. One advantage of this approach would be that one can learn more from the *Joint Declaration*. How many Catholics have to listen to moralistic, Pelagian sermons Sunday after Sunday? How wonderful for them to hear instead, "In justification, the justified receive from Christ faith, hope, and love, and are thus taken into communion with him. This new personal relation to God is grounded totally in the graciousness of God and remains always dependent on the salvific-creative work of the merciful God, who remains faithful to himself and on whom one can therefore rely" (*Joint Declaration* §27).

In this hermeneutics of the Spirit, one could still point out ambiguities and express the hope that a clearer treatment of inhering justice could be reached. One could show that the consequences of what was clearly agreed upon must include a metaphysical change in the justified sinner. No magisterial documents are without ambiguity. They are all written by weak human instruments. Even the canons of the Council of Trent could be much clearer on the nature of inhering justice. N.V.

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