

**On Analogy, the Incarnation,
and the Sacraments of the Church:
Considerations from the
Tertia pars of the *Summa theologiae***

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Introduction

IN THE THICK FOREST of the literature, the density of which is significantly clouded by the contributions of Thomists, it can be forgotten that, at its root, analogy is simply a means of comparing logical, mathematical, and metaphysical realities. From these comparisons, whose validity is founded upon the existence of similitudes, attributes, relations, and proportions in diverse realities, real, scientific conclusions can be made. Philosophers and theologians, of course, have had—and still do have—a great deal to say about how far these conclusions can be extended and which forms of analogical comparison lead to authentic knowledge about reality.¹

Theological disquiet over analogy tends to settle into two primary collection areas. On the one hand, there is a substantial body of literature resulting from Karl Barth's famous charge that the analogy of being

¹ In *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2004), Gregory Rocca traces the "commencement" of analogy. Rocca begins with the pre-Socratic understanding of analogy as "mathematical or geometric proportionality," moves to its extension to "the properly philosophical plane" (77) by Plato and Aristotle, and continues all the way to Aquinas and his interpreters by way of brief considerations of, inter alia, Augustine and Dionysius. See especially, 77–134.

was the “invention of the Antichrist.”² On the other hand, there is the so-called ontotheological critique of Aquinas and his commentators, especially Cardinal Cajetan on account of his reading of Aquinas on analogy.³ In each of these cases the analogy of being is held in suspicion because of its apparent failure to respect revelation by reducing God vis-à-vis analogical comparison to the order of creaturely existence.⁴

In his most recent book, *Analogia Entis*, Steven Long defends Aquinas’s doctrine of the analogy of being by correcting a misreading of Aquinas on analogy that has become quasi-normative and hence unchallenged for more than a generation. Long identifies the fact “that a generation and more of historically nuanced and profound contemplation of the metaphysics and theology of Thomas Aquinas nonetheless has managed . . . to mislay the central tenets of the Angelic Doctor”⁵ as his primary motivation for composing the book. These mislaid tenets are, Long argues, “precisely those that prove most essential to the metaphysician and the theologian: in particular, those that concern the intrinsic analogicity of being as divided by act and potency, an analogical division that is the foundation both for the doctrine of participation and for the causal demonstrations proving the truth of the proposition that God exists.”⁶

This essay is divided into two sections. In the first section I broadly sketch the key movements of Long’s argument in *Analogia Entis*. In the second section I consider a few points from St. Thomas’s theology of the Incarnation in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae* in light of my

² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), xiii [I/1]. For a presentation of Barth’s position on the *analogia entis*, his engagement with Catholic interlocutors, and interpretations of his position, see Keith L. Johnson, “Reconsidering Barth’s Rejection of Przywara’s *Analogia Entis*,” *Modern Theology* 26 (2010): 632–50.

³ For an example of the ontotheological critique of Cajetan’s reading of Aquinas on the analogy of being from a theological perspective, see Laurence Paul Hemming, “*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*: The Ontological Consequences of the Doctrine of Analogy,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 (2004): 118–29.

⁴ Thomas Joseph White, O.P., offers a helpful Thomistic response to these criticisms. He draws particular attention to the shortcomings of the ontotheological critique of Aquinas in its post-Kantian, Heideggerian forms. See White, *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2009), esp. 3–28.

⁵ Steven A. Long, *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

preliminary sketch, as a means of testing Long's thesis. My purpose is to highlight the underappreciated significance that Aquinas's doctrine of analogy has within his articulation of the relation of the world to God in Christ and in the Church through the sacraments. Aquinas does not explicitly invoke the phrase "analogy of being" in the *tertia pars* when expounding the Incarnation and the sacraments, but his reasoning certainly presupposes a doctrine of analogy, without which the Incarnation and presence of God in the sacraments would reduce God to the order of created being.⁷

Analugia Entis: Interpretive Keys

Proper Proportionality in Aquinas

During the final period of his life, especially when composing the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas, according to Long, seems to emphasize "analo-

⁷ In "*Analugia non Entis sed Entitatis*," Hemming appeals to the *tertia pars* to make the case, inspired by the ontotheological critique of Aquinas and his followers, that there is de facto no analogy of being in Aquinas. "I am going to take for my authority in this," Hemming writes,

the supposed author of the *analugia entis* (although he never himself uses the term), St Thomas Aquinas. The great fountainhead for study of the term *analugia* in St Thomas is Question 13 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. This alone should alert us that something is up with St Thomas' use of the terms *analugia* and *analogice*. Question 13 assumes such an importance in neo-Thomism and the crypto-Thomism that succeeded it because the two terms hardly appear anywhere else in the whole of the *Summa*. So it was not very important for Thomas. Moreover, and to the chagrin of the new breed of analogists, it does not turn up once just exactly where it should if all the contemporary theorizing on analogy really did have its home in Aquinas—in the *Tertia Pars*, the treatise on Christ and on the Sacraments (119–20).

What I hope to demonstrate in the second part of this essay is that while Aquinas does not specifically invoke the analogy of being when making metaphysical-comparisons in the *tertia pars*, his causal and participatory analogies—which are frequent—about the Incarnation and sacraments presuppose, as Long implies, the prior foundation of the analogy of proper proportionality as the analogy of being. Hemming fails to recognize that were this not the case, God's presence and causal activity in Christ and the sacraments, would be founded upon a univocal notion being. It is precisely the analogy of being, properly understood, that enables Aquinas to avoid this mistake.

gy of attribution and proportion,” while in the earlier work, *De veritate*, proper proportionality was put forward by the Angelic Doctor “as the analogy of being and as alone capable of avoiding the error of affirming God to have a determined relation to creatures.”⁸

If the position of *De veritate* on the analogy of proper proportionality as the analogy of being is abandoned, Long highlights the emergence of problems that vitiate the internal consistency of metaphysical and theological doctrine. Because there is no “strict analogy of proportion between the creature and God,” analogy of simple proportion when set forth absolutely creates obvious difficulties for the philosopher and the theologian alike. Likewise, with analogy of attribution a similar issue arises. Created effects enable arguments to be made for God’s existence and nature, but the existence of creatures is not, *de facto*, the existence of God. Long argues that the analogy of being qua proper proportionality, while not substituting for “causal analysis” is, nevertheless, “the foundation and precondition for causal resolution in God.”⁹

Analogy and the Problem of the One and the Many

Aristotle’s response to the monism of Parmenides and Thomas’s appropriation and development of this response hold a pivotal place in Long’s presentation.¹⁰ The division of being into act and potency makes it possible to forge a coherent solution to the problem of the one and the many: “As the potency to laugh,” Long explains, “is to actually laughing, so is the potency to thought to actually thinking . . . yet laughing is not thinking . . . There is a likeness of diverse *rationes* of act and potency.”¹¹ This point is of crucial importance because “analogy of proper propor-

⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰ In *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), John F. Wippel summarizes Thomas’s understanding of Parmenidean monism as follows: “On the ontological level or the level of being itself, it seems that being cannot be divided from being. It cannot be divided from itself by being, since it already is being. Viewed from this perspective, it is simply one. Nor can it be divided from itself by nonbeing, since this is nothingness. Therefore it cannot be divided at all, and all is one” (69).

¹¹ Long, *Analogia Entis*, 18.

tionality does not place creature and God indifferently under being, but rather affirms that the actuality of God is infinitely more perfect and nobler than that of the creature.” God and creatures are thus not placed (or tied together) in proportionate degrees of being because the being of God “is wholly free of *potentia*, the proportion to which alone accounts for limitation in the perfection of being.”¹²

This point goes to the very heart of both the Barthian concern and the ontotheological critique. Long establishes that God is not compared to creaturely being according to the creaturely mode of being, but as free from all potency, and hence in no way reducible to or participatory in the creaturely realm of *potentia*.

A key text of Aquinas that Long develops in defense of his thesis is *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 11, which asks, “Is knowledge predicated of God and men purely equivocally?” In this text Thomas states various ways in which knowledge is “predicated” analogously, or according to proportion, of both God and creatures. According to the one form, Thomas articulates the proportion of the analogates to each other in terms of numeric standing (such as double) or attribution (such as health). “Nothing can be predicated analogously of God and creature according to this type of proportion,” Aquinas declares, “for no creature has such a relation to God that it could determine a divine perfection.”

Another type of analogy, however, that Thomas recognizes in *De veritate*, q. 2, is when a similitude such as “sight is predicated of bodily sight and of the intellect because understanding is in the mind as sight is in the eye.”¹³ In this type of analogy, Aquinas explains that “no definite relation is involved between the things which have something in common analogously, so there is no reason why some name cannot be predicated analogously of God and creature in this manner.”¹⁴ Aquinas here makes the very clarification—*by way of analogy*—that critics of the analogy of being mistakenly accuse him of transgressing.¹⁵ As Long

¹² Ibid., 31.

¹³ Ibid., 45.

¹⁴ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵ “No matter how dressed up . . . the *analogia entis* will simply not do the work in contemporary theology that all too many theologians want it to do,” Laurence Hemming argues. Why? Failing to appreciate that proper proportionality does not entail a “definite relation” between the common analogates, Hemming thus views the

demonstrates, proper proportionality is, by its nature, the very avoidance of any direct dependence of the nature of God on the world.

Revelation and the Analogy of Being

In the final chapter of *Analogia Entis*, Long extends his meditation on analogy to the realm of faith and theological discourse. On the analogical nature of revealed concepts, Long cites Maritain from the *Degrees of Knowledge*, who argues that

in the knowledge of faith it is . . . from the very heart of the deity that the whole process of knowledge starts out . . . That is to say, from the source, through the free generosity of God, derives the choice of objects and of concepts . . . which God alone knows to be analogical signs of what is hidden in Him, and of which he makes use in order to speak of Himself to us in our own language.

Maritain continues: "Once designated by revelation as likeness of what is hidden in God, the mind perceives that such things as paternity and filiation . . . have the value of the analogy of proper proportionality."¹⁶ The importance of this insight by Maritain cannot be stressed enough: the knowledge communicated in revelation, issuing from divine wisdom, indicates certain likenesses or analogies between creatures and God. Revelation also communicates the otherness of God, thus revelation presupposes the analogy of proper proportionality. As a result, Long observes that "the analogy of being is necessarily presupposed by divine revelation, just as the existence of creatures is presupposed by their real relation to God."¹⁷

Revealed likenesses like paternity and filiation cannot be understood according to any analogy of proportion because the divine paternity and filiation are infinite and hence in no way bear any proportion to

analogia entis as an "attempt to 'tie the being of God, man and the world' together." Hemming, "*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*," 119.

¹⁶ Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald Phelan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 257.

¹⁷ Long, *Analogia Entis*, 104.

created paternity and filiation. Likewise, paternity and filiation cannot be attributive analogies because God does not stand in any determined relation to created, participated paternity and filiation. As a result, the analogies offered in revelation are four-term analogies of proper proportionality: as the human father is to his offspring, God is eternally to the eternal Son. In both cases the paternity and filiation are real, but God's paternity and filiation in no way participates in creaturely paternity and filiation.

Summary

Three central movements in Long's work have been highlighted in this all too brief summary: namely, the foundational importance of the analogy of proper proportionality in Aquinas, the role that proper proportionality has in Aquinas's development of Aristotle's response to Parmendeian monism, and finally the use of likenesses by revelation under the presupposition of the analogy of being to communicate knowledge of God.

Analogy and the *Tertia pars*

In the second part of this essay, I attempt to test Long's thesis in light of a few texts from the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae* in which Aquinas sets forth various analogies to explain the Incarnation and the sacraments. These texts are not considered by Long in *Analogia Entis*, nor are they generally discussed, for obvious reasons, in philosophical literature in which analogy is taken up.¹⁸ In these texts Aquinas does not explicitly put forth the analogy of proper proportionality as the analogy of being, but the analogous reasoning that he engages in is highly consistent with Long's contention that causative and participatory conclusions presuppose the foundation of proper proportionality as the analogy of being. Aquinas's doctrinal theology can and should be used as an important measure of the claims of Thomist philosophers about his thinking on

¹⁸ In the first of his formidable three-volume work on analogy, Santiago Ramirez, O.P. has a detailed section on the use of analogy in sacred theology, which includes references and application to Aquinas's theology of the hypostatic union and the sacraments in the *tertia pars*. See Ramirez, *Opera Omnia*, vol. II, *De Analogia* (Madrid: Instituto de Filosofia "Luis Vives," 1972), 1736ff [esp. 792 and 793].

analogy; it is indeed hard to imagine that St. Thomas would abandon or contradict his deepest philosophical sensitivities when seeking to render intelligible the articles of faith.¹⁹

Analogy and the Hypostatic Union

In the very first article of the first question of the *tertia pars*, Thomas considers the fittingness of the Incarnation. Each of the objections opposes the fittingness of the Incarnation on account of some aspect of the perfection of the Divine *esse* such that it would seem unfitting that the Being who is eternal, infinite, uncreated spirit, and incomprehensible unite to itself some being of a lower order. These considerations are not far from the problem of the one and many, which, as we saw above, Thomas solves with the analogy of proper proportionality.

Aquinas roots the fittingness of the Incarnation in the very essence of the divine being itself, offering an analogy to establish his argument. Fittingness, Aquinas explains, is what belongs to each thing by reason of its nature: as reason is fitting to man “because he is of a rational nature,” God by his very nature is goodness.²⁰ “Hence,” Aquinas argues, “what belongs to the essence of goodness befits God. But it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others” and “it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature” and therefore it was fitting for the Word to personally

¹⁹ The examples below from the *tertia pars* are not meant to be exhaustive; many more could be provided. They are offered simply as a sampling of Aquinas’s analogical reasoning in relation to Long’s thesis.

²⁰ Seemingly unawares of the careful qualifications and many analogies that Thomas uses to explain the fittingness—not arbitrariness or absolute nature—of the Incarnation according to the divine goodness, Hemming writes: “Thomas does not resolve his theology of the incarnation or of the sacraments through a doctrine of analogy, and neither should we. He does not do this for a very good reason—he believes that the incarnation is effected by divine fiat—that is to say, because God just chooses it to be that way, rather than because they thereby indicate an already analogical tie between the being of things and the being of God.” See Hemming, “*Analogia non Entis sed Entitatis*,” 120. Yet as early as the *Scriptum* on Lombard’s *Sentences* Aquinas explicitly invokes analogy to explain these very theological realities. “Sacramentum non dividitur per sacramenta veteris et novae legis sicut genus per species,” Aquinas clarifies, “*sed sicut analogum* in suas partes, ut sanum in habens sanitatem, et significans eam” (emphasis added). In *IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 1., s. 3, ad 5.

unite himself to a human nature.²¹ The analogy used here is based on what is fitting in relation to what follows most distinctively from diverse natures: as reason is fitting to rational nature, so too the highest form of self-communication, hypostatic or personal union, is fitting to the divine goodness.

Thomas's teaching on the fittingness of the union between God and man in Christ fits well with Long's thesis insofar as the very *ratio* for the fittingness is rooted in the perfect goodness of the divine *esse*.

The Nature of Christ's Perfections

Aquinas moves logically from the fittingness of the Incarnation to the metaphysical implications of the hypostatic union. In a brief article in the second question, which treats the mode of the union, Thomas establishes a point that is central to Long's argument, namely, that the union of God and man in Christ does not place God in a determined relation to the creature. The *ratio* of this position seems to rely on the division of being into act and potency: the substantial union terminating in an infinite person constitutes the highest possible union without effecting change in God because the term of the union, the Eternal Word, exists in full act. The union, in short, does not activate any potency in the Word because there is no potency in the Word. Speaking of the relation between God and creatures in light of the Incarnation, Aquinas succinctly states that the relation "is not really in God, but only in our way of thinking, since it does not arise from any change in God."²² Because God is *actus purus* the change in the Incarnation is on the part of the created nature because the participation in God on the part of Christ's human nature is a union with a being who is pure act prior to the union.

Aquinas tests this conclusion by the consideration of the special fittingness of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. The spe-

²¹ *Summa theologiae* III, q. 1, a. 1. "Unde quidquid pertinet ad rationem boni, conveniens est Deo. Pertinet autem ad rationem boni ut se aliis communicet, ut patet per Dionysium, IV cap. de Div. Nom. Unde ad rationem summi boni pertinet quod summo modo se creaturae communicet." Translations from the *tertia pars* are taken from volume 4 of *St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologica*, 5 vols., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, cited hereafter as *ST*.

²² *ST* III, q. 2, a. 7: "non autem est realiter in Deo, sed secundum rationem tantum, quia non nascitur secundum mutationem Dei."

cial fittingness of the Incarnation of the Second Person is defended by Aquinas on the analogy of the likeness that exists between a concept in the mind of a craftsman and the work that he produces. "The Person of the Son," Aquinas reasons, "Who is the Word of God, has a certain common agreement with all creatures, because the word of the craftsman . . . is an exemplar likeness of whatever is made by him." This likeness, however, is not participated by the Word, even in the hypostatic union. Aquinas explains this important point as follows:

By the non-participated and personal union of the Word with a creature, it was fitting that the creature should be restored in order to its eternal and unchangeable perfection; for the craftsman by the intelligible form of his art, whereby he fashioned his handiwork, restores it when it has fallen into ruin.²³

This passage is significant because Aquinas posits diverse *rationes* of participatory likenesses of creatures to God, yet the diversity of these likenesses is intelligible only by analogy insofar as the restoration of creaturely friendship with God in Christ is predicated on that fact that Christ enjoys these perfections in a prior, manner according to their full actuality.

Thomas further identifies the Incarnate Word's nonparticipatory primacy by arguing that the comparison of the grace of the union and the grace enjoyed by Christ's members is not reducible to a common genus. Thomas ponders an objection that asserts that since habitual grace is common "to Christ and others" while the grace of union is exclusive to Christ, habitual grace must therefore be prior in thought to Christ's unique grace of union. Yet, in comparing Christ's grace of union to habitual grace, and hence Christ's uniqueness to that which can be commonly predicated, Thomas declares that "the grace of union is not in the same genus as ha-

²³ *ST* III, q. 3, a. 8. "Ipsius autem personae filii, qui est verbum Dei, attenditur, uno quidem modo, communis convenientia ad totam creaturam. Quia verbum artificis, idest conceptus eius, est similitudo exemplaris eorum quae ab artifice fiunt. Unde verbum Dei, quod est aeternus conceptus eius, est similitudo exemplaris totius creaturae . . . ita per unionem verbi ad creaturam non participativam sed personalem, conveniens fuit reparari creaturam in ordine ad aeternam et immobilem perfectionem, nam et artifex per formam artis conceptam qua artificiatum condidit, ipsum, si collapsum fuerit, restaurat."

bitual grace; but is above all genera even as the Divine Person Himself.”²⁴ Thomas contends, therefore, that the hypostatic union of the Son with his human nature is “prior in the order of nature to habitual grace” and that “the habitual grace of Christ is understood to follow this union, as light follows the sun.”²⁵ In this instance, again, Thomas posits grace in a sense that is intrinsically analogical and realized in diverse *rationes*.

Analogy and Christological Naming

Aquinas’s method of Christological naming when appropriating terms or offices that apply to both Christ and others presents a further case that is worthy of exploration in light of Long’s thesis.²⁶ Thomas explores the theological validity of applying biblical offices such as head, priest, and mediator to Christ. An article is devoted to each of these that is framed by an *Utrum sit proprium Christo* question.²⁷ *Proprium*, as Thomas uses it in these cases, is meant to identify whether or not there is something unique, particular, or exclusive to Christ’s standing as head, priest, or mediator. In other words: are Christ’s headship, priesthood, and mediation merely one privileged realization of these offices among many other subordinate realizations, or rather is there something unique and exclusive to Christ’s exercise of these offices?

In each case, Thomas affirms that bishops as heads of churches, Levites, New Testament priests, and so on, share these offices in a fashion that is extrinsic, participatory, and subordinate to Christ’s intrinsic, singular standing as head, priest, and mediator. These offices seem to be attributive, with Christ, as man, standing as the primary analogate. Yet, I wonder in relation to Long’s argument, in what sense attributive analogies like these necessarily presuppose the prior recognition that Christ’s divine perfection and grace of union are fully actual and nonparticipatory such that his standing as the primary analogate in these cases is read or

²⁴ ST III, q. 7, a. 13, ad. 3. “Gratia autem unionis non est in genere gratiae habitualis, sed est super omne genus, sicut et ipsa divina persona.”

²⁵ ST III, q. 7, a. 13. “Unde gratia habitualis Christi intelligitur ut consequens hanc unionem, sicut splendor solem.”

²⁶ For a full treatment of the content and method of Aquinas’s treatment of Christ’s names, see Henk Schoot, *Christ, the ‘Name’ of God: Thomas Aquinas on Naming Christ* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993).

²⁷ See, e.g., the representative articles in ST III, qq. 8, 22, and 26.

translated through his ontological and nonparticipatory uniqueness as the Incarnate Word? Christ's priesthood can be participated in by others, but Christ's own exercise of the office is unique and nonparticipatory. In addition, Thomas treats each of these offices only after treating the mode of the union and Christ's perfections. Christ as man, of course, has a determined relation to creatures, but his standing as unique head, mediator, and priest is derivative of the grace of union, which itself is rooted in the communicability of the divine *esse* as the highest good.

The Instrumentality of Christ's Human Nature and the Sacraments

One of the most frequent and common analogies that Aquinas deploys in the *tertia pars* is the likeness that exists between the integral unity of a (matter-form) composite entity and the unity of motion in a composite action performed by an agent who uses an instrument.²⁸ Thomas first introduces this analogy in the *prima secundae* of the *Summa theologiae* when treating composite human acts. He then extends the analogy to the relation of Christ's human nature and the sacraments to the Word. "A whole is composed of matter and form (e.g. man, who is one natural being, though he has many parts, is composed of soul and body)," Thomas explains,

so, in human acts, the act of a lower power is in the position of matter in regard to the act of a higher power, in so far as the lower power acts in virtue of the higher power moving it: for thus also the act of the first mover is as the form in regard to the act of its instrument. Hence it is evident that command and the commanded act are one human act, just as a whole is one, yet in its parts, many.²⁹

²⁸ On St. Thomas's use of analogy in his sacramental theology, see Ruggero Biagi, *La Causalità dell'umanità di Cristo e dei Sacramenti nella "Summa Theologiae" di S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano 1985), esp. 25–27. For a general treatment of analogy in sacramental theology, see Antonio Miralles, *I Sacramenti Cristiani: Trattato Generale* (Rome: EDUSC, 2008), 117ff.

²⁹ ST I-II, q. 17, a. 4: "aliquid totum componitur ex materia et forma, ut homo ex anima et corpore, qui est unum ens naturale, licet habeat multitudinem partium; ita etiam in actibus humanis, actus inferioris potentiae materialiter se habet ad actum superioris, inquantum inferior potentia agit in virtute superioris moventis ipsam, sic enim et actus moventis primi formaliter se habet ad actum instrumenti. Unde patet quod imperium et actus imperatus sunt unus actus humanus, sicut quoddam totum est unum, sed est secundum partes multa."

This analogy of the unity of matter and form in composite substances and composite human acts serves as a foundation to which Thomas refers many times in the *tertia pars*, each time specifying the unique way in which Christ and the sacraments realize in diverse ways the reality of instrumental efficient causality. For example, in the seventh question of the *tertia pars*, Thomas puts forward an objection arguing that Christ's human nature did not enjoy habitual grace because instruments do not act by way of their own habitual operations, but by the habitual operations of the principal agent.³⁰ To this objection, Thomas affirms the instrumentality of Christ's human nature but qualifies the nature of its instrumentality:

The humanity of Christ is the instrument of the Godhead—not, indeed, an inanimate instrument, which nowise acts, but is merely acted upon; but an instrument animated by a rational soul, which is so acted upon as to act. And hence the nature of the action demanded that he should have habitual grace.³¹

Christ's human nature is a true instrument insofar as it works to produce effects in a unified motion with a higher agent, but it is a unique type of instrument. Aquinas takes up this point several other times in the *tertia pars* to explain how Christ's human nature contributes in the order of efficient causality to his miracles,³² salvation through the passion,³³ and the causal efficiency of the sacraments.³⁴ Thomas explains the inner workings of instrumental efficient causality as follows:

what is moved by another has a twofold action—one which it has from its own form—the other, which it has inasmuch as it is moved by another; thus the operation of an axe of itself is to

³⁰ ST III, q. 7, a. 1, ob. 3.

³¹ ST III, q. 7, a. 1, ad 3: "humanitas Christi est instrumentum divinitatis, non quidem sicut instrumentum inanimatum, quod nullo modo agit sed solum agitur, sed tanquam instrumentum animatum anima rationali, quod ita agit quod etiam agitur. Et ideo, ad convenientiam actionis, oportuit eum habere gratiam habitualement."

³² See ST III, q. 43, a. 2.

³³ See ST III, q. 48, a. 6.

³⁴ See ST III, q. 62, a. 1.

cleave; but inasmuch as it is moved by the craftsman, its operation is to make benches.³⁵

He concludes from this that “in Christ the human nature has its proper form and power whereby it acts”³⁶ as does the divine nature. In the divine plan Christ’s human nature causes salvation by its knowledge and love as the instrument of Word.

Finally, in addition to making an analogy between the unity of a matter-form composite and the motion of a principal agent and instrument, Thomas clarifies that the instrumentality of the sacraments is analogous in relation to the instrumentality of Christ’s human nature. “The instrumental cause works not by the power of its form,” Thomas explains, “but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent . . . And it is thus that the sacraments of the New Law cause grace: for they are instituted by God to be employed for the purpose of [causing] grace.”³⁷ This analogy allows Thomas to trace the causal dependency of the sacraments as causes of grace from the sacramental celebration itself back to Christ’s passion and ultimately to the fullness that he enjoys as a result of the hypostatic union. “An instrument is two-fold,” Thomas argues,

the one, separate, as a stick, for instance; the other, united, as a hand. Moreover, the separate instrument is moved by means of the united instrument, as a stick by the hand. Now the principal efficient cause of grace is God Himself, in comparison with Whom Christ’s humanity is as a united instrument, whereas the

³⁵ *ST III*, q. 19, a. 1: “actio eius quod movetur ab altero, est duplex, una quidem quam habet secundum propriam formam; alia autem quam habet secundum quod movetur ab alio. Sicut securis operatio secundum propriam formam est incisio, secundum autem quod movetur ab artifice, operatio eius est facere scamnum.”

³⁶ *Ibid.* “Sic igitur in Christo humana natura habet propriam formam et virtutem per quam operatur et similiter divina.”

³⁷ *ST III*, q. 62, a. 1. “Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae, sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento, sed principali agenti, sicut lectus non assimilatur securi, sed arti quae est in mente artificis. Et hoc modo sacramenta novae legis gratiam causant, adhibentur enim ex divina ordinatione ad gratiam in eis causandam.”

sacrament is as a separate instrument. Consequently, the saving power must needs be derived by the sacraments from Christ's Godhead through His humanity.³⁸

This demonstrates that the participation of the sacraments in the efficient causation of grace is rooted by St. Thomas in the analogical realization of diverse and subordinate forms of instrumentality, each of which presupposes the unique, fullness of grace enjoyed by the Incarnate Word.

Summary

These examples should not be taken as demonstrations of the analogy of being as such. However, such consistent and developed use of analogical reasoning by St. Thomas in the *tertia pars* evidences his commitment to explain the participation in the life of God through the Incarnation and sacraments in a way that presupposes Long's central claim about Thomas's ongoing commitment to proper proportionality, namely, that proper proportionality safeguards causal and participatory doctrines from the error of placing God in a determined relation to the world.

General Conclusion

To the extent that revealed doctrines such as the Incarnation and the sacraments possess an intelligibility that renders them capable of meaningful speech and thought, such doctrines must avoid internal metaphysical contradiction. In *Analogia Entis*, Steven Long gives the philosopher and the theologian a tool suitably forged for just that task. It is my contention that the metaphysically exacting doctrines the Incarnation and sacramental causality are articulated by St. Thomas in the *tertia pars* in a fashion that presupposes Long's claim about Aquinas's doctrine of

³⁸ ST III, q. 62, a. 5. "Est autem duplex instrumentum, unum quidem separatum, ut baculus; aliud autem coniunctum, ut manus. Per instrumentum autem coniunctum movetur instrumentum separatum, sicut baculus per manum. Principalis autem causa efficiens gratiae est ipse Deus, ad quem comparatur humanitas Christi sicut instrumentum coniunctum, sacramentum autem sicut instrumentum separatum. Et ideo oportet quod virtus salutifera derivetur a divinitate Christi per eius humanitatem in ipsa sacramenta."

the analogy of being. Those of us who work in the various branches of theology owe Long a special debt of gratitude for demonstrating the way in which Thomas's metaphysical doctrine of analogy safeguards the intelligibility of faith and the meaning of revelation. 