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978-0-521-02942-1 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 34 - Charity, (2a2ae. 23-33)

R. J. Batten O.P.

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The *Summa Theologiae* ranks among the greatest documents of the Christian Church, and is a landmark of medieval western thought. It provides the framework for Catholic studies in systematic theology and for a classical Christian philosophy, and is regularly consulted by scholars of all faiths and none, across a range of academic disciplines. This paperback reissue of the classic Latin/English edition first published by the English Dominicans in the 1960s and 1970s, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, has been undertaken in response to regular requests from readers and librarians around the world for the entire series of 61 volumes to be made available again. The original text is unchanged, except for the correction of a small number of typographical errors.

The original aim of this edition was not narrowly ecclesiastical. It sought to make this treasure of the Christian intellectual heritage available to theologians and philosophers of all backgrounds, including those who, without claiming to be believers themselves, appreciate a religious integrity which embodies hardbitten rationalism and who recognise in Thomas Aquinas a master of that perennial philosophy which forms the bedrock of European civilisation. Because of this the editors worked under specific instructions to bear in mind not only the professional theologian, but also the general reader with an interest in the 'reason' in Christianity. The parallel English and Latin texts can be used successfully by anybody with a basic knowledge of Latin, while the presence of the Latin text has allowed the translators a degree of freedom in adapting their English version for modern readers. Each volume contains a glossary of technical terms and is designed to be complete in itself to serve for private study or as a course text.

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SUMMA  
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Latin text and English translation,  
Introductions, Notes, Appendices  
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IN AN AUDIENCE, 13 December 1963, to a group representing the Dominican Editors and the combined Publishers of the New English *Summa*, His Holiness Pope Paul VI warmly welcomed and encouraged their undertaking. A letter from His Eminence Cardinal Cicognani, Cardinal Secretary of State, 6 February 1968, expressed the continued interest of the Holy Father in the progress of the work, 'which does honour to the Dominican Order, and the Publishers, and is to be considered without doubt as greatly contributing to the growth and spread of a genuinely Catholic culture', and communicated his particular Apostolic Blessing. The assurance was repeated in a letter, 5 February 1973, from the present Secretary of State, His Eminence Cardinal Villot.

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VOLUME 34

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(2a2ae. 23-33)

Latin text, English translation,  
Notes, Appendices & Glossary

R. J. BATTEN O.P.

Introduction  
THOMAS GILBY O.P.  
Cambridge

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521393812](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521393812)

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[Excepting Latin text of 'DE CARITATE SECUNDUM SE']

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This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN-13 978-0-521-39381-2 hardback  
ISBN-10 0-521-39381-7 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-02942-1 paperback  
ISBN-10 0-521-02942-2 paperback



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## TEXT AND TRANSLATION

THE TEXT is that of the Leonine; the punctuation has been tidied and paragraphs introduced to ease the discourse. Of the variations found in the Piana, which are never of great moment, a few have been adopted and others noted. The translation seeks to avoid the extremes of transliteration and of readability at the expense of accuracy.

## REFERENCES

Biblical references are to the Vulgate. Patristic references are to **Migne** (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). Abbreviations to St Thomas's works are as follows:

*Summa Theologiae*, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a. 42, 1 and 1. 1a2æ. 114, 8 and 3. 2a2æ. 87, 1 ad 4. 3a. 35, 8 ad 2.

*Summa Contra Gentiles*, CG. Book, chapter; e.g. 3, 53.

*Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum*. Book, distinction, question, article, solution or *quæstiuncula*, reply; e.g. III *Sent.* 25, 2, 3, ii ad 3.

*Compendium Theologiae*, Compend. Theol.

Commentaries on Scripture (*lecturæ, expositiones*): Job, *In Job*; Psalms, *In Psal.*; Isaiah, *In Isa.*; Jeremiah, *In Jerem.*; St Matthew, *In Matt.*; St John, *In Joann.*; *Epistles* of St Paul, e.g. *In 1 Cor.* Chapter, verse, *lectio* as required.

Philosophical Commentaries: On the *Liber de Causis*, *In de causis*. Aristotle; Nicomachean Ethics, *In Ethic.*; *De Cælo et Mundo*, *In De Cæl.*; Physics, *In Physic.*; *De Anima*, *In De anima*; Metaphysics, *In Meta.*; Politics, *In Pol.* Book, chapter, *lectio* of St Thomas as required, also for Expositions on the *De Divinis Nominibus* of the Pseudo-Dionysius, *In De div. nom.* References to Aristotle give the Bekker notation.

*Quæstiones quodlibetales (de quolibet)*, *Quodl.* Main titles are given for other works, including the 10 series of *Quæstiones Disputatæ*.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to Fr Thomas Gilby, O.P. for his patience, and for his help in providing the Introduction and Glossary. Also to Mrs Nita Grinter of Auckland who did the bulk of the typing while managing a large family. And, finally, to my brethren at St Dominic's, Fr L. P. Fitzgerald and Fr F. X. Brown, who lent me their time and talents; Brothers Kevin Toomey and Anthony Vidot who are responsible for the Indices.

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## INTRODUCTION

AFTER THE main sweep of the *Prima Secundæ*, which considers in general terms the movement of man to God, the *Secunda Secundæ* considers the Christian virtues more specifically; the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, to begin with, followed by the four moral virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, together with their various ramifications. The discussions on charity come after those on faith and hope; the present volume contains the first eleven Questions of the treatise on charity, the remaining thirteen will be found in the next volume of this series.<sup>1</sup> On the face of it the division looks like a separation between the positive and negative elements, but turns out to be not so simple as that. While conforming to the author's usual method of taking first a virtue and afterwards its conflicting vices, he never lapses into the prohibitory mood of later more juridical moralists who concentrate on what we should not do, and construct their theologies, more black than white, mainly *De præceptis et peccatis*. There is more than simple offence in sin—the line of the epitaph by Belloc comes to mind, 'His sins were scarlet, but his books were read'—and his interest is engaged less by faults as negative than by the values they betray.<sup>2</sup> So it is in the section on the failures of charity, which, in fact, leaves them to end with the imperatives of loving, and the corresponding Gift of the Spirit.

The treatise, then, is all of a piece, as indeed is the whole *Summa*. Profoundly non-Manichean, it is written from the reasoned conviction, not just the persuasion of an eupeptic temperament, that good is predominant and evil subordinate, and, though polarized in rough-and-ready practical reckoning, the two are not to be equally matched against one another in theory. Man is called to the good, to the *Summum Bonum*, and beyond, for our friendship is invited by God as revealing himself in himself and for himself, not only as the object in which our thoughts and affections about his creatures culminate and are integrated. It is about *agapē*, the highest loving we can be made capable of. Highest? The term is misleading if it suggests a transport out of this world entirely and the exclusion of other and lower loving. The treatise edges charity in the darkness of our present predicament, and, deeper still, shows how it respects and cherishes our very creatureliness. This is in keeping with the metaphysical pluralism St Thomas takes into theology:<sup>3</sup> God is not magnified by lessening other

<sup>1</sup>Vol. 35, 2a2æ. 34–46, ed. T. R. Heath

<sup>2</sup>1a2æ. 71, 72, 75. Vol. 25, ed. J. Fearon

<sup>3</sup>1a. 47, 1 & 2. Vol. 8, ed. T. Gilby, *Introduction*

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things; charity is not lauded as an escape into other-worldliness. The same line is sustained here, and he shows no strain in adopting Aristotelean psychology and ethics, not only to provide a frame of reference, but also to expose the groundwork of this surpassing virtue.

Of course he pays the price, of seeming flat and prosaic by comparison with the pæan in *I Corinthians* 13. Much of his discourse is in effect a tribute of a Christianized rationalism to the truths of faith, a partial translation into the terms proper to scientific method of the way grace works in order to recommend a love that outstrips the measures of right reason. All the same he does not regard this as talking about it from outside, for while he was among the first to define the distinction between the levels of the natural and supernatural,<sup>4</sup> a double-world theory that they are historically quite separate is no part of his doctrine. Grace enters into nature, and charity, as the following pages will show, goes to the depths of our innate capacity for loving and, while taking it to heights beyond philanthropy and romance, safeguards the humanity and 'mateyness' congenial to a social animal. This continuity between grace and nature is essential to the notion of Christian theology, or *sacra doctrina*, as he conceives it.<sup>5</sup> It issues from the acceptance by faith of divine Revelation into the study of the consequences in human thought and affection. While awed and reverent before the mystery, we are not to be too hushed about it, nor to feel that we should speak only in the noblest strains. For in the great sheet descending from heaven with all kinds of things the voice bade Peter call nothing common or unclean.<sup>6</sup> The *Summa* mixes easily with high and low; like a Mahler symphony with its rustic dance, it is not consistently elevated.

So it is in the present treatise on *agapē*. The introduction of considerations about psychological abilities and disposition is not abrupt or violent, nor are those about the teleology of means and ends, about ineradicable self-love, about sheer liking which is not a matter of dutiful esteem, about what we should do with our surplus cash, and about when we should bear with fools gladly. Yet all the time it recognizes that it is dealing with a theological virtue, not a moral virtue, and that its activity is to cleave to God who reveals himself and who transcends all meanings we can discover in the universe, not just to keep the mean of virtue and live according to right reason, *recta ratio*, *orthos logos*. Charity is not at heart an ethical topic strictly speaking. For the proper field of moral theory as part of philosophy is that cultivated clearing made by reason, deliberation and choice, surrounded by dark jungle and intermittently lit by a light beyond reason

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<sup>4</sup>Vol. 1, ed. T. Gilby, Appendix 8

<sup>5</sup>op cit, Appendices 5, 6 & 7

<sup>6</sup>*Acts* 10, 15. cf *1a. 1, 9 ad 3*



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from over the hills and far away.<sup>7</sup> As part of theology it draws on that mystery, nevertheless its explanations are still couched in terms of reasonableness for all its responsiveness to metaphor and symbol.<sup>8</sup> Charity, however, outstrips the reasonable and is ruled by law only in a figurative sense; it is post-moral, post-legal, it is the *plerōma nomou*.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly systematic moral theology lays hold only on the skirts of the virtue. The *Secunda Pars*, which is conventionally regarded as the moral part of the *Summa*, though there is nothing there approaching the later *apartheid* of 'dogmatics' and 'morals', appreciates that the theological virtues, and charity in particular, range out of the human scene as composed by the moral virtues, of practical wisdom or prudence, of justice, including religion or the due service of God, and of fortitude and temperance which preserve human poise amid fears and pleasures. Yet at once any suggestion of an unearthliness strange to St Thomas's thought should be corrected. The theological virtues range out, but they return by overflowing, *per quamdam redundantiam*, into the conditions of human living here and now. Charity is justifiably isolated as an abstraction by systematic theology, but in the concrete it comes back to the shared life of persons, and the human persons concerned are single substances acting through a complex of knowing and loving.

There charity is embodied, and from there this treatise starts. It refines the meaning of being utterly in love with God because of himself, not merely his effects, but this is not the pure love of God such as was propounded by some spiritual writers in the backwash of Quietism, a completely disinterested affection prepared to acquiesce even in the prospect of eternal loss. Whereas to St Thomas the communication of and sharing in God's own happiness is the very foundation of charity. He stands, in doctrine rather than manners, with Bossuet rather than Fénelon; neither, however, really catch his thought: perhaps he would have seen the point of Innocent XII's remark, 'At Cambrai they love God too much, and at Meaux men too little.' He does not think that the best is the enemy of the good, or that loving God with your whole heart means loving him alone. Nor is charity itself apart, for it quickens all manner of other rightful affections.<sup>10</sup> *Let all that you do be done in charity.*<sup>11</sup>

The opening article strikes this note.<sup>12</sup> Charity is more than the loving of the good-for-you, and more than loving the good for another; it is a loving

<sup>7</sup>Vol. 18, ed. T. Gilby, Appendices 3, 5 & 6

<sup>8</sup>Ia. 1, 8 & 9

<sup>9</sup>Romans 13, 10. cf 1a2ae. 91, 5. Ia. 106-8, Vol. 30, ed. C. Ernst

<sup>10</sup>2a2ae. 23, 8

<sup>11</sup>1 Corinthians 16, 14

<sup>12</sup>2a2ae. 23, 1

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shared by you and another of such sort that the terms ‘egoism’ and ‘altruism’ are irrelevant. It is the whole-hearted love of God, but is no more self-denying at the deepest level than the object in the union of knowledge and love spells diminishment for the subject. The next article sustains the note:<sup>13</sup> charity is *ours*. St Thomas’s doctrine of grace allows no depreciation of human freedom; the activity of charity is not jerked out of us by preternatural agency, and, while lifted beyond the reach of our unaided powers, is natural in its manner. And later articles take ‘natural’ to cover the unpretentious vernacular sense of the term, as when we say, ‘It’s only natural.’ The thought is humble, yet hardy: charity includes loving ourselves, body and all;<sup>14</sup> it responds to the situation in which God’s particular Providence places us, and, modulated by human factors of kinship and liking, is more intense for *conjunctiores* than *meliores*.<sup>15</sup> We may feel that the priorities here are rather doggedly sorted out, but even that witnesses to a concern to compact charity with our ordinary lives. It is a cherishing love;<sup>16</sup> its qualities of joy,<sup>17</sup> peace,<sup>18</sup> and compassion,<sup>19</sup> which are its consequences, are plainly recognizable and admirable, as are loving kindness,<sup>20</sup> bountifulness to those in need,<sup>21</sup> and, ticklish to give and receive, helpful correction.<sup>22</sup> The treatise offers no instruction about esoteric loving, no initiation into purely spiritual techniques. We are to love God totally, but not exclusively. *How can he who does not love his brother, whom he sees, love God whom he does not see?*<sup>23</sup>

<sup>13</sup>23, 2<sup>14</sup>23, 4 & 5; 26, 3 & 4<sup>15</sup>26, 7<sup>16</sup>27, 2<sup>17</sup>28, 1<sup>18</sup>29, 3<sup>19</sup>30, 2<sup>20</sup>31, 1<sup>21</sup>32, 1<sup>22</sup>33, 1<sup>23</sup>1 *John* 4, 20