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978-0-521-02949-0 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 41 - Virtues of Justice in the Human Community, (2a2ae. 101-122)

T. C. O'Brien

Excerpt

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 101, 1

DEINDE, POST RELIGIONEM, considerandum est de pietate. Cujus opposita vitia ex ipsius consideratione innotescunt.

Quaestio 101. de pietate

Circa pietatem ergo quaeruntur quatuor:

1. ad quos pietas se extendat;
2. quid per pietatem aliquibus exhibeatur;
3. utrum pietas sit specialis virtus;
4. utrum religionis obtentu sit pietatis officium praetermittendum.

*articulus 1. utrum pietas se extendat ad determinatas personas
aliquorum hominum*

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod pietas non se extendat ad determinatas personas aliquorum hominum. Dicit enim Augustinus quod *pietas proprie Dei cultus intelligi solet, quam Graeci eusebiam vocant.*² Sed Dei cultus non dicitur per comparisonem ad homines, sed solum ad Deum. Ergo pietas non se extendit determinate ad aliquas hominum personas.

2. Praeterea, Gregorius dicit, *Pietas in die suo convivium exhibet, quia cordis viscera misericordiae operibus replet.*³ Sed opera misericordiae sunt omnibus exhibenda, ut patet per Augustinum.⁴ Ergo pietas non se extendit determinate ad aliquas speciales personas.

¹cf *In I Tim.* 4, lect. 2

²*De civ. Dei* x, 1. PL 41, 279

³*Moral.* 1, 32, PL 75, 547. In matters concerning the spiritual life, this work of St Gregory the Great (c. 540–604), Pope and last of the great Latin Fathers, was a primary source in the Middle Ages. The work is an exposition of the Book of Job, with emphasis on the moral sense of the text; the full title, *Moralium Libri, sive Expositio in Librum B. Job, Libri XXXV.*

⁴*De doctr. christ.* 1, 30. PL 34, 31

⁵The Latin *pietas*, as this Question shows, designates many different, though allied, moral attitudes; one constant connoted by the term is the 'sacredness' of these attitudes. All attempts at translating *pietas* by one adequate and restrictive English word—e.g. dutifulness, reverence, devotion, loyalty—prove unsatisfactory. Consult the Oxford (1933) and Webster (1959) dictionaries on the choice of 'piety'. Still there remains some dissatisfaction with the term, because we do not ordinarily think of the relationship to parents and to country as the one kind of moral response (perhaps the affinity of filial piety with charity explains why, cf 2a2ae. 26, 7). We have to allow 'piety' to be given the meaning it had for the Romans by letting

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NEXT, AFTER RELIGION, we must move on to look at the virtue of piety,^a an investigation which will also point up the vices against it.^b

Question 101. piety

Regarding piety there are four points of inquiry:

1. its range;
2. its marks;
3. its distinctness;
4. the problem of precedence between the service of God and duties in piety.

article 1. whether piety is directed towards certain people^c

THE FIRST POINT:¹ 1. The range of piety does not seem to be a particular class of people. For Augustine observes that '*pietas*', in Greek '*eusebeia*', is usually taken in its strict sense to mean the worship of God.² The 'worship of God', however, refers to acts offered not to human beings, but to God alone. So the special reference of '*pietas*' is not to human beings at all.

2. Further, Gregory states that '*pietas*' has its days of feasting, for it fills the heart's desires with works of mercy.³ Works of mercy, as Augustine points out,⁴ are to be shown to all. The reach of piety is, therefore, not to be narrowed down to special individuals.

this Question explain the term. In Roman use *pietas* connoted the attitude towards intimates, family, *deos parentes*, as contrasted with *fidelitas*, the attitude towards outsiders. Cicero especially extended its meaning to include the cult of fatherland; cf *De Inventione* 22 & 66. Macrobius, *In Somnum Scipionis* 3, exemplifies the Roman usage, *justitiam cole, et pietatem, quæ cum sit magna in parentibus et propinquis, tum in patria maxima est*. Remember, too, that a whole new meaning is given *pietas* as it is used to designate one of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; cf 121, 1 ad 1 & 3. ^bcf 222æ. Prologue; part of the doctrinal order is to consider sins and vices by contrast with the virtues they oppose.

^cOne reason for the clumsy *ad determinatas personas aliquorum hominum* is to stress piety as a part of justice. The phrase even may allow for the personification of *patria* clearly involved in piety as patriotism. 122æ. 60, 3 states that the meaning and variations of justice are found on the meaning and variations in debt or indebtedness, which is the exact match, the determinate order or commensurate adjustment of certain objects or actions to other persons. Art. 1, then, establishes the existence of a particular interpersonal relationship; art. 2 spells out the form of indebtedness; art. 3 shows consequently that piety is a specific virtue; art. 4 merely deals with a possible moral dilemma.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 101, 1

3. Præterea, multæ sunt aliæ in humanis rebus communicationes præter consanguineorum* et concivium communicationem, ut patet per Philosophum,⁵ et super quamlibet earum aliqua amicitia fundatur, quæ videtur esse pietatis virtus, ut dicit glossa⁶ ad *Tim.*, super illud, *Habentes quidem speciem pietatis.*⁷ Ergo non solum ad consanguineos et concives pietas se extendit.

SED CONTRA est quod Tullius dicit, quod *pietas est per quam sanguine junctis, patriæque benevolis officium et diligens tributur cultus.*⁸

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod homo efficitur diversimode aliis debitor, secundum eorum diversam excellentiam et diversa beneficia ab eis suscepta. In utroque autem Deus summum obtinet locum; qui et excellentissimus est, et est nobis essendi et gubernationis primum principium; secundario vero nostri esse et gubernationis principia sunt parentes et patria, a quibus et in qua nati et nutriti sumus. Et ideo post Deum est homo maxime debitor parentibus et patriæ.

Unde sicut ad religionem pertinet cultum Deo exhibere, ita secundario gradu ad pietatem pertinet exhibere cultum parentibus et patriæ.

In cultu autem parentum includitur cultus omnium consanguineorum, quia etiam consanguinei ex hoc dicuntur, quod ex eisdem parentibus processerunt, ut patet per Philosophum.⁹ In cultu autem patriæ intelligitur

*We follow the Piana reading here; the Leonine has *consanguinitatem*, consanguinity.
⁵*Ethics* VIII, 11. 1161a10; 12. 1161b11. St Thomas regularly refers to Aristotle as the Philosopher. The *Ethics* refers to the *Nicomachean Ethics*; rarely in the *Summa* does St Thomas cite the *Eudemian Ethics* (e.g. 1a2ae. 9, 4).

⁶*Glossa interlinearis*. In this series the *Glossa ordinaria* is referred to as *the Gloss*, others as a gloss. Among the biblical glosses cited by St Thomas, the *Glossa ordinaria* and the *Glossa interlinearis* are both attributed in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (113) to Walafridus Strabo (+849); but only some elements are traceable to him; in their finished form both are from the school of Anselm of Laon (+1117). Other citations can be traced to the *Glossa Lombardi*, i.e. of Peter Lombard (+1160). See Smalley, B., 'La Glossa ordinaria' in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 9 (1937) 365-400; de Blic, J. 'L'Œuvre exégétique de Walafrid Strabon et La Glossa ordinaria', *ibid* 16 (1949), 5-28.

⁷II *Timothy* 3, 5

⁸*Rhetorica* (or *De inventione oratoria*) II, 53. Many elements of the Stoic moral philosophy of Cicero (Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43 B.C.) were taken over by Christian writers, e.g. the *De officiis* of St Ambrose. The citation here is one of the primary loci on which St Thomas relies in the present treatise (see 2a2ae. 80) both for the enumeration of the virtues and the ideal of upright social living.

⁹*Ethics* VIII, 12. 1161b29

¹⁰on *amicitia* cf 2a2ae. 114, 1 & ad 1. The term had a much broader application than 'friendship' does in English.

¹¹The Vulgate here has *speciem pietatis*; the translation here is the Douay; the

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3. Further, as Aristotle notes,⁵ in human affairs there are many relationships other than those between blood relatives or fellow countrymen, each of them being the basis of some form of friendship.^d And a gloss⁶ on II *Timothy*—*having an appearance of godliness*⁷ (*pietatis*)^e—seems to identify friendship with piety. The range of piety, therefore, is wider at least than relatives and compatriots.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Cicero maintains, *This is pietas: to fulfil one's duty and conscientious service towards our own flesh and blood and those having the interests of our country at heart.*⁸

REPLY: Indebtedness to others arises in a variety of ways matching their own superiority and the diverse benefits received from them.^f On both counts God holds first place; he is both absolutely supreme and the first source of our existence and progress through life.^g Next, on the basis of birth and upbringing, parents and country are the closest sources of our existence and development; as a consequence everyone is indebted first of all under God to his parents and his fatherland.

Therefore, as it is for the virtue of religion to pay homage to God,^h so on the next level, it is up to piety to render its own kind of homage to parents and country.

Note that in its meaning homage to parents extends to blood relatives as well, i.e. to those so called because, as Aristotle notes,⁹ they share our

Confraternity, *having a semblance indeed of piety*. The Greek term used by St Paul, *eusebeias*, doubtless has little to do with the virtue being discussed in this Question.

^fIt will be seen that this is a theme running through the Questions on the virtues of reverence: the two bases for this kind of indebtedness are the intrinsic worth of those to whom we are so indebted (cf 106, 1) and their actual benefactions in our regard.

^g'progress through life' for *gubernatio*; in 102, 2 we read, *Gubernare autem est movere aliquos ad debitum finem*, to govern is to conduct people to an appropriate end. Here *gubernatio* has a passive connotation.

^h'homage' for *cultus*, a term which, along with *colere*, runs throughout these questions. A minimal sense of the term as 'taking care' is given in 81, 1 ad 4 (cf also CG III, 119), but in progressive use *cultus* stands for the form of indebtedness arising from the superiority of others over us and their benefactions towards us. The term is nuanced accordingly; there is a *cultus* owed to God, one of supreme reverence (*latria*) and absolute subjection (*servitus*) (cf 81, 3 ad 2); to parents we owe a *cultus* of reverence and service (*obsequium*), which includes obedience (cf 101, 2); to those who have any distinctive excellence we owe the *cultus* of giving them honour; when they are authorities having power to command, the *cultus* also includes obedience (cf 102, 2). Gratefulness is a special case; its *cultus* does not have the strict sense of indebtedness, but is the response appropriate to graciousness. Cf art. 2; 102, 2. *De Trin.* I, 1, 2. CG III, 119.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 101, 2

cultus omnium concivium, et omnium patriæ amicorum. Et ideo ad hoc pietas principaliter se extendit.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod in majori includitur minus. Et ideo cultus qui Deo debetur, includit in se, sicut aliquid particulare, cultum qui debetur parentibus: unde dicitur *Malach.*,¹⁰ *Si ego pater, ubi est honor meus?* Et ideo nomen pietatis etiam ad divinum cultum refertur.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod, sicut Augustinus dicit, *more vulgi nomen pietatis etiam in operibus misericordiae frequentatur: quod ideo arbitror evenisse, quia hæc fieri præcipue mandat Deus quæ sibi præ sacrificiis placere testatur; ex qua consuetudine factum est ut Deus ipse pius dicatur.*¹¹

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod communicationes consanguineorum et concivium magis referuntur ad principia nostri esse quam aliæ communicationes; et ideo ad has nomen pietatis magis extenditur.

articulus 2. utrum pietas exhibeat parentibus sustentationem

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod pietas non exhibeat parentibus sustentationem. Ad pietatem enim videtur pertinere illud præceptum Decalogi, *Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam.*² Sed ibi non præcipitur nisi honoris exhibitio. Ergo ad pietatem non pertinet sustentationem parentibus exhibere.

2. Præterea, illis homo debet thesaurizare quos tenetur sustentare. Sed secundum Apostolum, ut habetur *II ad Cor.*, *filiis non debent thesaurizare parentibus.*³ Ergo non tenetur eos per pietatem sustentare.

3. Præterea, pietas non solum extendit se ad parentes, sed etiam ad alios consanguineos et concives, ut dictum est.⁴ Sed non tenetur aliquis omnes consanguineos et concives sustentare. Ergo nec etiam tenetur ad sustentationem parentum.

SED CONTRA est quod Dominus *Matt.* redarguit Pharisæos quod impediabant filios ne parentibus sustentationem exhiberent.⁵

¹⁰*Malachy* 1, 6¹¹*De civ. Dei* x, 1. PL 41, 279¹*In II Cor.* 12, lect. 5. *In Ethic.* IX, lect. 2. *De duobus præceptis caritatis*²*Exodus* 20, 12³*II Corinthians* 12, 14⁴art 1⁵*Matthew* 15, 3

¹The basis for the special indebtedness, the *cultus*, here is given, namely that we are born and exist in dependence on certain paternal or parental sources of our whole being. These rank after God, participants in his own divine causality over us (cf Ia. 103, 4 & 6). In 102, 1 & 103, 3 St Thomas will indicate that the hierarchy of virtues of homage matches the hierarchy of beneficent causes over us, from God on down; all of them attend to a duty that is thereby sacred. Here the conclusion shows that the full scope of piety is parents, kin, country and fellow-citizens 122, 5 ad 2 indicates that homage towards parents comes first, because it is by being born of these parents that we share in the benefits of homeland. Indebtedness to relatives is based on blood; it is honouring 'family' as the source of what we are;

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lineage; and homage towards country includes what we should show to all fellow citizens and well-wishers. This is the full range of piety.¹

Hence: 1. The greater takes in the less; thus the kind of homage owed to God already embraces as but a partial form of itself the kind owed to parents—thus *Malachi*, *If then I be a father where is my honour?*¹⁰ This is the explanation of the use of *pietas* to refer to homage towards God.¹

2. Augustine observes, *In ordinary speech you hear the term 'pietas' in connection with acts of mercy. This, I feel, happens because God has stressed the obligation to perform them, and even given utterance to a preference for them over sacrifice. Even the usage of calling God himself 'pious' has this practical origin.*¹¹

3. Ties of blood and native origin have a more direct bearing upon the sources of our existence and development than do other human relationships; this is why the term 'piety' has a more apposite application here.

article 2. whether piety entails supporting parents

THE SECOND POINT:¹ 1. Apparently piety does not include the support of parents. One of the Ten Commandments—*Honour thy father and thy mother*²—has reference to piety and simply enjoins showing them honour. Therefore this virtue has nothing to do with supporting parents.

2. Further, a duty to support someone includes the duty to put aside savings for them. Yet *neither ought the children to lay up for the parents.*³ Nor, then, does piety entail an obligation to support them.

3. Further, piety extends not only to parents, but to relatives and countrymen as well,⁴ and surely no one has to support all of these. Neither, then, must parents be supported.

ON THE OTHER HAND our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for preventing children from providing for their parents.⁵

the degree of indebtedness is gradated with the degree of consanguinity (cf *In Ethic.* VIII, *lect.* 12). Similarly what we owe our fellow-citizens is based on their sharing with us one soil, one cultural heritage. Piety, both as filial and as patriotic, is a virtue based on blood, bone, soil, but also upon all the benefits, spiritual, material, cultural, moral, that go to make up the kind of human existence we have by being born into this family, this native land; cf art. 3 the expression *principium commaturale*. Hence patriotism is not 'political'; nor is it the same as legal justice, this being a concern for the public good, the actual order in civil society; cf art. 3 ad 3. The article suggests further that wherever we are dependent for a whole side of our life, piety has place. Thus for the Christian, towards the Church, wherein he receives existence as a new creature in grace; for a religious, towards his Order and its founder, sources of a special kind of existence within the Church (cf 2a2ae. 183, 2).

¹cf 2a2ae. 81, 1 ad 2.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2æ. 101, 3

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod parentibus et concivibus aliquid debetur dupliciter: uno modo per se; alio modo per accidens. Per se quidem debetur eis id quod decet patrem, inquantum pater est: qui cum sit superior, quasi principium filii existens, debetur ei a filio reverentia et obsequium.

Per accidens autem aliquid debetur patri, quod decet eum accipere secundum aliquid quod ei accidit; puta si sit infirmus, quod visitetur et ejus curationi intendatur; si sit pauper, quod sustentetur, et sic de aliis hujusmodi, quæ omnia sub debito obsequio continentur. Et ideo Tullius dicit quod pietas exhibet et officium et cultum ut officium referatur ad obsequium, cultus vero ad reverentiam sive honorem.⁶ Quia, ut dicit Augustinus, *dicimur colere homines, quos honorifica vel recordatione vel præsentia frequentamus.*⁷

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod in honoratione parentum intelligitur omnis subventio quæ debet parentibus exhiberi, ut Dominus interpretatur, *Matt.*,⁸ et hoc ideo quia subventio fit patri ex debito, tanquam majori.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod quia pater habet rationem principii, filius autem habet rationem a principio existentis, ideo per se patri convenit ut subveniat filio; et propter hoc non solum ad horam debet ei subvenire sed ad totam suam vitam, quod est thesaurizare. Sed quod filius aliquid conferat patri, hoc est per accidens ratione alicujus necessitatis instantis, in qua tenetur ei subvenire, non autem thesaurizare quasi in longinquum, quia naturaliter non parentes filiorum, sed filii parentum sunt successores.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod cultus et officium, ut Tullius dicit, *debetur omnibus sanguine junctis et patriæ benevolis*,⁹ non tamen æqualiter omnibus, sed præcipue parentibus, aliis autem secundum propriam facultatem et decentiam personarum.

articulus 3. utrum pietas sit specialis virtus ab aliis distincta

AD TERTIUM sic proceditur: 1. Videtur quod pietas non sit specialis virtus ab aliis distincta. Exhibere enim obsequium et cultum aliquibus ex amore

⁶*Rhetorica* II, 53⁷*De civ. Dei* X, 1. PL 41, 278⁸*Matthew* 15, 3⁹*Rhetorica* II, 53

^a*per se* and *per accidens* have varying meanings (cf *In Poster.* I, *lect.* 10); it is helpful to try to vary the translation to express the proper meaning. The ad 2 makes explicit what *per se* means in the present instance.

^bThroughout where the text has simply *pater* we translate 'parents', because what is said of the father applies to both parents. Fatherhood was, of course, for St Thomas the nobler causal influence; cf 2a2æ. 26, 10.

^cThe homage (*cultus*) owed in piety to parents as such includes in higher form all the expressions of deference shown to any particular superior or benefactor, because the beneficence of parents touches the whole of human existence. Thus their

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REPLY: The grounds for obligation towards parents are two, those arising from the very nature of the case, and those from special circumstances.^a Because they are who they are, parents^b have a right to everything that goes with the status of parenthood, namely the respect and deference owed by a son to those who, as sources of life, are above him.^c

In special contingencies parents also have a right to whatever plain decency shows to be suited to their situation—in sickness to be visited, in poverty to be helped out, etc.^d In truth all such acts are implicit in the obligation of being a dutiful son.^e This is why Cicero declares that piety shows itself in *duty* and *homage*, 'duty' standing for deeds of service and 'homage' for respect or honour.^f Augustine states that *we are said to pay homage (colere) to those whom we cherish by doing honour either to their memory or their company*.⁷

Hence: 1. Take honouring parents as our Lord interprets it,⁸ i.e. for every sort of assistance that is their due. The reason is that rendering assistance towards parents is a debt owed to those over us.

2. To be a parent means to be a source of life; to be a child, to be the recipient of life. Normally, then, it is for parents to make provision for the child, and not only for immediate needs, but also for setting him up in life; hence St Paul speaks of them *laying up*. When a child does give aid to parents, it is an exceptional case, brought on by some besetting need. Even so, the obligation is to support, not to provide a nest-egg; nature indicates not that parents are heirs of the children, but children of the parents.

3. As Cicero states, respect and dutifulness are due to all *related to us by blood or common allegiance*;⁹ but this does not apply to all in equal measure. Rather parents come first, then others, depending on our own resources and the claims of their ties to us.

article 3. whether piety is a specific virtue, distinct from the rest

THE THIRD POINT: 1. It seems that there is no special virtue of piety, distinct from other virtues. It is love that prompts us to offer service and

due is a unique respect (*reverentia*), surpassing that of the virtue of respectfulness (*observantia*; cf 102); the deference (*obsequium*) owed them includes obedience (cf 102, 2).

^aUnderstand this contingent indebtedness as applying also to the spiritual indigence of parents, when namely they are in a condition of moral deterioration. To make 'exact' rules about the obligation to support parents (or even blood relatives—cf ad 3) we can apply those given in 2a2æ. 32, 5, but with greater strictness, i.e. at greater cost to the donor, because of the blood-ties. In the United States, many states have civil, not however criminal, laws urging the obligation of children to indigent parents.

^eAnd also of a loyal citizen: i.e. apply these points to the duties of patriotism, in the case, e.g., of the native son in a developing country.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 101, 3

procedit. Sed hoc pertinet ad pietatem. Ergo pietas non est virtus a caritate distincta.

2. Præterea, cultum Deo exhibere est proprium religionis. Sed etiam pietas exhibet cultum Deo, ut dicit Augustinus.¹ Ergo pietas non distinguitur a religione.

3. Præterea, pietas quæ exhibet cultum et officium patriæ, videtur esse idem cum iustitia legali, quæ respicit bonum commune. Sed iustitia legalis est virtus generalis, ut patet per Philosophum.² Ergo pietas non est virtus specialis.

SED CONTRA est quod ponitur a Tullio pars iustitiæ.³

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod aliqua virtus specialis est ex hoc quod respicit aliquod objectum secundum aliquam specialem rationem. Cum autem ad rationem iustitiæ pertineat quod debitum alii reddat, ubi invenitur specialis ratio debiti alicui personæ, ibi est specialis virtus. Debetur autem aliquid alicui specialiter, quia est connaturale principium producens in esse et gubernans. Hoc autem principium respicit pietas, inquantum parentibus et patriæ, et his qui ad hæc ordinantur, officium et cultum impendit. Et ideo pietas est specialis virtus.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod sicut religio est quædam protestatio fidei, spei et caritatis, quibus homo primordialiter ordinatur in Deum, ita etiam pietas est quædam protestatio caritatis, quam quis habet ad parentes et ad patriam.

¹*De civ. Dei* x, 1. PL 41, 279

²*Ethics* v, 1, 1129b29; 1130a9; 2, 1130b18

³*Rhet.* II, 53

^a'Legal' also called 'general' justice is explained in 1a2ae. 60, 3 ad 2 & 2a2ae. 58, 5-7.

^b'public good' for *bonum commune*. The Latin phrase is employed in many senses: 1. in the abstract for goodness in general—the objective of the will—as a substitute for *communis ratio boni* or *bonum in communi*, cf. 1a. 82, 4. 1a2ae. 1, 6; 9, 1; 10, 1; 2. for the collective good of a group, e.g. as here of a civil society, cf loc. cit. note a; 3. for the divine good as source and goal of all good, cf 1a. 60, 5; 103, 2; 1a2ae. 109, 3. Cf also 1a. 8, 2. *In Meta.* XII, lect. 12. *CG* III, 17.

^c2a2ae. 58, 5 & 6 should be read here for the meaning of 'general virtue'; cf also 1a2ae. 61, 3. Briefly, a 'general virtue', while specific in the way described here in the Reply, has as objective a broader end for human activity and so the virtue directs (commands, *imperat*) other virtues towards this broader end, e.g. charity towards the love of God; religion, towards God's service; legal justice, towards the welfare of the community; cf 2a2ae. 23, 4 ad 2 & 3; 81, 4 ad 1; 127, 4.

^d'objective' for *objectum*. Here a basic point in St Thomas's teaching on acts, powers and habits is reiterated. These are all 'specified', i.e. receive their determinate nature, through the causal influence of their objective, i.e. that to which they respond. An act, and through it a power or habit, terminates in a certain reality,

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homage to others, both works of piety. Piety is not therefore a virtue differing from charity.

2. Further, homage to God is the concern of the virtue of religion, and since, as Augustine asserts,¹ piety offers homage to God, it does not differ from religion.

3. Further, piety understood as patriotism seems identical with legal justice,^a the bearing of which is towards the public good.^b Aristotle has shown that this type of justice is a general virtue.² Piety, then, cannot be a specific one.^c

ON THE OTHER HAND Cicero classifies piety as a part of justice.³

REPLY: What makes any virtue to be specific is that its relationship to its objective is based on some specific moral value in the objective.^d Since honouring a debt towards someone else is a function of justice generally, a specific kind of justice arises wherever there is a specific basis for indebtedness to any person.^e This is the case in regard to anyone who, in the natural course of things, is a source of our life and its development. In rendering its service and homage piety is the response towards those sources—parents, homeland and those related to either one. Consequently, it is a special virtue.

Hence: 1. Just as religion bears witness as it were to faith, hope and charity, which are fundamental in a person's relationship to God, so also piety gives expression to the love we have for parents and country.^f

called the *objectum materiale* because of some special value or interest, the *formalis ratio objecti*, in the thing; it is this that specifies the act, power or habit. When the *formalis ratio objecti* is a psychological value, i.e. cognitional or appetitive, it differentiates the knowing or appetitive acts, powers or habits. In the objectives of a human act, there is also a moral value—*ratio boni humani*—i.e. some feature that calls for a specific kind of human response from the will, the appetites or the moral habits modifying these. All this obviously implies an 'objective' morality, so often rejected currently. In St Thomas's complete view, however, the actual living of the moral life is highly 'subjective', in the sense, namely, that it is by a personal, concrete moral perception, decision and intention that each man assesses and confronts objective moral values. (See 1a2æ. 63, 4; Vol. 18 of this series, Appendixes 11-15.) A person's acts, powers, virtues, vices 'get specified' because with all his individual energies he becomes involved, and therefore morally involved, with the people and things of his experience.

^acf 1a2æ. 60, 3

¹2a2æ. 19, 2 ad 3 points out that charity is a union of love between children and parents; we may add also here, among fellow-citizens (fatherland cannot be personalized to the extent that we can have charity towards it). In both cases the natural ties mark a preference of intensity in charity (cf 2a2æ. 26, 7-11, especially 8;

(footnote f continued on page 12.)