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978-0-521-02955-1 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 47 - The Pastoral and Religious Lives, (2a2ae. 183-189)

Jordan Aumann 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, expresses 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 communicates his particular Apostolic Blessing.

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THE TRANSLATION was made from the critical edition of the Leonine text, published by Editiones Paulinæ at Rome in 1962: the Piana text, published by the Canadian Dominicans at Ottawa, was also consulted, especially in regard to the sources. It is as close as possible to the original Latin without being a transliteration. Explanatory footnotes have been added wherever the text warrants and a glossary of terms has been provided.

FOOTNOTES

Those signified by a superior number are the references given by St Thomas or supplied by the Leonine Commission or the Canadian editors of the Piana edition. Those signified alphabetically are editorial references or explanatory notes supplied by the translator.

REFERENCES

Biblical references are to the Vulgate; English translations from the Jerusalem Bible or the Douay. Patristic references are to Migne (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). Abbreviations of St Thomas's works are as follows:

Summa Theologiæ, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a. 3, 2 ad 3. 1a2æ. 17, 6. 2a2æ. 180 10. 3a, 35, 8.

Summa Contra Gentiles, CG. Book, chapter; e.g. CG1, 28.

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

Compendium Theologiæ, *Compend. Theol.*

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

Philosophical commentaries: On the *Liber de Causis*, *In De causis*. Aristotle: *Peri Hermeneias*, *In Periherm.*; *Posterior Analytics*, *In Poster.*; *Physics*, *In Physic.*; *De Cælo et Mundo*, *In De Cæl.*; *De Generatione et*

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Quæstiones quodlibetales (de quolibet), *Quodl.*

Main titles are given in full for other works, including the 10 series of *Quæstiones Disputatæ*.

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THROUGHOUT THE *Secunda Pars* St Thomas has been expounding the general principles of moral theology (1a2æ) and the life of grace, the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit so far as they apply to Christians in general (2a2æ. 1-170). He then turns his attention to those factors which differentiate Christians from one another in the Mystical Body of the Church, according to the statement of St Paul, *Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord* (1 Cor. 12, 4-5). Accordingly, he discusses charismatic gifts (171-8), the active and contemplative life-styles (179-82), and the various states of perfect Christians (183-9). His moral theology describes man's return to God by means of the human activities elevated by divine grace: this volume contains the concluding treatise.

He begins his investigation of the states of perfection by a definition of terms. In every visible society (and the Church is such) there are diversified *functions* which serve as the basis for a classification of *offices* and of ranks or *grades*. He notes that the offices or rank that derive from functions or ministries should preserve the quality of service to others, since 'offices are properly distinguished by activities directed to others' (183, 3 ad 2). Yet, not all offices suffice to constitute a 'state of life' or the 'state of perfection'. In accordance with Roman Law, a 'state' requires permanency or stability arising from some kind of bond or contract. Consequently, we may speak of a 'state of life' in the Church wherever there is a permanent or stable commitment by reason of a bond or obligation assumed; e.g., marriage, religious life, priesthood, episcopate, etc.

At first glance it may seem that the author is capricious in the selection of 'states' he picks for discussion. He is selective, of course, as is evident from the fact that after defining his terms in q. 183 he states in the introduction to q. 184 that he will consider 'those things which pertain to the state of perfection'. For the study of offices, he refers the reader to the jurists; for the questions pertaining to the sacred ministry, he promises to take them up in the *Tertia Pars* where he also treats of the sacrament of matrimony.

However, even allowing for his exclusive concern for the 'state of perfection', his treatment appears, from our contemporary viewpoint, incomplete and arbitrary. He restricts the state of perfection to bishops and religious, making no allowance for priests, married persons, or those living under vows in secular institutes or in the world. Moreover, there are numerous other questions concerning function, office, and state which are ignored completely; thus, to mention a few, the rôle of auxiliary bishops,

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the ministry of the word as an apostolate of priests, the tensions between the life-style of religious and their apostolate, the observance of the evangelical counsels by non-religious, the celibacy of the clergy, the admission of married men to holy orders, the shared responsibility between bishops and diocesan priests, the division of ministries.

Obviously we should not expect a theologian of the thirteenth century to discuss the problems and theological developments of the twentieth century. St Thomas is speaking out of his own historical context, in which the official ministry of the word was entrusted exclusively to the bishops; all religious life was within a monastic framework; all religious vows were solemn and indissoluble; laymen were not admitted to the administration or ministry of the Church; secular institutes and purely active religious institutes did not yet exist.

Secondly, as he notes in his introduction to q. 184, many of the questions relating to offices, functions and states are treated, at least tangentially, in other parts of the *Summa*, while matters of ecclesiastical discipline are left to the canonists. Bear in mind, also, that many of the answers given to questions explicitly raised in this section of the *Summa* are not apodictic theological arguments but reasons of convenience, which recognize that while it is *fitting* that some things be as they are, it is not *necessary* that they be so or remain so. Thus, allowance is made for development of doctrine and adaptation of laws and discipline.

The theological core of this volume is the discussion of the state of perfection in general and of charity as the principal element of Christian perfection. Question 184 is at once a synthesis of Thomist spiritual theology and the crown of Thomist moral theology. The first four articles investigate the nature, possibility and obligation of Christian perfection and the conclusions apply to all Christians, regardless of their offices, functions or state of life in the Church. Only after he has established the universal doctrine on the interior perfection of charity does St Thomas turn to the external, social, juridical concept of 'state of perfection' as a perpetual, exterior commitment to God and the Church by means of religious profession or episcopal ordination. And he is careful to insist that the 'state of perfection' does not always coincide with personal, interior perfection. Some are perfect but are not in a 'state' of perfection; some are in the 'state' (bishops and religious) yet are far from the perfection of charity (art. 4).

Finally, a word should be said about the Thomist concept and division of Christian perfection. Taken in the abstract, perfection is a transcendental concept, because anything is perfect so far as it is in act and imperfect so far as it is in potency (1a2ae. 3, 2). It is also an analogous concept, and therefore it can be applied in different ways to the existential order of particulars. Thus, St Thomas states that a thing is perfect so far

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as it is constituted in its proper being (*perfectio in esse*), when it possesses the faculties for perfect operation (*perfectio in operatione*), and when it attains its goal or purpose (*perfectio in assecutione finis*) (1a. 6, 3). The perfection of a thing in its very being is called *first perfection*; the perfection of a thing in a specified activity (such as playing a musical instrument) or in the attainment of a goal (such as restoring a sick person to health) is called *second perfection* (1a. 73, 1). He also speaks of perfection *simpliciter* (the attainment of an end or goal due to a thing by its nature) and perfection *secundum quid* (that which is accidental or concomitant to substantial perfection) (2a2ae. 184, 1 ad 2). Lastly, he speaks of that which constitutes perfection essentially and *per se* and that which constitutes perfection *instrumentally* (ibid 3).

Applying these distinctions to the various elements of Christian perfection, we can summarize his doctrine as follows. Perfection *in esse* (first perfection, substantial perfection) is constituted by sanctifying grace. This is the common teaching of all theologians, since sanctifying grace is the soul of the supernatural life and is the endowment of a Christian elevated to the supernatural order. According to Scripture (*Matt.* 22, 35–40; *Mark* 12, 28–31; *Col.* 3, 14; *Rom.* 13, 10; *I Cor.* 13, 13; etc.), again it is the common teaching of theologians that *perfectio secunda in operatione* consists of charity, either in its elicited act or as imperating the other virtues; and that *perfectio secunda in assecutione finis* also consists in charity, since charity is the virtue that unites us directly to God as our supernatural end (2a2ae. 184, 1). Perfection *secundum quid* comprises the elicited acts of the supernatural virtues other than charity, and instrumental perfection is attributed to the evangelical counsels.

In his treatise, *De perfectione vitae spiritualis*, St Thomas succinctly states the theology of charity as the essence of Christian perfection: ‘In the spiritual life a man is said to be perfect *simpliciter* by reason of that in which the spiritual life consists principally; he is said to be perfect *secundum quid* by reason of those things that are connected with the spiritual life. But the spiritual life consists principally in charity which, if one does not have it, he is reputed spiritually as nothing. Therefore *simpliciter* one is perfect in the spiritual life if he is perfect in charity.’

The most authoritative Thomist commentary on this section of the *Summa Theologiae* is *De statibus hominum* by H. M. Passerini, O.P., published in 1663. For more recent works the reader can consult R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* (1946); J. De Guibert, S.J., *Theologia Spiritualis Ascetica et Mystica* (1946); J. G. Arintero, O.P., *The Mystical Evolution* (1951); J. Aumann, O.P., and D. Greenstock, *The Meaning of Christian Perfection* (1956); A. Royo, O.P., and J. Aumann, O.P., *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (1962).