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978-0-521-02960-5 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 52 - The Childhood of Christ,
(3a. 31-37)

Roland Potter, O.P.

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The *Summa Theologiæ* 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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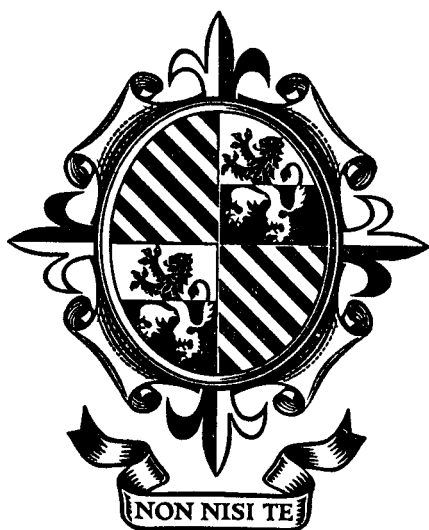
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ST THOMAS AQUINAS

SUMMA

THEOLOGIAE

Latin text and English translation,
Introductions, Notes, Appendices
and Glossaries



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[More information](#)

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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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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

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521393997

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[Excepting Latin text of 'DE IPSA CONCEPTIONE SALVATORIS, DE PERFECTIONE
PROLIS CONCEPTÆ, DE EJUS NATIVITATE, DE MANIFESTATIONE CHRISTI NATI,
ET DE LEGALIBUS CIRCA PUERUM JESUM OBSERVATIS']

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This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

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

ISBN-13 978-0-521-39399-7 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-39399-X hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-02960-5 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-02960-0 paperback

CONTENTS

xii Editorial Notes
xv Introduction

QUESTION 31. BODILY MATTER IN OUR SAVIOUR’S CON-
CEPTION

3 Article 1. whether Christ’s flesh was derived from Adam
7 Article 2. whether Christ’s flesh was derived from David
11 Article 3 whether Christ’s genealogy is suitably traced by the
Evangelists
21 Article 4. whether the matter of Christ’s body should have been
taken from a woman
25 Article 5. whether Christ’s body was fashioned from the most
pure blood of the Virgin
29 Article 6. whether Christ’s flesh was in the ancient fathers as
determinate matter
33 Article 7. whether Christ’s flesh in the patriarchs was subject to
sin
35 Article 8. whether Christ paid tithes in the person of his ancestor
Abraham

QUESTION 32. ACTIVATING PRINCIPLE IN CHRIST’S CON-
CEPTION

41 Article 1. whether the Holy Spirit was the activating principle in
the conception of Christ
45 Article 2. whether it should be said that Christ was conceived
of the Holy Spirit
49 Article 3. whether the Holy Spirit should be called the father of
Christ in respect of his humanity
51 Article 4. whether the blessed Virgin played any active part in
the conception of Christ’s body

QUESTION 33. MODE AND ORDER OF CHRIST’S CONCEPTION

57 Article 1. whether Christ’s body was formed in the first instant
of conception
61 Article 2. whether Christ’s body was animated in the first instant
of its conception
65 Article 3. whether the flesh of Christ was first conceived and
afterwards assumed by the Word

CONTENTS

67	Article 4.	whether the conception of Christ was natural or miraculous
QUESTION 34. PERFECTION OF THE CHILD CONCEIVED		
71	Article 1.	whether Christ in the first instant of his conception was sanctified by grace
73	Article 2.	whether Christ in the first instant of conception had the use of freewill
77	Article 3.	whether in the first instant of his conception Christ could merit
79	Article 4.	whether Christ had full vision of God in the first instant of his conception
QUESTION 35. BIRTH OF CHRIST		
83	Article 1.	whether birth is of the nature or the person
85	Article 2.	whether another birth besides the eternal should be attributed to Christ
89	Article 3.	whether in respect of his temporal birth the blessed Virgin is his mother
91	Article 4.	whether she should be styled mother of God
95	Article 5.	whether Christ, in respect of the two filiations, is Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mother
101	Article 6.	the manner of his birth
103	Article 7.	the place
105	Article 8.	the time
QUESTION 36. MANIFESTATION OF THE NEW-BORN CHRIST		
111	Article 1.	whether Christ's birth should have been made known to all
113	Article 2.	whether it should have been made known to some only
117	Article 3.	to whom should it have been manifested?
121	Article 4.	should he have made himself known, or should he have been manifested through others?
123	Article 5.	by what other means should the birth have been made known?
129	Article 6.	on the order of these manifestations
133	Article 7.	on the star by which his birth was made known
137	Article 8.	on the adoration of the Magi who knew of Christ's birth by a star

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-02960-5 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 52 - The Childhood of Christ,
(3a. 31-37)
Roland Potter, O.P.
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

QUESTION 37. THE CHILD JESUS AND OLD LAW OBSERVANCES

143	Article 1.	his circumcision
147	Article 2.	the giving of his name
151	Article 3.	his presentation in the Temple
155	Article 4.	his mother's purification

APPENDICES

158	1.	Jesus in his mother's womb
160	2.	Sonship
162	3.	He was called Jesus
163	4.	The wise men and the star
166	5.	Apocryphal stories
169		Glossary
173		Index

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978-0-521-02960-5 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 52 - The Childhood of Christ,
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION

THE FAUCHER TEXT used has been corrected according to the Ottawa Piana and Rome Leonine. The punctuation has been tidied up and the paragraphs often re-arranged. Variants of any consequence are indicated. The translator has preferred to keep close to the latter rather than to attempt a free rendering.

FOOTNOTES

Those signified by a superior number are usually the references given by St Thomas and tracked down by the Leonine Commission, with the exception of no. 1 to each article which refers to parallel texts in his writings. Those signified alphabetically are editorial references and explanatory remarks.

REFERENCES

Biblical references are to the Vulgate; Patristic references to Migne (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). When the English titles are well known, references to the works of St Thomas and Aristotle are in English. Titles of St Thomas's works are abbreviated as follows:

Summa Theologiae, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a. 70, 1 ad 2. 2a2æ. 25, 4.

Summa Contra Gentiles, CG. Book, chapter; e.g. CG 11, 14.

Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum, Sent. Book, distinction, question, article, solution or *quæstiuncula*, reply; e.g. 11 Sent. 15, 1, 1, ii ad 3.

Compendium Theologiae, *Compend. theol.*

Scriptural commentaries (*lecturæ, expositiones reportata*): 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: Aristotle, *Peri Hermeneias*, *In Periherm.*; Posterior Analytics, *In Post. Anal.*; Physics, *In Phys.*; *De Cælo et Mundo*, *In de Cæl.*; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *In de Gen. et Corr.*; *De Anima*, *In de Anima*; Metaphysics, *In Meta.*; Nichomachean Ethics, *In Ethic.*; Politics, *In Pol.* Book, chapter, *lectio* as required, 1, also for

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EDITORIAL NOTES

references to Dionysius, *De divinis Nomini us*, *In de Div. Nom.* References to Aristotle include the Bekker numbering

Quæstiones quodlibetæ, *Quodl.*

Complete titles are given for other works.

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INTRODUCTION

TO APPRECIATE this tractate we need to recall its general context. St Thomas considers first the Mystery of the Incarnation in itself (3a. 1-36), and then goes on to his own form of a life of Christ (3a. 27-59). His purpose is set out in the Prologue to Question 27 'After considering the Union of God and man and its consequences, we need now to consider what the Son of God did and suffered; and first we shall consider the coming of the Son of God into the World.'

This study is essentially a theological treatment of some Gospel events. Some events because he makes no attempt, as a modern might, to treat of *all that Jesus began to do and to teach* (Acts 1, 1). Thus, for example, he says nothing about the finding of the child Jesus in the Temple, as told in *Luke 2, 41-52*.

Further, his wholly theological exposition of the life of Christ differs from modern biographies, which have been numerous and varied in character. We may safely say that an author nowadays would glean all he could from the Gospel texts and then set them out with copious aids from background studies, ancient and near-eastern history, archæology, and much else; while, were he a believer, he would strive to show something of the transcendence of God on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. St Thomas remains innocent of the 'historical method' (his greatness lies elsewhere), and works in the doctrinal medium of the councils and Fathers. After dwelling on the Mother of Christ (3a. 27-30), he now has much to say, as his contemporaries did, about the fruit of her womb. Reflections on this aspect of the Incarnation reality came easily to the medieval world: the modern reader may tend to see much of this section as something unwanted and unwarranted. All the same the stress on the pre-natal Christ forces us to reflect yet more on the very essence of the Incarnation. God indeed was on earth in the Virgin's womb, and God was acting then too, as we read in the story of the Visitation (*Luke 1, 39-45*).

Inevitably St Thomas was at the mercy of the science of his time as regards the state and development of the foetus before birth. There is accordingly much in what he writes which we have to re-read in the light of present-day findings. Yet the difficulty for us is minimal: a few notes will help us to read with understanding. Whatever is transient and of a period long past is amply counterbalanced by the many insights which follow from the pervasive application of enduring principles at once theological and anthropological.