5-1-1946

The Doctrine of the Church in Thomas Aquinas

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH
IN THOMAS AQUINAS

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Systematic Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

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May 1946

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IN THOMAS AQUINAS

I. Introduction.

A. Impetus for the Present Study.

Since the Lutheran Reform no topic has been more prominent in either Protestant or Roman Catholic theology than the doctrine of the Church. As a result of the elemental challenge to the nature and authority of the Roman Church coming from all denominations of Protestantism, Catholic theologians were forced to defend and complete the intellectual structure of their institution; their dogmatics received its most significant additions on the subject in what may be considered the two termini of the struggle, the Council of Trent, 1545-63, and the last Vatican Council in 1870.[1]

Materials for creative historical research on the Church either during the above-mentioned period or in the present situation are not meager.[2] However, two considerations have prompted this study of Aquinas: first, an

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1. Consider the writings of Card. Bellarmine, Van Noort, Dieckmann, Card. Manning, Garrigou-Lagrange, Card. Newman, Bishop D'Herbigny, and hundreds of others.

2. Cf. the impetus of the ecumenical movement on the study of the Church. Documents prepared for some of the conferences, esp. Oxford and Edinburgh, were voluminous.

interest in the system of Thomas as an organic whole, for research here demands an understanding of his Christology, doctrines of the Trinity and the Sacraments, as well as a study of scattered references throughout his dogmatic and exegetical works; secondly, an interest specifically in the doctrine of the Church. References to this doctrine are not lacking in studies on Cyprian, Irenaeus, Augustine, James of Viterbo, Duns Scotus, as well as of all post-Reformation Catholic dogmaticians. But what does the theologian[3] of the Roman Catholic Church say, one who, living in the Golden Age of his Church's life, was singularly free from later polemical discussions on the organization and functions of the Church?

B. Place of the Doctrine in Thomas' System.

It is both interesting and significant to discover in such a search that Thomas wrote no formal treatise De Ecclesia. Fruitless is the search for a direct treatment of the subject in any question or article of the Summa Theologica, Summa Contra Gentiles, Scriptum super IV Libros Sententiarum, Quaestiones Disputatae, Quaestiones Quodlibetales, Compendium Theologiae, or in any other of his major

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3. An encyclical of Leo XIII in 1879, Aeterni Patris, made "the precious wisdom of St. Thomas" the official teaching of all Catholic schools. With Thomas reason had reached its highest point.

or minor works.[4] The nearest approach to such a presentation is found in the discussion of article nine, "sanctam ecclesiam catholicam", in his Expositio in Symbolum; here, however, he is speaking only of the properties of the Church--one, holy, catholic, and established.[5]

The reason Thomas wrote no comprehensive tract on the Church, as pointed out by Downey[6] and Grabmann,[7] lies in the fact that this doctrine was not in controversy during the Middle Ages. Theological tracts are written when some questions, heresies, or erring opinions are raised. This explanation is a commonplace to students of the history of Christian thought: they see it exemplified in the early formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, or Christology, as we see it today in the doctrine of Sacred Scripture or Inspiration. The history of philosophy also has parallels, cf. the problem of knowledge. Moreover, Thomas was not

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4. Cf. the examination of Thomas' works by Bainvel, "L'idée de l'Église au moyen âge: S. Thomas", La Science catholique, pp. 976-7.

5. In this point Grabmann's criticism of Johann Gottschick, ("Hus', Luthers u. Zwinglis Lehre von der Kirche", Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, VIII Bd. p. 348) is undoubtedly correct. Thomas' treatment here is not "zusammenhangend". Grabmann, Die Lehre des heiligen Thomas von Aquin von der Kirche als Gotteswerk, p. 111. The definitive monograph on Thomas' conception of the inner nature of the Church is this work by Grabmann; he saw the necessity, after a general introduction, of confining his study to the principles of being and life in the Church, i.e., the activity of the Spirit and of Christ.

6. The Very Rev. Richard Downey, Ph.D., quoted by Berry, The Church of Christ, p. 184.

7. Op. cit., p. 2.

alone among the Medieval scholastics to treat this subject in a fragmentary, incidental manner. For them the authority of the Church was self-evident; the historical sense of the Middle Ages was not such as to question a reality so once-and-for-all given as the nature of the Church. Grabmann quotes Atzberger as follows:

> "Die Scholastiker haben die Lehre von der Kirche überhaupt nicht eingehend und ex professo entwickelt, wenn sie auch die einschlägigen Grundgedanken mit der ihnen eigenen Tiefe und Präzision an verschiedenen Stellen ihres Systems ausgesprochen und speziell in dem Traktate von Christo als dem Haupte der Kirche (S. Thomas, S. Th. III. q. 8.) die Stelle bezeichnet haben, wo die Lehre von der Kirche sich anschliessen konnte."[8]

However, the fact that Thomas has no complete treatise on the Church does not solve the problem of the place of the doctrine in his system. The opinions of students of Thomas differ; we have the unequivocal statement of Congar, who also refers to the view of Käppeli:

> "In reality everything in the thought of St. Thomas has an ecclesiological phase, and the author of an essay on his theology of the Mystical Body has gone so far as to say that this doctrine of the Body of Christ is the heart of his theology. The reason is that the Church is not a separate reality, something outside the Christian-Trinitarian mystery, outside the anthropologic, christologic sacramental thing which is the subject of theology. So much is this true that I am forced to ask myself if it be not a deliberate act on St. Thomas' part that he has refused to write a separate treatise De Ecclesia, seeing that the Church pervaded his

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8. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 1, from Atzberger-Scheeben, Dogmatik, 4. Bd. I. Abt. S. 280.

theology in all its parts. I am indeed inclined, personally, to think so.[9]

Congar's opinion is extreme: he makes into a "deliberate act on St. Thomas' part" a phenomenon resulting from the natural unfolding of theological thought and from historical conditions of the Middle Ages.[10] Tacitly and implicitly, I believe, the doctrine of the Church does underlie Thomas' thought. But it is not explicit, and I do not believe with Käppeli that Thomas' doctrine of the Mystical Body is "the heart of his theology" or with the same opinion of Anger that "the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ dominates and unifies everything in the work of the Angelic Doctor.[11]

On the other hand, one must heartily disagree, on two grounds, with statements made by Thomasius-Seeberg: "Es musz hier zunächst hervorgehoben werden, dasz die Scholastik ein Dogma von der Kirche nicht kennt. Die Kirche war ihr eben nicht Glaubengegenstand, sondern vor allem die sinnlich wahrnehmbare Heilsanstalt, auf das geistliche wesen der

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9. Congar, "The Idea of the Church in St. Thomas Aquinas", The Thomist, Vol. 1, No. 1, April, 1939, p. 358. Congar is quoting Käppeli, Zur Lehre des hl. Thomas von Aquin vom Corpus Christi mysticum, Fribourg (switz.): 1931, which is unavailable.

10. Cf. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 2.

11. Abbé Joseph Anger, The Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ According to the Principles of the Theology of St. Thomas, p. xvii. However, I believe the interpretation of Thomas' theology by men like Congar, Käppeli, and Anger is more an interpretation by apologetic churchmen of a problem in modern theology than a study of Thomas' doctrine in it's organic and historic relations. I do not believe a dogma so inexplicit and assumed as Thomas's doctrine of the Mystical Body may properly be denominated the "heart", "center", "common source", etc., of his theology.

Kirche kommt man daher nur nebenbei zu sprechen."[12] Ecclesiological considerations conditioned the whole theology of Thomas; as will be shown later he refers to the teachings and laws of the Church, to its priesthood and the supernatural powers dispensed through the sacraments. Simply because the Lombard included no chapter on the Church and was followed in this by later scholastics,[13] including Thomas, we are not justified in concluding that the scholastics knew no dogma of the Church.

Moreover, they had much to say about the functions of the Church, for it was, indeed, for them the physical, perceptible institution of salvation, Cf. Chapter VI. However, the dogmatic interpretation of the Church as it is found scattered throughout Thomas' works is a presentation of a spiritual reality, the corpus Christi mysticum and the communio fidelium. The body of this thesis will show that the visible Church is the vehicle of God's supernatural, gracious activity among His creatures.

Thus more true to Thomas' conception of the Church is Grabmann's analogy between Thomas' Summa and a towering Gothic cathedral of the Middle Ages ruled by one great architectural thought, which is the doctrine of the Church.[14]

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12. Die Christliche Dogmengeschichte, Vol. 2, p. 196.
13. Cf. Seeberg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Vol. III, p. 291.
14. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 18.

The place of the doctrine in Thomas' system is well expressed in a short quotation:

> "Da die Lehre des heiligen Thomas über die Kirche keineswegs als förmlicher abgeschlossener Traktat, als selbstständiges Bauglied seines monumentalen Wissensdomes erscheint, den ganzen Bau durchherrscht und an verschiedenen Stellen in Erscheinung tritt, so wird dieselbe auch an verschiedenen Stellen seiner Werke zerstreut sich vorfinden."[15]

It is the third part of the theological Summa that may be characterized as preeminently ecclesiological.[16] Here Thomas treats the Church in relation to Christ as the corpus Christi mysticum (III[a], q. 8); here also in his treatment of the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Orders, Thomas considers the Church as the organ of grace. Throughout his teaching on the Church Thomas considers primarily the inner nature of the Church, and it is the thesis of this study, as will be pointed out later, that the Church is for Thomas primarily the organ of grace and truth.

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15. This analogy employed by Grabmann, op. cit., p. 10, is probably that of Harnack, Vol. III, p. 449.
16. Willman's conviction, Geschichte des Idealismus II. p. 474, accepted by Grabmann, op. cit., p. 10. Congar's opinion must be noted, that "the entire Second part of the Summa Theologica is ecclesiology." Op. cit., p. 337. The limited importance of the theological virtues in the entire Second Part, however, hardly renders this statement accurate.

C. Note on Historical Setting

One is not under obligation when writing a treatise in systematic theology to treat his subject historically. In fact, to give a comprehensive history of the various elements in this treatise, e.g., the doctrine of grace, or the Pauline concept of the Body of Christ, or the spiritual Church, would require separate studies. The purpose here is to make only a general statement on the sources of Thomas' thought.

Thomas had mastered the great sources of knowledge of his day. He understood and passed on again the heritage of his time: biblical knowledge, though lack of linguistic training obviated a critical understanding of Scripture; the Fathers, long sections of which he could recite at will; the earlier scholastics; and Greek philosophy, esp. Plato and Aristotle. Grabmann says:

> "Rücksichtlich der Vergangenheit benützt der englische Lehrer das ihm aus der Patristik und früheren Scholastik vorliegende Material, indem er dasselbe planmässig ordnet, ergänzt und weiterbildet. Aus der Patristik haben auf die Lehre des heiligen Thomas von der Kirche besonders der heilige Augustine, Dionysius Areopagita und auch Johannes von Damaskus Einfluss ausgeübt. Von den früheren Scholastikern sind für den heiligen Thomas namentlich der heilige Anselm, Hugo und Richard von St. Viktor und der Lombarde massgebend gewesen. Sicherlich sind auch Wilhelm von Auvergne, Wilhelm von Auxerre, Alexander von Hales, Bonaventura, Albert d. Grosse von tiefgehendster Bedeutung für den heiligen Thomas gewesen."[17]

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17. Op. cit., pp. 14-5.

One has only to consult the introduction to all the letters of St. Paul to recognize the fountainhead of Thomas' doctrine of grace and of the Mystical Body. Further, it is well-known that no one between the times of St. Paul and Thomas Aquinas made a greater contribution to the teaching on grace or the Church than the foremost of the Fathers, St. Augustine.[18] Augustine's conception of the Church was altogether conditioned by his conception of grace, grace which he saw as flowing from God alone through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Augustine's pregnant teaching on the Church provided the fundamental ideas for the teaching of the scholastics. Pseudo-Dionysius, indeed, exercised considerable influence on Thomas, as he did on all the Medieval theologians; many statements from the Areopagite are cited by Thomas, and he is of special importance for the development of the hierarchical principle in the doctrine of the Church.[19]

Thomas Aquinas taught what may be found, sometimes less clearly and precisely formulated, as in his doctrine of the authority of the Roman pontiff, in all the scholastics. He is, as Bainvel points out, "le représentant le plus parfait

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18. Cf. Kirsch, Die Lehre von der Gemeinschaft der Heiligen im Christlichen Altertum, Mainz, 1900, p. 144, whom Grabmann quotes, among others, p. 6, as follows: "Am eingehendsten und am tiefsten von allen theologischen Schriftstellern des Altertums hat der heilige Augustine die Lehre von der Kirche behandelt."

19. Cf. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 7.

du haut enseignement de la Scolastique."[20] Congar states that with the exception of certain delicate discriminations not affecting general structural outlines all the great scholastics had the same ecclesiology. What he says of Thomas he declares to be equally true of Bonaventura, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, and others of that epoch.[21]

Thus when we study Thomas' doctrine of the Church we must recognize that it was the successor of a heritage, deepened and amplified, which formed the mainspring of all his thought. This heritage included Greek reason and the Christian religion, the hierarchically-constructed world of Aristotle and the eternal ideas of Platonist Augustine, together with almost all the Church Fathers, canonical law, the early scholastics as Anselm, Peter Lombard, Hugo of St. Victor, his friend Bonaventura, and his teacher Albert.[22] The "Christian Aristotle's" doctrine of the Church lies imbedded in a synthesis never before surpassed and seldom attempted since.

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20. Op. cit., p. 976. Bainvel declares that on the question of the Church St. Bonaventure was "en parfait accord de doctrine avec saint Thomas."
21. Congar, op. cit., p. 332.
22. Cf. Hans Meyer's section "Die geschichtlichen Quellen und ihre Verwertung", Thomas von Aquin: Sein System und seine Geistesgeschichtliche Stellung, pp. 4-27.

D. Order of Present Treatment

In treating Thomas' thought on the Church many more topics than those chosen for this thesis might be studied. Fruitful would be research in the jurisdiction of the Church, its unity, its priesthood and government, distinctive marks, organization as a kingdom, the episcopacy, apostolicity, the sanctity of its message, C hurch and liturgy, etc. However, the present study is the result of an attempt to comprehend the inner nature of Thomas' ecclesiology. Interest is directed toward the Church's source and its mode of existence. Considerable material was gathered on several other topics: The Relationship between Church and State and The Power and Infallible Authority of the Pope. These, however, bring one into the exterior side of the Church; they involve difficult problems of interpretation and demand consultation of sources at present unavailable. They will be topics for future studies in Thomas.

The present thesis is built on the complementary pillars of grace and truth.[23] For Thomas, who treats the Church particularly in its functioning through the sacraments and orders, the Church is the organ of grace. Especially the

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23. Cf. the first chapter of John, vs. 14.16.17, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.... And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Holy Eucharist conveys grace and brings to perfection the spiritual life, that man in himself might be made perfect through union with God.[24] Prat is expressing a true Thomistic principle when he says: "This expression 'the fullness'--'the fullness of Him who is filled all in all' (Eph. I, 23) describes the Church. It says 'Christ is completed by the Church as the Head is completed by the members. Christ may fill everything with his plenitude. He none the less needs to be completed in order to exercise His redemptive work; and the Church does complete Him, as a passive power which he endows with His virtue, or as a receptacle which He fills with His graces.'"[25]

These graces are brought to the members of Christ's Body through the instrumentality of the sacraments. Incense, Thomas says, is the symbol of the working of grace, of which Christ was the fulness.[26] Geiselmann says, "Die Gnade ist demnach für Thomas das entscheidende Prinzip, nachdem er die Zugehorigkeit zur ecclesia bestimmt."[27]

But the passion of Christ receives its effect in those to whom it is applied not only by the sacraments but also by faith informed by charity. Thus there is also an intellectual and practical element in the mission of the Church--

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24. III^{a}, q. 79, a. 1, ad 1.
25. Prat, The Theology of St. Paul, Vol. I, p. 299, quoted by Anger, op. cit., p. 387.
26. III^{a}, q. 83, a. 5, ad 2.
27. "Christum und die Kirche nach Thomas von Aquin", Theologische Quartalschrift, p. 204.

the obligation of bringing to men the truth of the passion of Christ.[28] The whole argument of IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 10, is carried on the supposition that the Church operating through its supreme pontiff is the organ of truth—"quia una fides debet esse totius Ecclesiae." This thesis, it is held, has not been brought out in its proper relationships in previous research.

The first three chapters of this thesis attempt to describe the unique roles of the Three Persons in the life of the Church. The fourth shows the application of grace through the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. By the time we reach Chapter VI we are ready to face the problem of the visible and invisible Church in Aquinas.

Chapter VII is devoted to a brief critical analysis of Thomas' conception of the Church: statements of a critical nature, it is held, should not mar the objectivity of a presentation of Thomas' thought, yet they are in place in the conclusion where an evaluation and criticism are desirable.

In conclusion, and in introduction, let Plato's words be kept in mind: "As it is the commendation of a good huntsman to find game in a wild wood, so it is no imputation if he hath not caught all."

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28. IIIa, q. 49, a. 1, ad 5.

II. Grace--Participation in the Life of God.

A. The Spiritual Potentiality of Man in the Natural Order.

Man, Thomas tells us, is at the same time the borderland and the horizon of purely spiritual and purely physical nature and, standing midway between both, he takes part in the order of spiritual as well as of physical existence.[1]

Man is endowed with reason and a soul: these are the impressions of the seal of God's own spirit, and they raise man above other created things and distinguish him as a citizen of a higher, heavenly kingdom. Within the depths of his soul there has been created an attraction toward God, as to his final end. The rational creature is immediately ordained to the source of being to the extent in which he knows the universal ground of goodness and being (*in quantum cognoscit universalem boni et entis rationem*).[2]

There is in man a strong longing for knowledge of and union with God. God is the last end of everything, and all things tend toward union with Him in so far as they share in His likeness.[3] But for the intelligent creature the final end is to know God by understanding Him, for this is an

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1. *Prolog. in III Sent.*
2. *IIa IIae*, q. 2, a. 3.
3. *S.c.G.*, III, 17 ff.

operation proper to the intellectual substance,[4] or to love Him, even as angels and all created things love Him in so far as they are able.[5]

B. The Supernatural Life-energy.

Thomas says that man is not only a citizen of an earthly city, but has an inheritance in the heavenly Jerusalem, of which the Lord is ruler and the angels and all the saints citizens, whether they reign in glory and rest in the Fatherland, or still walk about on the earth... "Ad hoc autem ut homo huius civitatis sit particeps, non sufficit sua natura, sed ad hoc elevatur per gratiam Dei."[6]

Forgiveness, which according to Thomas is the central doctrine in Christianity,[7] is not accomplished by the ascent of the creature to the creator, but by the gracious inclination of the Most High to the lowly. Indeed, natural knowledge of God is a going-up (ascendere naturali lumine rationis per creaturas), but knowledge of God by faith is a coming-down (divina veritas per modum revelationis in nos descendit).[8]

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4. S.c.G., III, 25. Cf. also S. Th., I^{a}, q. 62, a. 2; Ibid., q. 93, a. 4.
5. Cf. I^{a} II^{ae}, q. 109, a. 3: "Diligere autem Deum super omnia est quiddam connaturale homini, et etiam cuilibet creaturae, non solum rationali sed irrationali, et etiam inanimatae, secundum modum amoris qui unicuique creaturae competere potest." And Quodlibet I, 8: "Dicendum est ergo quod diligere Deum super omnia plus quam seipsum est naturale non solum Angelo et homini, sed etiam cuilibet creaturae."
6. De Virtut. in comm., q. 1, a. 9 corp.
7. Cf. Geiselmann, op. cit., p. 198, and S. c.G., IV, 54.
8. S.c.G., IV, 1.

Perfect beatitude and the divine knowledge, which consists in beholding the divine essence, is possible neither to man nor to any other creature; man is able to attain to only an imperfect beatitude through the exercise of his natural virtues.[9]

In order that man might be united with God in life eternal, "intelligere actualissimum per se et a se subsistens", God has channelled into the human spirit while yet on earth the supernatural life of grace, which, as Grabmann says, stands in inner proportion to eternal life.[10] "Life is also called grace, inasmuch as it conveys the life of God and is the unmediated principle of this life. Grace gives a spiritual existence (esse spirituale) and the life of God to the soul, and is the principle and root of the infused virtues and is related to the nature of the soul as is health to the body. Through it we participate in the nature of God and receive the life of children of God. In possession of grace men become godlike (deiformes), children of God through God's grace."[11]

Grabmann points out that this supernatural life of

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9. I^{a} II^{ae}, q. 5, a. 5 corp.; III^{a}, q. 9, a. 2, ad 3.
10. Op. cit., p. 75.
11. De Virtut. in comm., q. 1, a. 2, ad 21, quoted in German by Grabmann, op. cit., p. 75. Cf. also II^{a} II^{ae}, q. 19, a. 7 corp.: "Vita nostra ad divinam fruitionem ordinatur et dirigitur secundum participationem divinae naturae, quae est per gratiam."

of grace has a social tendency. In its very nature it seeks to communicate itself to others, bonum est communicativum, diffusivum sui. God, too, the highest good, communicates Himself in the most complete manner possible. Sanctifying grace, since it is participation in God's nature, has an innate characteristic of sharing itself with others:

> "Infolgedessen wird durch die heiligmachende Gnade, welche das Formalprinzip der vita spiritualis ist, in das gesamte übernatürliche Leben ein durch und durch soziales Grundelement hineingetragen. Der heilige Thomas redet deswegen so schön von einer „gratia fraterna" (S. Th. 2.II. q. 14, a. 2, ad 4m.), von einer „gratia crescens in mundo" (S. Th. 2.II. q. 14, a. 2 corp.), von einer „gratia tendens ad alios" (I. Sent. dist. 16. q. 1, a. 2, ad 1m). In der Gnade Gottes liegt die Erweiterung und Ausbildung des übernatürlichen Lebens zum sozialen kirchlichen Leben grundgelegt."[12]

God's grace operates in a whole community of rational creatures, not only in the saints of this world, but, as will be shown in Chapter VI, among the saints in glory, the angels, and the suffering in purgatory. Only under the influence of the fellowship of grace, the societas christiana, can the individual hope to attain to salvation. And as God is the final goal of the individual, so

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12. Grabmann, op. cit., pp. 78-9. On Thomas' doctrine of grace see esp. Ia IIae, q. 111-114; IIIa, q. 7 and 8, and the references cited in the Leonine edition. One expression the angelic doctor was fond of using conveys his full meaning of grace: "Grace is nothing else than a certain beginning of glory within us--gratia nihil aliud est quam quaedam inchoatio gloriae in nobis." IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 3, ad 2; also Ia IIae, q. 69, a. 2; de Verit. q. 14, a. 2.

is He also of the social organism.[13]

The question arises: "How is grace dispensed to the individual and the Christian communion?" Thomas would answer: "Through the virtues (theological) and the sacraments." From the grace of Christ, which was full and perfect, flowed the virtues, which perfect the different powers of the soul for all its acts--"ita virtutes sunt quaedam derivationes gratiae."[14] The theological virtues, which proceed from grace, plunge man into the current of divine life, render him truly resemblant of God, a child by adoption, and participant in the divine nature; through these man participates in the nature of God somewhat as the lighted wood participates in the nature of fire.[15]

Faith communicates the knowledge of God Himself, charity His goodness, and hope His omnipotence and kindness;[16] in the order of generation faith precedes hope, and hope charity.[17] These theological virtues perfect man's reason in a supernatural way; but man remains a child in the supernatural order and as such must incessantly seek recourse to the Most High, to the paternal Providence of God.[18]

All grace is from God, but it does not reach man except by the mediation of Christ; it is through Christ's human nature

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13. For a treatment of the church as religious community consult Meyer, op. cit., 499 ff.
14. III^{a}, q. 7, a. 2 corp.
15. I^{a} II^{ae}, q. 62, a. 1, ad 1.
16. I^{a} II^{ae}, q. 64, a. 4 corp.
17. I^{a} II^{ae}, q. 62, a. 4 corp.
18. Mura, Le Corps mystique du Christ, II, 198.

that man receives forgiveness of sins.[19] As Head of the Mystical Body He shares the grace, of which He is the fulness, with all its members. The sacraments are the special channels of His grace: as God Christ is Author of the sacraments, and as man He is the principal Dispenser of them.

Thus Thomas could say that grace, which flows out upon the Church, beautifies the inner life of the Church. "Gratia divina pulchrificat sicut lux."[20] Grace raises man to oneness with God, as Christ Himself was once one with the Father. So Grabmann calls Harnack's statement (Wesen des Christentums, p. 6) an authentic Thomistic thought when he says that Christianity is "ewiges Leben mitten in der Zeit, in der Kraft und vor den Augen Gottes."[21]

C. Eternal Beatitude.

The fundamental thought in Thomas' treatment of the Church is that the soul has gone out from God and can return to Him only through Christ; basic in this, says Harnack, is the Augustinian-Pseudo-Dionysian turn given this thought, that God is all in all.[22] Everything that man is, is capable of,

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19. III[a], q. 64, a. 3 corp.
20. In Psalm. 25.
21. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 71-2.
22. Harnack, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, p. 449. Harnack further declares that this position is dangerous. Out of it came what the Catholics call the "Aftermystik", in which the subject proposes to go his own way and avoids complete dependence on the Church.

and has is ordained toward God as his final end.[23] This end is placed for man individually and collectively: it embraces the entire human race. Thomas says that since eternal blessedness is the object of a natural desire of all men, so all men long for the Kingdom of God.[24]

By whatever name this may be called--heaven, eternal life, beatitude, oneness with God, deification of man (the θείωσις once more of Pseudo-Dionysius), life with God--it is knowing, seeing, loving God not through any veil or intermediary, but in His very essence.[25]

This is in the sense of the Scriptural passages: I John 3, 2, "we shall see Him as He is," and I Cor. XIII, 12, "face to face." Thomas explains it thus: "The vision of the Divine essence means for all the blessed a sharing of the light passed on to them from the Word of God as from a well-spring."[26]

So we have, too, a typical expression of that unique modern, Henry Adams, who interpreted the Church and its end quite correctly: "Thomas Aquinas, when he pleased, was singularly lucid, and on this point he was particularly positive. The architecht insisted on the controlling idea of his structure. The Church was God, and its lines

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23. Ia IIae, q. 21, a. 4, ad 3. Cf. also Ia IIae, q. 5, art. 8.
24. Comp. theol. 256.
25. Ia, q. 12; Suppl., q. 92, a. 1.
26. "...divinae essentiae visio convenit omnibus beatis secundum participationem luminis derivati ad eos a fonte Verbi Dei." IIIa, q. 10, a. 4 corp.

excluded interference. God and the Church embraced all the converging lines of the universe, and the universe showed none but lines that converged."[27]

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27. Henry Adams, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres, p. 354. Italics mine.

III. Pervasion of the Life of the Church by the Spirit.

A. The Activity in General.

The Church is the whole operation of the return of the rational creature to God. Of this return the Holy Spirit is the power and first impulse. He is the Dynamic which effects the return to God through His Church: He gives life to the Church and unites men with God and one another.

One of the clearest and most important statements made by Thomas on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church is to be found in a work in which he enjoyed considerable freedom for development of thought, the *Expositio in Symbolum*. He begins his exposition of article nine of the Apostle's Creed as follows:

> "*Sicut videmus quod in uno homine est anima et unum corpus, et tamen sunt diversa membra ipsius, ita Ecclesia catholica est unum corpus, et habet diversa membra. Anima autem quae hoc corpus vivificat, est Spiritus Sanctus. Et ideo post fidem de Spiritu Sancto jubemur credere sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam; unde additur in Symbolo: Sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam.*"[1]

It may be noted, first, that Thomas sees in the very position of this article, following as it does the one on the Holy Spirit, evidence for the inner, living relationship between Spirit and Church. The Spirit is a life-giving

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1. *Expositio in Symbolum*, art. 9.

principle working in a living body of many members. The members are all the faithful.[2]

The surprizing closeness which Thomas sees between the Holy Ghost and the Church is brought out in another exposition of these words, S. Th., II^{a} II^{ae}, q. 1, a. 9, ad 5. He states that if one says in sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam these words are to be understood as referring to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the Church, in the sense that Credo in Spiritum Sanctum sanctificantem Ecclesiam. He advises that it is better to follow common usage and not use the in, whereby one would simply say sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam.[3]

The Holy Spirit anoints the sanctified with the washing of regeneration through the blood of Christ.[4] He builds into us through the brightness of his grace a resemblance to the splendor of our Elder Brother; the Son is our example, as the Father is our author, but the Holy Spirit imprints in us through love the divine image. Therefore the Spirit is called Spiritus adoptionis filiorum, Rom. 8, 15, ff.[5]

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2. Cf. III^{a}, q. 28, art. 1, corp., where Thomas quotes Augustine to show the necessity that our Head be born by a most evident miracle, according to the flesh, or a virgin, to show that his members must be born by the Holy Spirit of a virgin Church.
3. See also Comp. theol. I, 147; III Sent., d. 25, q. 1, a. 2 sol et ad 5.
4. Expositio in Symbolum, art. 9.
5. III^{a}, q. 23, a. 2, ad 3 et a. 3.

In the article in which Thomas establishes the necessity of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 2, he speaks most explicitly of the necessity of adoption. All that the natural man can do is according to the manner of humanity, according to the adage of the Schools, "Quidquid recipitur, ad modum recipientis recipitur." All this is insufficient for reaching one's final end; the infused virtues enable us to love and know only imperfectly. But the Holy Spirit plays the role of the master over against the disciple, of the father to the child. Mura explains the work of the Holy Spirit well when he says:

> "Ainsi en est-il de nous dans le plan surnaturel, et le Saint-Esprit vient suppléer, avec une Providence toute paternelle, voire maternelle, à ce qui manque aux enfants de Dieu: Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur, hi sunt filii Dei. Grâce du Saint-Esprit, grâce des dons, grâce d'ordre mystique, c'est tout un.
>
> "C'est de cette grâce spéciale, motivée par notre faiblesse et notre ignorance profonde de l'ordre surnaturel, que parle le saint apôtre, à propos de la prière que l'Esprit-Saint produit dans l'âme fidèle; il s'agit donc d'une prière infuse et mystique."[6]

He is also called the soul of the Mystical Body,[7] and to His working in them is attributed the efficacy of the Sacraments.[8]

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6. Mura, op. cit. II, 276-7.
7. III. Sent., dist. 13, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2. For Thomas' treatment of the working of the Spirit in the Mystical Body in his commentaries see: In Rom., VIII, lect. 2; XII, lect. 2; In Col. I, lect. 5.
8. e. g. IIIa, q. 66, a. 9; ibid., 72, a. 1 corp.

It is precisely in this pervasion of the life of the Church by the Holy Spirit that Thomas sees most profoundly the unity of the Church: "Est in ecclesia continuitas quaedam ratione Spiritus Sancti qui unus et idem numero totam ecclesiam replet et unit."[9] The Spirit produces and maintains the unity of faith through His activity as Comforter: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth," John 16, 13. On the basis of this passage Thomas could say: "...ecclesia universalis non potest errare, quia a spiritu sancto gubernatur."[10] The Spirit is active not only in producing the effects of the sacraments but also in filling the Church with truth.

Thomas speaks expressively of the inner nature of the Church in dealing with the lex nova (I^a II^{ae}, q. 106-9). That which is most important in the law of the New Testament and that in which its efficacy consists is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given to the faithful in Christ.[11]

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9. De Verit. q. 29, a. 4 corp.

10. II^a II^{ae}, q. 1, a. 9. From this sacred truth Thomas could deduce the infallible teaching office of the Pope. Another citation is so important in regard to the unifying activity of the Spirit that it must be considered: "Ad tertium dicendum quod sicut in corpore naturali membra diversa continentur in unitate per virtutem spiritus vivificantis, quo abscedente membra corporis separantur; ita etiam in corpore Ecclesiae conservatur pax diversorum mem- virtute Spiritus Sancti, qui corpus Ecclesiae vivificat, ut habetur Joan. VI, 64. Unde Apostolus dicit, Ephes. IV, 3: Solliciti servare unitatem Spiritus in vinculo pacis."

11. I^a II^{ae}, q. 106, a. 1 corp. It is in connection with such expressions, and they are very numerous in Thomas' works, that one must reject the statement in Thomasius-Seeberg, "auf das geistliche Wesen der Kirche kommt man daher nur nebenbei zu sprechen." Above, p. 5-6.

B. The Outpouring of the Spirit.

The two outstanding examples of the working of the Holy Spirit are His descent on Christ, and His coming to the Apostles on the first Pentecost. St. Thomas distinguishes between a visible and invisible sending of the Spirit. In the invisible sending grace is poured into the human heart out of the fulness of divine love: through the working of this grace an experimental knowledge of God is inwardly instilled. But in the visible outpouring another purpose is accomplished, for on account of the fulness of this grace it remains not only in the person in whom the Spirit dwells, but flows out to others. By a visible sign this more-than-fulness is made apparent to others. Thus two conditions attach to the visible sending: first, plenitude of grace in those to whom it is sent, and second, direction of this plenitude toward others in some form or other. Thus the outpouring of inner grace takes place in both a primary and a secondary operation—"Et ideo Christo primo et postmodum apostolis missio, visibilis scilicet, facta est, quia per eos plures gratia diffusa est, secundum quod per eos Ecclesia plantata est."[12]

In dealing with His creatures, Thomas says, God accomodates himself to the nature of each thing; the nature of

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12. I. Sent. dist. 16, q. 1, a. 2 sol.

man requires that he be led through visible means to the invisible.[13] The visible sending was designed to make apparent the fulness of grace in those who were to pass it on to others; always it was designed to establish, strengthen, and spread the faith of the Church. Thus God was fulfilling a useful purpose when He sent the Spirit on Christ, on the Twelve, and on a few chosen missionaries of the early Church.[14]

The invisible mission made to Christ showed forth the invisible mission made already at the first moment of his conception. And here we find in Thomas an interesting interpretation of the two missions to Christ: they were separately to designate Him as full of grace and truth. The first was at His baptism in the Jordan, when He was distinguished as the Regenerator from sin. This occurred at the time when the grace of Christ first began to flow out upon others. Thomas explains it as follows: "Facta autem est missio visibilis ad Christum, in baptismo quidem sub specie columbae, quod est animal fecundum, ad ostendendum in Christo auctoritatem donandi gratiam per spiritualem regenerationem: unde vox Patris intonuit: Hic est Filius meus dilectus, ut ad similitudinem Unigeniti alii regenerarentur."[15] The second mission was at the Transfiguration, where Christ's infallible

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13. I^{a}, q. 43, a. 7 corp.
14. I. Sent. dist. 16, q. 1, a. 3 sol.
15. I^{a}, q. 43, a. 7, ad 6.

teaching authority was indicated; here the Holy Ghost assumed the form of a bright cloud to indicate the fulness and outpouring of grace upon others in the form of doctrine.[16] As he says in the Summa: "In transfiguratione vero, sub specie nubis lucidae, ad ostendandam exuberantiam doctrinae: unde dictum est: ipsum audite."[17] These missions of the Holy Spirit on Christ certified him as Head of the Church: He was sent visibly as the Author of sanctification as the Holy Spirit was the Sign of sanctification.[18]

The grace and truth of Christ was spread in the world by the Apostles. It was fitting, therefore, that they, too, should experience a visible reception of the mighty treasury of grace which would flow out from them upon the Church. In his exposition of Romans VIII, lect. 5, Thomas speaks of their preeminent grace: they had been chosen to occupy a higher position because they were to administer to others the truth and grace of salvation, which they had received directly from Christ. To a certain extent the Church was established by them; for this purpose God awarded them richer grace than other men. A brilliant statement of their double grace is given by Thomas: "Ad Apostolos autem, sub specie flatus, ad ostendam potestatem ministerii in dispensatione sacramentorum: unde dictum est eis: Quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur

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16. I. Sent. dist. 16, q. 1, a. 3 sol.
17. Ia, q. 43, a. 7, ad 6.
18. Ia, q. 43, a. 7 corp.

eis. Sed sub linguis igneis, ad ostendendum officium doctrinae: unde dicitur quod coeperunt loqui variis linguis."[19]

C. Heart of the Church.

Christ is, as we shall see, preeminently the head of the Church, and as such Grabmann calls Him "Daseinsprinzip der Kirche." But the inner relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Church, by which He carries out the purposes of the Father and expends the merits won by Christ, makes Him, according to Grabmann "das Wesensprinzip der Kirche," "Der heilige Geist hingegen, dessen Wirken und Walten in der Kirche innerlich und mehr unsichtbar ist, ist das Wesensprinzip, das Herz der Kirche. Das Wesen ist ja der verborgene innere Grund aller Erscheinungen und Tätigkeiten eines Dinges."[20]

Just as the human heart is buried in the body and invisible to the eye, so is the Holy Spirit buried and invisible in the Church. As the heart dispenses its life-giving activity to all the members from the center of the organism, so the Holy Spirit pours out its love into the Church in the most mysterious, mystical, and supernatural manner. Thomas shows the influence of the Philosopher when in his commentary on the Metaphysics he calls the heart preeminent in the

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19. I^{a}, q. 43, a. 7, ad 6.
20. Op. cit., p. 119.

body: "Secundum autem philosophy sententiam prima pars est cor, quia a corde omnes virtutes animae per corpus diffunduntur."[21]

If Thomas had had Harvey's knowledge of the circulation of blood he would undoubtedly have added a comparison between the supernatural life of grace dispensed by the Holy Spirit and the flow of blood in the physical organism. For Thomas grace must accomodate itself to man's mode of being and assume visible form in the sacraments; it flows through the ministrations of the priests as blood flows in the arteries.[22] With our modern knowledge, Thomas might even have gone so far as to compare the nourishing activity of grace with the activity of the red corpuscles, the defensive activity of preserving the one true faith with the protective activity of the white corpuscles.

It is in the article in which Thomas asks whether Christ is Head of the Church that he declares the Spirit to be the heart. It must be kept in mind regarding both of these comparisons that Thomas is speaking only metaphorically. By virtue of its position the head enjoys a certain preeminence over the other members, but the Holy Spirit inwardly quickens and unifies the Church: "Caput habet manifestam eminentiam

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21. Book V, lect. 1, quoted by Grabmann, p. 191. In his work, pp. 184-193, Grabmann gives an excellent historical and analytical treatment of the concept of the Holy Spirit as heart of the Church.

22. Cf. S.c.G. IV, 76; S.Th. III^a, q. 34-40, and other places where Thomas speaks of the sacrament of Orders.

respectu ceterorum exteriorum membrorum; sed cor habet quandam influentiam occultam. Et ideo cordi comparatur Spiritus sanctus, qui invisibiliter Ecclesiam vivificat et unit; capiti autem comparatur ipse Christus secundum visibilem naturam, secundum quam homo hominibus praefertur."[23]

In the above quotation is contained Thomas' most profound thought on the activity of the Holy Spirit. It demonstrates the close relationship between Christ and Church. Dörholt explains the meaning of the passage as follows:

> "Wie Christus das Haupt des ganzen zu unserm Heile tätigen Organismus, seines mystischen Leibes ist, so ist der heilige Geist das Herz desselben. Er wird so genannt, weil er das unsichtbare, übernatürliche Lebensprinzip und das unsichtbare Einheitsband der Kirche ist. Von ihm haben die Glieder der Kirche ihr übernatürliches Sein und Leben. Selbst das Haupt ist der Menschheit nach in utero Virginis durch ihn gebildet, und nach der Aehnlichkeit des Hauptes bildet er noch jetzt die einzelnen Glieder und schliesst sie dem Haupte an, gliedert sie dem Leibe Christi vermittelst der Gnade, die er vom Haupte auf sie überleitet, im Bade der Wiedergeburt."[24]

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23. III[a], q. 8, a. 1, ad 3. Cf. also De Verit. q. 29, a. 4, ad 7.

24. Die Lehre von der Genugtuung Christi, Paderborn, 1891, p. 366-7. Quoted by Grabmann, op. cit., p. 192.

IV. Christ as Mediator of Grace.

A. Head of the Church.

Thomas' most developed thought on the relation between Christ and the Church is found in his Christology, where he treats of Christ as Head of the Church.[1] By analogy with man's body, Paul had called the Church the Body of Christ.[2] However, in order to distinguish it from Christ's natural body the adjective "mystical" began to be employed.[3] Of

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1. III[a], q. 8; III Sent. dist. 13; De Verit. q. 29, 4 et 5; Comp. theol. 215; In I Cor. 12, lect. 3; In Eph. 1, lect. 7 et 8; 4, lect. 4 et 5, and at other places.

2. Rom. 12, 4.5; I Cor. 12; Eph. 1, 22, 23; 4, 4-7, 11-16; Col. 1, 18; 2, 10.12.19. This plays a significant role in our thinking today, cf. The Lutheran Hymnal, No. 206, stanza 2, "Shall I fear, or could the Head Rise and leave His members dead?"

3. As O'Connor, op. cit., p. 298, and Lattey, The Church, vii, point out, the term "Mystical Body" was not used by the Fathers to designate the Church. O'Connor quotes Bishop Meyers (The Mystical Body of Christ, Treasury of the Faith Series, Macmillan, New York, 1931, p. 27), saying that Chrysostom used the term "mystical body" to designate the Eucharist, and that this use persisted in Rabanus Maurus (d. 856) and Paschasius Radbertus (d. 851). Lattey traces its application to the Church to the treatise De Corpore et Sanguine Domini (chap. 95) by Tatramnus Corbeiensis in the ninth century. Alexander of Hales (d. 1245) used it in his Universae Theologiae Summa (ed. 1622, vol. 2, p. 73), when treating the grace of Christ and His Headship of the Church. The usage of the doctor irrefragabilis was repeated by William of Auvergne (d. 1249) and Albert the Great (d. 1280), making it common usage in the thirteenth century. Cf. also Brabmann's treatment, "Die Lehre von Christo, dem Haupte der Kirche, in der Patristik und Scholastik," op. cit., p. 196 ff. Grabowski, "St. Augustine and the Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ," Theological Studies, March, 1946, Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 74; O'Connor, op. cit., p. 292, who interprets Aquinas to mean the "mystery" of the redemption in the sense of Paul, Eph. 3, 1-13.

the many members Christ is Head, for the grace which flowed into Christ first goes into all the members, and they become as a single mystical person, una persona mystica.[4] Christ's influence is a personal one in all the spiritual life of the Church. According to Paul Christ is the fulness from which all grace and holiness that flows into the Church comes; therefore the Church is τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν πληρουμένου, Eph. 1, 23. On this verse Thomas remarks that since the Church was instituted by Christ it is called His fulness, for just as all virtues are in Christ, from whence they are implanted into the members of His Church, so all the spiritual gifts which the Church has in Christ flow out into the members and perfect them.[5]

This influence of Christ on the members has a tremendous social influence, for all creation, which went out from Christ in the beginning and which was partly separated by sin, is led back to its Head as to its final end. In accord with the Fathers, Thomas speaks of a communicatio idiomatum between Christ and the Church;[6] there is such an inner unity between Christ and the Church that they become one idea. As Grabmann says, "Von Christo kommt die Kirche, in Christo lebt die Kirche, zu Christo strebt die Kirche."[7] Thomas' remarks

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4. III^{a}, q. 49, a. 1 corp.
5. In Eph. 1, lect. 8.
6. Cf. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 261 ff.
7. Ibid., p. 265.

on the communicatio are found in his exposition of the Psalms: "Haec est una de regulis supra in principio Psalterii positis, quod ea, quae pertinent ad membra, dicit Christus de se propter hoc, quod sunt scilicet unum corpus mysticum Christus et Ecclesia, et ideo loquuntur sicut una persona et Christus transformat se in Ecclesiam et Ecclesiam in Christum."[8]

This unity is expressed in another way by Thomas, again following the Fathers and the other scholastics, when he speaks of the marriage relationship between Christ and the Church.[9] In this concept of the marriage between the two their continued mutual love is given its most beautiful expression. In the traditional interpretation of the Song of Songs this idea comes into special prominence: "Intentio principalis hujus operis est exprimere mutua desideria inter Sponsum et Sponsam sive inter Christum et Ecclesiam."[10]

So much are Christ and the Church identified by Thomas that he declares the two together make no more than Christ alone, just as God and the World make no more than God alone, since the world emanated from God and realizes in plurality

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8. In Ps. 21, lect. 2.
9. See Grabmann, p. 251 ff.
10. In Cant. 3, lect. 2.

that which in Him is one and simple.[11] Congar explains: "For as the world is what it is only by participation of God, thus receiving from Him but adding nothing, so the Church, new life of humanity moving Godwards, is what she is only by participation of Christ, receiving from Him yet adding nothing."[12]

Also in his commentary on the Psalms and on the marriage at Cana, John 2, 1-10, Thomas speaks of the Bride and Bridegroom. In the latter Thomas speaks of the mystical marriage between Christ and the Church. This took place first in the womb of the virgin, publicly when the Church was joined to Him through faith, consummately when the bride will be introduced to the marriage chamber of the bridegroom, i.e., in heavenly glory.[13]

John's description of the λόγος as "plenum gratiae et veritatis," John 1, 14.16, provides the impetus for another reference in Thomas to Christ as Head of the Church: "Tertio

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11. IV Sent. dist. 49, q. 4, a. 3, ad 4: "In Christo spirituale non est particulatum, sed est totaliter et integrum; unde ipse est totum Ecclesiae bonum, nec est aliquod majus ipse et alii quam ipse solus." De Verit., q. 29, a. 5: Et quia Christus in omnes creaturas rationales quodammodo effectus gratiarum influit, inde est quod ipse est principium quodammodo omnis gratiae secundum humanitatem, sicut Deus est principium omnis esse: unde, sicut in Deo omnis essendi perfectio adunatur, ita in Christo omnis gratiae plenitudo et virtutis invenitur." Cf. also IIa IIae, q. 183, a. 2 corp.; Expositio in Symbolum, art. 10.
12. Congar, op. cit., p. 342.
13. In Joan. 2, lect. 1.

modo possunt exponi secundum capitis dignitatem, scilicet inquantum Christus est caput Ecclesiae."[14]

Thomas distinguishes three kinds of grace, each possessed by Christ in their fulness: 1) Grace of union, gratia unionis, by which the Person of the Divine Word is given gratis to the human nature.[15] This is the source of the two other graces. All grace comes from God,[16] but through the hypostatic union in Christ God is joined to human nature; from this union in Christ is derived the grace of union. It belongs to Christ as God. 2) Habitual grace, gratia habitualis, belongs to the spiritual holiness of Christ as man. It flows from the union with God, as St. John writes, 1, 14: "We saw His glory,... the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Because this man is the Only-begotten of the Father, He is full of grace and truth.[17] 3) Capital grace, gratia capitis, which Christ possessed as Head of the Church; by this Christ is closely united to His members. Since they are His members His merits extend to them, just as in a man the action of the head is not for itself alone, but for all the members.[18]

The incarnate Lord is Head according to His humanity

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14. In Joan. 1, lect. 2.
15. Cf. III^{a}, q. 6, a. 6; q. 7, a. 11; q. 7, a. 13.
16. "Spiritus sanctus non datur nisi ab eo qui causat gratiam sicut principale agens, quod solius Dei est." De Verit., q. 27, a. 4, ad 19.
17. Ibid., q. 6, a. 6 corp.
18. Ibid. q. 19, a. 4.

in three ways--order, perfection, and power: order--as the head is highest in the body so spiritually Christ's grace is the first and highest; perfection--inasmuch as all the senses dwell in the head, so the fulness of all graces dwells in Him, John 1, 14, "We beheld Him... full of grace and truth"; power--as the power of moving and directing the other members is derived from the head, so He bestows grace on the members of the Church, John 1, 16, "Of His fulness have we all received."[19]

A penetrating analysis of this analogy is given by Pope in Lattey's The Church:

> "The Head is, of course, the directive principle governing every member of the body in proportion as it is subordinate to its influence. How marvelously subtle that force which, while acting through the medium of sinews and muscles and a multiplicity of channels, yet secures absolute and immediate obedience to behests: my hand rises simultaneously with my brain's determination that it shall rise: 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Moreover that subtle, all-pervading influence of the head over the members is proportioned to and perfectly adapted to the needs, capacities and powers of each member, so that each, while remaining perfectly subordinate, yet retains its individuality."[20]

B. The Manner of His Mediation.

It remains to be shown how the grace of Christ as Head is made available to the Church. We must begin with the source of all grace--God; except God give grace through

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19. III^{a}, q. 8, a. 1 corp.
20. Lattey, op. cit., p. 82-3.

Christ, it is not received. But according to his divine nature Christ was God. He was nearest the Source, so He had grace as perfectly as it can be possessed: "Et hoc quidem apparet primo, ex propinquitate animae Christi ad causam gratiae. Dictum est enim quod, quanto aliquod receptivum propinquius est causae influenti, abundantius recipit. Et ideo anima Christi, quae propinquius coniungitur Deo inter omnes creaturas rationales, recipit maximam influentiam gratiae eius."[21]

The value of the passion of Christ lies in the hypostatic union: the divine nature gave supernatural value to the suffering of Christ's flesh. The flesh is merely the instrument of the Godhead.[22] As God Christ was "principaliter effective", as man "instrumentaliter effective et meritorie." Thomas says that the passion of Christ, though it occurred in the flesh, nevertheless had a spiritual effectiveness from his divinity, because His flesh was united to it as an instrument. It follows that the passion of Christ has a certain divine power to remit sins.[23]

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21. III^a, q. 7, a. 9 corp. For the present chapter this article is of great importance; its subject: "Utrum fuerit in Christo gratiae plenitudo."

22. Cf. Seeberg, op. cit., III, p. 565.

23. III^a, q. 49, a. 1, ad 1. Cf. III^a, q. 64, a. 3 corp.: "Dictum est enim quod passio Christi, quae competit ei secundum humanem naturam, causa est nostrae justificationis et meritorie, et effective, non quidem per modum principalis agentis, sive per auctoritatem, sed per modum instrumenti, inquantum humanitas est instrumentum divinitatis eius, ut supra dictum est." Ibid., q. 8, a. 1, ad. 1; a. 2.3; q. 19, a. 1; S.c.G. IV, 41.

Christ's passion is the cause of forgiveness of sins in three ways: 1) By exciting our charity. By charity we gain pardon, cf. Luke 7, 47: "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." 2) By redeeming us from sin. As our Head He delivered His members from sin by paying the price of the Passion. 3) By way of efficiency as man. His flesh, the instrument of divinity, operated with divine power to expel our sins.[24]

Because of the divine and human in Him, Christ is the perfect mediator between God and man. Had Adam not sinned Christ would not have had to assume the human nature.[25] But He became flesh in order that He might manifest His love for us, that we might participate fully in His divinity. We may do this because we share in some way in this union with the Word. Thomas quotes St. Augustine: "*Factum est Deus homo, ut homo fierit Deus.*"[26]

The Incarnation is the cause for the reception of grace in all who receive it. In the Incarnation is grounded the unity between the Old and New Testament Church, for grace in the God-man is the source of salvation. So although the Old Testament believers came much earlier in time, the Incarnation was logically prior. Christ came into the world to save

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24. *Ibid.*, a. 1 corp.
25. *III*^{a}, q. 1, a. 3.
26. *Sermo de Nativ. Domini*, III^{a}, q. 1, art. 2.

sinners, but Thomas could also say that He came into the world to establish the Church--"Ad hoc venit in mundum, ut Ecclesiam fundaret."[27]

So humanity receives through Christ the supernatural gifts of God. As Christ is the way to God, so is the Church the way to Christ. Over this divine highway flows the grace which Christ won for all His members.[28] Only through Christ, the way, can the return be made: "qui, secundum quod homo, via est nobis tendendi in Deum."[29]

Christ's work, then, is effective for us through the instrumental activity of His humanity serving the divine nature. Here the influence of the Greek Fathers, particularly Cyril of Alexandria and John of Damascus ("Humanitas Christi est instrumentum divinitatis.") is apparent.[30] In fact, the burden of Geiselmann's entire inaugural lecture at Tübingen, "Christum und die Kirche nach Thomas von Aquin," Theologische Quartalschrift, is the point discussed by Grabmann, pp. 243-4, that Thomas changed his doctrine on the instrumental

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27. In. Matt. 16, 18.
28. "Sic enim recipiebat anima Christi gratiam, ut ex ea quodammodo transfunderetur in alios." III^{a}, q. 7, a. 9 corp.
29. I^{a}, q. 2, prol. Cf. also III^{a}, prol.
30. Cf. Congar, op. cit., pp. 346-7; Grabmann, op. cit., pp. 221, 243-4.

effectiveness of Christ's work.[31] Geiselmann has decisively proven his point. There can be no doubt but that in his mature work, the Summa Theologica, Thomas ascribed an instrumental effectiveness to the work of Christ as man.[32]

In passing it may be mentioned that Christ is the highest teacher in the Church. The teaching of the Church is only participation in the teaching activity of Christ, who was the first and foremost teacher in matters of sacred doctrine and faith. On His teaching the Church was built.[33] This Church cannot err, says Thomas, not only because the Holy Spirit is preserving it, but because the Pope is the very Vicarius Christi. Peter had taken Christ's place as Head of the Church, and he and his successors have full

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31. Geiselmann points out that the young Thomas, when he commented on the Sentences, taught a causality of grace from God alone (III Sent. dist. 13, q. 2 sol.), ascribing only a preparatory, disposive activity to Christ ("Gratia fluit a deo mediante homine Christo; ipse enim disposuit totum humanum genus ad susceptionem gratiae." III. Sent. dist. 13, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3). In the course of his theological development, through reading the Greek Fathers (in translation), he came to ascribe a causality to Christ's humanity. Geiselmann even traces down time and place: "Sie fällt in die Zeit zwischen der Vollendung des Kommentars zum Sentenzenwerk (1255) und Abfassung des Compendium theologiae (1260) und findet sich in den Quaestiones De Veritate und zwar von q. 27 zu q. 29 (1256-1259 nach Grabmann)." Geiselmann, op. cit., p. 202.

32. III^{a}, q. 43, a. 2; q. 48, a. 6.

33. Grabmann, op. cit., p. 234, using the following references. "Spiritualis autem doctrinae et fidei primus et principalis doctor est Christus autem secundum illud Hebr. 2, 3 ... Unde manifestum est, quod in Christo excellentissime fuerunt omnes gratiae gratis datae sicut in primo et principali fidei doctore." S.Th. III. q. 7, a. 7 corp.—"Praedicatio Christi, super quam fundatur Ecclesia" in IV. Sent. dist. 43, q. 1, a. 3. sol. 2 ad 2^{m}.

power in the whole Church.[34] The fact that the collective Church cannot err is actually referred back to the inerrancy of the Roman pontiffs, who inherit Christ's statement to Peter, Luke, 22, 32: "Ego autem rogavi pro te, ut non deficiat fides tua."[35] So not only is the Church the way to Christ and God through the physical activity of the sacraments, which confer the grace of Christ, but Christ is the source of her teaching. Not only does the Church live by Christ, but she learns from Him.

So well did Thomas write on the person of Christ that, according to his oldest biographer, he received a message from Christ himself emerging from a portrait of the Crucified: "Bene scriptisti de me."[36]

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34. Note the continued interest of Thomas in the Pope as Head of the Church, because he is Peter's successor. S.c. G. IV. 76, Suppl., q. 25, a. 1 corp.; III^{a}, q. 8, a. 6 corp. Cf. Op. 1, Contra errores Graecorum. Thomas could go so far in this work as to formulate the statement employed a few decades later by Boniface VIII in "Unam sanctam" (1302, "(ostenditur etiam), quod subesse Romano pontifici, sit de necessitate salutis."

35. II^{a} II^{ae}, q. 2, a. 6. Cf. also Ibid., q. 1, a. 10; Suppl., q. 25, a. 1, Sed contra et Praeterea; In. Matt. 16, 18.

36. Quoted by Grabmann, p. 4, from Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis auctore Guilelmo de Tocco, O. Pr., cap. VI. Acta Sanctorum Martii, tom. I., pag. 671.

V. The Sacramental Channels of this Grace.

A. The Sacraments in General.

The point of departure in considering the role of the sacraments in the life of the Church may not be better than Thomas' point of departure, their supernatural source. "Sacramenta de latere Christi fluxerunt."[1] From the side of the dead Christ as He hung on the cross came forth blood and water; He was thereby completing His work of priestly mediation begun already at the first moment of His conception. From the Crucified one the sacraments receive their entire effect.[2] For Thomas Christ was the author of the Sacraments.[3]

In keeping with his sacramental-hierarchical interpretation of Thomas' conception of the Church, Harnack says that the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church can be understood only through an understanding of the Sacraments. Faith itself is not sufficient. It lacks the certitudo salutis; this is attained only through the teaching authority of the Church on

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1. IV. Sent., dist. 3, q. 1, a. 3, quaestiunc. 1, obj. 6. Cf. also III^{a}, q. 64, a. 2, ad 3: "Per sacramenta, quae de latere Christi pendentis in cruce fluxerunt, dicitur esse fabricata Ecclesia Christi."
2. De Verit., q. 29, a. 4, ad 3.
3. It is interesting to note, in this connection, Thomas' explanation of the gratia plena in Mary. This is true because of her nearness to the auctor, who received His human nature through her, "quod eum, qui est plenus omni gratia, in se reciperet et eum pariendo quodammodo gratiam ad omnes derivaret." III^{a}, q. 27, a. 5, ad 1.

the one hand and through the whole sacramental organization of the Church on the other.[4]

The powers of grace which derive from Christ as Head flow into those who are His members. The sacraments in bringing grace operate as instruments; they incorporate man into Christ, yet not of their own power, but by their principal cause, Christ. "Et hoc modo sacramenta novae legis gratiam causant: adhibentur enim ex divina ordinatione ad gratiam in eis causandam."[5]

In answer to the question: "Utrum sacramenta novae legis habeant virtutem ex passione Christi," Thomas answers that God alone is the principal efficient cause of grace, in comparison to Whom the humanity of Christ is as a united instrument, while the sacraments are as separate instruments. Then he made the significant statement: "Et ideo oportet quod virtus salutifera derivetur a divinitate Christi per eius humanitatem in ipsa sacramenta."[6] He continues by stating that the sacramental grace seems to be ordered for two purposes: to remove the defects following on past sins, in so far as they are finished in act yet remain in guilt, and to perfect the soul in those things which pertain to the worship of God according to the religion of the Christian life. It was especially through His passion, by

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4. Harnack, op. cit., III., p. 424.
5. III^{a}, q. 62, a. 1 corp.
6. III^{a}, q. 62, a. 1 corp.

which He worked not only sufficiently and meritoriously but also by way of satisfaction, that Christ freed us from our sins. "Unde manifestum est quod sacramenta Ecclesiae specialiter habent virtutem ex passione Christi, cuius virtus quodammodo nobis copulatur per susceptionem sacramentorum. In cuius signum, de latere Christi pendentis in cruce fluxerunt aqua et sanguis, quorum unum pertinet ad baptismum, aliud ad Eucharistiam, quae sunt potissima sacramenta."[7]

Again in the sacraments we see the condescension of God in leading us to spiritual things by means of the corporeal and sensible. He has adapted his means to the feebleness of men in order to provide for their condition. Thomas here follows Augustine and neo-Platonic influences, and thinks of a soul imprisoned in a body; man must be offered spiritual medicine beneath a corporeal veil. This is, in effect, the reason for which the sacraments may be declared necessary for man's salvation.[8]

Christ's passion must be appropriated to us by means. Indeed, He suffered in the flesh, just as we are in the flesh. But His suffering had a spiritual power through the hypostatic union. Therefore, we must participate in its effects by spiritual contact, "per contactum spiritualem... per fidem et fidei sacramenta, secundum illud Apostoli:

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7. Ibid.
8. III^{a}, q. 61, a. 1 corp.

Quem proposuit propitiatorem per fidem in sanguine eius."[9] This Anknüpfungspunkt between the spiritual goods of Christ and the means available to man will be of special importance when we come to speak of the visible and invisible Church in the next chapter. It may be noted again that Thomas here means the fides formata per caritatem in the sense of a similar reference: "quod passio Christi sortitur effectum suum in illis quibus applicatur per fidem et caritatem, et per fidei sacramenta."[10] Faith is for Thomas the continued existence of the truth of Christ in the Church. The priesthood conveys this truth no less than it conveys grace in the sacraments.

We may glance for a moment at the function of the individual sacraments in the Church. From the beginning of life to its end they stand by with life-giving powers: baptism, confirmation, marriage, penance, orders, the Eucharist, extreme unction—the Church strengthens through its grace; it stands by with the viaticum for the sojourner.

Baptism, like the rite of circumcision, introduces one into the life of grace, the life of the Mystical Body. Baptism incorporates into Christ and makes the individual a member of His Body. From their Head the members receive spiritual sense, i.e., knowledge of the truth and fruitfulness

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9. III^{a}, q. 48, a. 6, ad 2.
10. III^{a}, q. 49, a. 3, ad 1.

of good works through infused grace.[11]

Confirmation increases the life of grace begun in baptism. Thomas says that in this sacrament the faithful conform themselves more completely to the Head, for this is the sacrament of the fulness of grace, and their Head from the first moment of His conception was full of grace and truth.[12]

In marriage husband and wife receive the grace to be participants in the union of Christ and the Church.[13] It was instituted by Christ as a sacrament of the New Law in so far as it represents the mystery of Christ's union with the Church.[14] Matrimony is also the cause of grace.[15]

The priests are channels of the grace that springs from Him who is Head of all the members.[16] Seeberg comments as follows on the role of the priesthood:

> "Nun ist es klar, dasz die Priester Mittler zwischen Gott und der Gemeinde, die durch die Sakramente das göttliche Leben in der Christenheit hervorbringen und erhalten. In dem Organismus des corpus Christi gibt es eine abgestufte Ordnung: von Christus durch die Hierarchie zu den Laien. Schärfer und klarer als in der Fassung Gregors VII tritt hier der Gedanke heraus, dasz die Hierarchie durch die Sakramente herrscht. Das ist eine innere religiöse Notwendigkeit, nicht blosz eine Forderung göttlichen oder natürlichen Rechtes."[17]

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11. III^{a}, q. 69, a. 5 corp.
12. Ibid., q. 72, a. 1, ad. 4.
13. S.c.G. IV, c. 78, par. 2.
14. Suppl., q. 42, a. 2 corp.
15. Ibid., q. 42, a. 3.
16. Ibid., q. 36, a. 3, ad 2.
17. Op. cit., III., p. 567.

In penance the power of the passion of Christ operates through the priest's absolution and the acts of the penitent. Thus the penitent cooperates with grace to destroy sin. After sin, Thomas says, penance is necessary for salvation, just as bodily medicine is necessary for a man who has contracted a dangerous disease.[18]

In the sacrament of extreme unction, the form of which is aprayer, all the members of the Mystical Body evidence their interest in the salvation of the dying. In this hour, which marks the sealing or the breaking of living union with Christ the Head, they pray that God's grace may be with the dying one.[19] This, too, being a sacrament of the new law, effects the forgiveness of sins.[20]

In a treatment of Thomas' doctrine of the Church, the central and principal sacrament, the Holy Eucharist, deserves a short presentation by itself.

B. The Holy Eucharist—Christ Present in the Church.

Christ, Head and Founder of the Church, is present in it even after His Ascension in the Holy Eucharist. The writer of the great "Tantum ergo Sacramentum" saw in the Eucharist the very body of Christ present, on which the Church could feed. The Head must have a continual influence

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18. IIIa, q. 84, a. 5 corp.
19. S.c.G. IV, cap. 73, par. 1, in fine.
20. Suppl., q. 30, a. 1, Sed contra.

on His Mystical Body, just as the physical head supplies sense and movement to the physical body. The bridegroom must remain actively in the chamber of the world with the Church, His Bride. Thomas says: "Ad perfectionem nostram exigebatur, ut caput nostrum etiam nobis realiter conjungeretur: et ideo quamdiu sub propria specie cum hominibus conversatus est, non oportebat hoc sacramentum institui, sed quamdiu eius corporali praesentia destituenda erat Ecclesia."[22]

The Holy Eucharist makes sensible the unity between Christ and the Church. As the bread, "which was once scattered upon the mountains" and the wine, which is the fruit of many individual grapes, have been united into two sacramental elements, so also many sanctified members form the Mystical Body of Christ.[23] "Panis ex multis granis conficitur et vinum ex multis acinis confluit, quod competit ad significandum corpus Christi verum et mysticum."[24] This sacrament, says Thomas, substantially contains the common spiritual good of the whole Church.[25]

Christ is the cause of the grace of this sacrament through His passion: as He came into the world visibly bringing the life of grace, John 1, so He operates

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22. IV. Sent. dist. 8, q. 1, a. 3, sol 3.
23. Cf. Grabmann's presentation of the history of this concept, which came through St. Paul, Augustine, Gratian's Decretals, Peter Lombard. Op. cit., p. 271.
24. IV. Sent. dist. 11, q. 2, a. 1 corp.
25. III^{a}, q. 66, a. 3, ad 1.

sacramentally in it now, bringing once more the life of grace, John 6: "qui manducat me, vivet propter me." Through this sacrament grace is increased and the spiritual life is perfected; for this purpose, that man might exist perfect in himself through being joined to God.[26]

This sacrament, like all the sacraments of the New Law, incorporates into Christ. It is necessary, by way of means, for salvation. "Res huius sacramenti est unitas corporis mystici, sine qua non potest esse salus; nulli enim patet aditus salutis extra Ecclesiam, sicut nec in diluvio absque arca Noë, quae significat Ecclesiam, ut habetur I Petr. 3."[27] Thomas continues by saying that the effect of a sacrament can be obtained before its reception by the desire of the recipient. Baptism ordains men toward the Eucharist. And just as they believe by the faith of the Church, thus it is by the intention of the Church that they desire the Eucharist, and in consequence receive its proper effect.[28] Mura says of this identification of the Church with the Eucharist: "Ce texte remarquable nous introduit dans l'intelligence du mystère de l'Église, qui tout entière existe en fonction de l'Eucharistie, pour elle et par elle."[29] This sacrament above all others introduces to and supplies the life of the Church and strengthens the unity

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26. III^{a}, q. 79, a. 1, corp. et ad 1.
27. Ibid., q. 73, a. 3 corp.
28. Ibid.
29. Op. cit., I, p. 185.

of the Mystical Body. The Holy Eucharist gives Christ Himself, the author of grace; it therefore supplies grace superabundantly, for it is the very source.

VI. The Three Churches in Thomas

Now, in order to clarify Thomas' conception of the Mystical Body which we met in considering the Headship of Christ, and to meet the problem of the visible Church in Thomas we must discover the orders of membership in Christ's Body. From the outset one dominant thought of Thomas must be kept in mind: membership is conditioned by grace—"Non autem efficitur homo membrum Christi nisi per gratiam."[1] This principle, basic whenever Thomas thinks of membership, should be kept in mind throughout the reading of this chapter: it will be established that Thomas operates with three different conceptions of Church: 1) The Mystical Body, 2) The Spiritual Church, 3) The Visible Church.

A. The Mystical Body.

The sedes for Christ as Head of the Church is found in articles three and four of question eight under the Christology of the Summa. Thomas asks first whether Christ is the Head of all men. The substance of his answer establishes the fact that membership in the Mystical Body is universal. All men—those in Old Testament times, the saints in glory, the sufferers in purgatory, unbelievers in this world, even

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1. IIIa, q. 62, a. 1 corp; also q. 17, art. 2, ad 1.

heretics--all mankind is included in this vast Mystical Church. The problem peoples dwelling round about and among the Christians--Jews and Mohammedans--are even included. They are members because they are all objects of God's redemptive will; even all angels are included, art. 4.[2] The Mystical Body includes the just of the Old Testament, because by observing the sacramental rites they professed faith and love for the coming Messias.[3]

There are three main parts of the Mystical Body: the Church Triumphant, consisting of those who are united to Him in glory; the Church Suffering, destined for certain glory but purifying their souls by the punishments of purgatory,[4] and the Church Militant, united to Christ by faith and grace on earth.[5]

Of those on earth Thomas apparently distinguishes four classes, two of which are incorporated into Christ _in actu_ and two _in potentia_:[6] 1) Those united to Him _per charitatem_; these are vitalized by the Holy Spirit through faith, the

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2. It will be noted that, broadly speaking, this concept is equivalent to that of objective justification. We would find no one in purgatory, but would admit that the angels participate in the blessedness of Christ's redemption, I Pet. 1, 12.

3. III^{a}, q. 8, a. 3, ad 3; _Ibid._, q. 62, a. 6 corp; _Expositio in Symbolum_, art. 9.

4. Cf. _Suppl._, q. 71, a. 6, ad 3.

5. Cf. _Expositio in Symbolum_, art. 9.

6. III^{a}, q. 8, a. 3 corp. Also the earlier _Commentary on the Sentences_, dist. 13, q. 2, a. 2, where he unites the _peccatores fideles_ only _aequivoce_ as members of the Church, Grabmann, _op. cit._, p. 108ff.

sacraments, and love. They are the fideles, his living members, who are free from mortal sins. 2) Those united to Him per fidem. These possess faith and receive the sacraments, but are still in need of love; they are dead members, though as Thomas says, ad 2, they are united to Him imperfecte actualiter by fides informata. "Percipiunt tamen tales a Christo quemdam actum vitae, qui est credere."[7] 3) Those united to Him now in potentiality but who will be reduced to act. Divine predestination foresees that they will one day be His. 4) Those united in potentiality who will never be His.

It must be noted that once someone in the fourth class has died he ceases to be a member of Christ's Body even potentially. He no longer has a chance to be saved.[8] But when alive he had access to grace, so he was a member of the Mystical Body, just as a hand which may later be chopped off is at present a member of the natural body.

Christ is the Head of angels not because He redeemed them, but because He is above them in the hierarchical order and is thus a source for them of light and perfection. Angels have the same end as men, i.e., the gloria divinae fruitionis, therefore they belong to the society moving Godwards through the mediation of Christ.[9]

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7. III[a], q. 8, a. 3, ad 2.
8. Ibid., q. 49, a. 3, ad 1.
9. Ibid., q. 8, a. 4., III Sent. dist. 13, q. 2, a. 2.

Christ is the Head of all men and angels. These are united to Him in different degrees, according to the grace which they have received and their nearness to glory. All rational creatures without exception were meant to return to the bosom of God. However, as we shall see, the Angelic Doctor had something more definite to say of those on the way.

B. The Spiritual Church

Practically, Thomas does not operate with the concept of the Mystical Body. He operates with the definition handed down to him from the early Fathers, that the Church is the congregatio or communio omnium fidelium. This is his point of view in the Expositio: "Unde Ecclesia sancta est idem quod congregatio fidelium, et quilibet christianus est sicut membrum ipsius Ecclesiae."[10]

Heretics do not belong to this Church, for they have divided themselves from a Church that is one. Here Thomas quotes Canticles 6, 8: "Una est columba mea, perfecta mea."[11] The greater excommunication separates men not only from the sacraments, like the smaller, but it excludes from the communio fidelium.[12] Therefore, says Thomas, no one should take it lightly to be cut off or expelled from this Church: only in this Church can men find salvation, just as only in

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10. Art. 9. Cf. also I^{a}, q. 117, a. 2; De Verit., q. 29, a. 4; S.c.G. IV, 78; IV. Sent. dist. 20, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 1.
11. Ibid.
12. Suppl., q. 23, a. 1, corp.

Noah's ark was it possible to be saved.[13]

Membership in the body of the faithful is not conditioned on faith alone; members must be united with one another through charity to be members of this Church.[14] Their faith must show forth the Spirit of Christ--they must witness through good works or by avoiding sin to the faith that is in them. Thomas brings this out very distinctly: "Christianus dicitur qui Christi est. Dicitur autem aliquis esse Christi, non solum ex eo quod habet fidem Christi, sed etiam ex eo quod spiritu Christi ad opera virtuosa procedit, secundum illud Rom. 8, 9, Si quis spiritum Christi non habet, hic non est ejus; et etiam ex eo quod ad imitationem Christi peccatis moritur."[15]

In this sense the Church is the continued existence of Christ through the centuries: in His members He continues to live. The sacraments are the "Lebenskräfte" on which the social body feeds. These are those who possess sanctifying grace, are in the state of grace. They have been anointed with a spiritual unction unto sanctification by the Holy Ghost. They are truly incorporated into the Body of Christ.

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13. Expositio in Symbolum, art. 9.
14. Suppl., q. 71, a. 1, praeterea.
15. IIa IIae, q. 124, a. 5, ad 1.

C. The Visible Church.

The question which presents itself to the modern mind is: "Where does the Church as institution enter Thomas' thought?" He saw all about him the functionings of the great institution of salvation, the Church hierarchically organized under the Pope at Rome. In precisely what relationship did the administration of the sacraments and the ministrations of the whole army of the Church stand to the corpus Christi mysticum or to the congregatio fidelium?

The visible church cannot be the same for Thomas as the Mystical Body. We learned that his dominant note in treating the Mystical Body was universality; this is the Church in the broadest sense for Thomas. Men become members of this simply by being born; but entry into the visible church can only be made through faith and baptism. Even a catechumen is not united to the visible church before baptism, though he is a member of the Mystical Body voto.[16] Likewise, neither can the visible church be identified with the spiritual congregation of the saints, for these are in the state of grace and not all in the visible church possess sanctifying grace.

I believe O'Connor is misleading when he says we are justified in calling the visible church the Mystical Body of

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16. O'Connor, op. cit., p. 290.

of Christ.[17] He does, indeed, recognize the wider sense of Thomas' use of the second term. I believe he is misrepresenting Thomas' thinking when he says that for Thomas there is only one Church, that "mystical" always points to the mystery of the redemption, and since that mystery is one, presenting many aspects, there can be only one Mystical Body.[18] This is simply not true to the thinking of Thomas. Congar takes essentially the same view as O'Connor, making the Church-as-Institution the very mode of being of the Mystical Body and the New Life in Christ.[19] He believes that for St. Thomas "there is only one Church whose inward being manifests itself in an organic society."[20] The rhetoric of these ecclesiastics seems to serve better as an apologetic for the one church than to meet the real problem in Thomas' ecclesiology.

Nor can we admit Thomasius' equation of the communion of the faithful with the visible Christian society.[21] The communion of saints consists only of those united to Christ by faith and charity. To be sure, the visible organization can excommunicate from this, but in itself the institution includes all those who possess faith and baptism.

One sees here the truth of Bainvel's observation on the

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17. Ibid., p. 297.
18. Ibid., pp. 298-9.
19. Op. cit., p. 349.
20. Ibid., p. 351.
21. Op. cit., pp. 200-2.

confusion, to our modern eyes, in Thomas' thinking on the Church:

> "On aura remarqué comment le Docteur angélique unit et confond dans un tout indissoluble les éléments visibles et les éléments invisible comment il met le Saint-Esprit, la grâce et la sainteté, les vertus, la communion des saints, dans le corps constitué, dans la société établie par le Christ, propagée par les Apôtres, répandue dans le monde, unie autour du Pape de Rome--et, signe curieux de cette confusion, comment il fait remonter jusqu' aux jours d'Abel, la même société qu'il dit avoir été fondée par le Christ et par les Apôtres. En cela Thomas est bien du moyen âge."[22]

An example of what Bainvel describes is found in II-II^{ae}, q. 183, a. 2, where Thomas suddenly asks: "Utrum in Ecclesia debeat esse diversitas officiorum seu statuum." Here he conceives of the Church as a society divided in functioning and organized under a hierarchy. In another article,[23] on Schism, Thomas passes easily from schism as related to the spiritual unity under Christ and the Mystical Body to the same sin defined as a break with the visible society organized under the Pope. Or one may refer to the Expositio, where he speaks of the Church of Peter which evangelized Italy, outside which there is neither no faith at all, or it is mingled with many errors.[24]

One sees here, as we near the end, the significance of the fact pointed out in the Introduction, that Thomas,

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22. Op. cit., p. 979.
23. II^{a} II^{ae}, q. 39, a. 1.
24. Art. 9.

lide the other Scholastics, had no treatise De Ecclesia. The confusion pointed to above indicates, to a certain extent, the conditions existing in Thomas' day. He was surrounded by the imposing, demanding, divine institution of salvation. This must have exercised a hidden, pervasive influence on all his thinking.[25] At the same time he was the recipient of a rich heritage of thinking on the nature of the Church from the Fathers and Early Scholastics. The concepts of the corpus Christi mysticum and the congregatio fidelium were most imposing. It is not surprising that Thomas never harmonized these realities. I think it a misinterpretation of Thomas to suppose he did.

This much may be said about Thomas' view of the visible organization. It was undoubtedly for him the indispensable means ordained by God Himself for bringing the grace and truth of Christ to the individual.[26] The Church was built on faith and the sacraments of faith.[27] So the Church existed to dispense the sacraments, and this activity demanded the whole hierarchy of the priesthood. Thomas never met the difficulties involved between the real and the ideal, between the Church of Rome and the una sancta.

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25. Cf. a statement regarding his literary activity ascribed to Thomas on his deathbed, which seems to be typical of his thinking throughout his life: "Totum relinquo correctioni sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, in cuius obedientia nunc transeo ex hac vita." Grabmann, op. cit., p. 4, from Guillelmus de Tocco, Vita S. Thom. Aqu. op. X. Boll Mart. tom I. pag. 677.

26. Cf. Gottschick's opinion given by Grabmann, p. 111.

27. We can do no better than quote Congar's collection of texts, op. cit., p. 354: "Ecclesia constituitur, fabricatur (In IV Sent., d. 18, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 1; Summa Theol., III, q. 64, a. 2, ad 3 um), fundatur (In IV Sent., d. 17, q. 3, a. 1, sol. 5), instituitur (Summa Theol., I, q. 92, a. 3), consecratur (In Joan., c. 19, lect. 5, n. 4) per fidem et fidei sacramenta. Compare the idea which occurs very frequently that the merits of the passion of Christ are mediated to us by faith and the Sacraments of faith: Q.D. de Ver., q. 27, a. 4; q. 29, a. 7, ad 8um; ad 11um; Summa Theol., III, q. 49, a. 3, ad 1um, and a. 3 c.; q. 62, a. 5, ad 2 um and a. 6; q. 79, a. 7, ad 2 um; in Hebr., c. 3, lect. 3; Expos. in Symbol., art. 10, etc."

VII. Brief Critical Analysis of Thomas' Position.

What was the Church for Thomas? I believe that, underlying his whole thinking, it was the vehicle for bringing the grace and truth of Christ to men. The relation of an individual to this grace and truth determined his relation to the Mystical Body, the Spiritual Church, or the visible institution. I believe Thomas sincerely wished to follow Scripture and Christ, but his thinking, clear and penetrating as the greatest mathematician's, was nevertheless molded by tradition and the institution he served. My impression is that it is one of the great tragedies in the history of Christian thought that Thomas had no greater exegetical tools at hand. Though he wished to follow Scripture faithfully he nevertheless followed Jerome, and Jerome mislead him just when he thought he was being most faithful to Scripture.[1]

On the basis of the foregoing study I believe a criticism of Thomas' views on the Church should take these lines:

1) Thomas did not see clearly the discrepancy between the una sancta and the institution of his day. His thinking on the Mystical Body cannot be taken seriously because it was not a practical concept for Thomas himself. I do not believe

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1. Cf. Suppl., q. 42, a. 1, where Thomas asks whether marriage is a sacrament. In the Sed contra he is influenced by Jerome's translation of Eph. 5, 32, "Sacramentum hoc magnum est," to consider matrimony a sacrament.

he identified, but he confused the communio sanctorum with the Ecclesia Petri, and therein lies his greatest error. The institution he served was too imposing and universal for him to see beyond it.

The Church in the proper sense, the invisible Church, is never identical with any single visible institution. In this Church the Holy Spirit unifies, and it needs no visible Head, the Pope, to guarantee a unity which was a myth already in Thomas' day. The Augsburg Confession speaks of this Church in Articles VII and VIII: "Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered."[2] In the sense of this passage the Church is wherever one finds the saving Word and Sacraments. Luther also spoke of "die gemachte Kirche", an empirical church, which is the visible aspect of the invisible Church. The Confessions speak of this church in an improper sense.

The Old Testament employs the term קָהָל, the New Testament the term ἐκκλησία to denote the assembly or congregation of the faithful. It is with these terms that we must begin our thinking on the Church. It is extremely interesting to find such thinking in a source so far afield as Widgery's text on Christian ethics. "The Bible, wrote Dr.

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2. Augsburg Confession, art. VII, (Of the Church), Concordia Triglotta, p. 47.

Gore, is of all books the most contemptuous of majorities. This is true of the Old Testament as of the New. The true religion, the religion of the prophets and the Psalms, appears as the religion of a faithful remnant who hardly maintain their ground among a faithless people."[3]

It is interesting to speculate regarding the development of thought on the Church if Thomas had stressed the Spiritual Church. The entire development of the hierarchical tendency might have been different; the thought of this theologian, now decisive for the majority of people in Christendom, might have led all thought in a different pattern.

2) Thomas speaks much of grace, yes, but what is this grace? It is, indeed, something you can see and feel, for it is mediated like a divine medicine in the sacraments. This grace flows, it is a perceptible means for spiritual help, it is for the sick, it was brought first by Christ, the Good Samaritan. St. Thomas could compare the grace proceeding from Christ's passion with the action of a pharmacist who may prepare a remedy which will in the future cure all sorts of maladies.[4]

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3. Christian Ethics in History and Modern Life, p. 249.
4. III^{a}, q. 49, a. 1, ad 3.

Now the grace of Christ, which is indeed mediated by the Church, is hardly such a priestly-mediated thing. Luther pointed Protestantism to the direct access of the sinner to his God, thus bypassing the tremendous mechanism of the Church. The excursus of Fuller in his History of Philosophy on this point is interesting: he would have us swallow the whole husk of ritual and sacraments in order to be sure to get the grain of spiritual sustenance.[5]

But grace is not that; it is the free gift of God, something spiritual rather than material. It's very essence is the relationship between man and his God. Melanchton best expressed the meaning of the grace of Christ when he said in the Loci Theologici, "Gratia non est medicina, sed favor est."

The Thomistic conception of grace fails to see that true Christianity is direct confrontation with Christ; institutionalism[6] must give way to a less perceptible, nevertheless more dynamic conception of the Kingdom of God. Thus I would say that Thomas was deceived in his conception of the grace of Christ no less than in the truth of Christ.

3) Finally, I believe, it remains to be pointed out

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5. Section on Modern Philosophy, p. 29, but consider 26 ff.

6. Cf. Niebuhr's poignant statement, Interpretation of of Christian Ethics, p. 232: "The Catholic doctrine of the Church is, in fact, a constant temptation to demoniac pretensions, since it claims for an institution, established in time and history, universal and absolute validity."

that the commingling of theology with philosophy in Thomas resulted in injury to his doctrine of the Church. We would have appreciated very much a treatise on the Church: this would have given him an opportunity to clarify his stand on the three churches. Had he lived a century later, in the midst of the great battles of Rome, he would have been prompted to write one. Now he rests in peace, let us believe even in the heavenly mansions, and the dialectic that once astounded both friend and foe will never break the silence to give us a tract De Ecclesia.

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