

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Trinitarian charity: Aquinas and Lombard on charity and the Holy Spirit

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Abstract

This paper examines Aquinas' reception of Peter Lombard's disputed thesis that the charity with which we love God and neighbour is not a virtue, but rather the Holy Spirit himself. Through a close reading of the four passages where Aquinas engages directly with the thesis, I show how this reception evolved over the course of his career, such that he gradually came to incorporate the trinitarian insight underlying Lombard's thesis into his doctrine of created charity. Although this doctrine is often viewed as an outright rejection of Lombard's thesis, I argue that it is in fact a substantial development of it that was made possible by Aquinas' assimilation of Aristotelian naturalism.

Keywords: charity; grace; habit; Holy Spirit; Peter Lombard; Thomas Aquinas

This paper proceeds in two stages. First, I survey the state of current research on Thomas Aquinas' reception of Peter Lombard's disputed thesis on charity and the Holy Spirit. I thereby intend to clarify what is theologically at stake in recent interpretations of this reception by some medieval scholars, and to show how these interpretations fail to adequately portray Aquinas' mature position as it is presented in the *Summa Theologiae*. Second, I undertake a close reading of four *loci* in Aquinas' corpus where he engages directly with Lombard's thesis. By examining these texts, I aim to demonstrate how they exhibit significant development in Aquinas' understanding of charity and its relation to the Holy Spirit over the course of his career. I argue that, despite consistently maintaining, *contra* Lombard, that charity is a virtue, Aquinas nevertheless in his later works comes to endorse, in a way not yet conceivable to the early Thomas of the *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, the genuine trinitarian insight that shapes Lombard's thesis; namely, the idea that the Holy Spirit personally effects the rational creature's advance towards God through His dynamic involvement in graced human action. Furthermore, I argue that this reading of Aquinas' doctrine of created charity calls into question a view prevalent among some medieval scholars that Lombard's disputed thesis is representative of a theological perspective that is antithetical to that of Aquinas and other thirteenth-century scholastics. On the contrary, I suggest that Lombard's thesis is best understood as a rudimentary attempt at explaining the Holy Spirit's personal involvement in meritorious acts of charity, upon which Aquinas' doctrine of created charity significantly improves. I conclude that the synthesis of divine and human action achieved in Aquinas' mature thought should be viewed not as an

outright rejection of Lombard's thesis, but rather as a substantial development of it made possible by his assimilation of Aristotelian naturalism.

I

A resurgence of scholarly interest in Peter Lombard (1096–1160) has recently revived debate about his controversial thesis, put forward in distinction 17 of book 1 of the *Sentences*, that charity is not a virtue, but rather the Holy Spirit himself, who brings about the act of loving 'only through himself, without the medium of any virtue'.¹ Lombard's identification of the Holy Spirit with the charity by which the human being loves God and neighbour is one of several theses that would later come to be widely disputed in the period of high scholasticism.² Although rejected by several prominent schoolmen, the thesis has nevertheless had its share of adherents – not only among Lombard's contemporaries, but also in the modern era among certain theologians who have found in it 'the seeds of a more evangelical attitude', unsullied by the Augustinian tradition's infelicitous encounter with Aristotle in the years immediately following Lombard's death.³ More recently, some scholars of Lombard have sought to reinstate the *Magister Sententiarum* and his magnum opus as being not only of historical interest, but also of contemporary theological significance. In doing so, they have sometimes gone so far as to describe his thesis on charity and the Holy Spirit as 'a cornerstone of his entire theological construction'.⁴ As such, they see it not as a deviation from the tradition, which it was widely considered to be by later scholastics, but rather as characteristic of a mystical mode of theology that stands opposed to the scientific approach that eventually came to dominate the thirteenth century and found its culmination in the work of Aquinas.⁵

¹*per se tantum sine alicuius virtutis medio operatur*, Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, editio tertia, 2 vols, ed. Ignatius Brady (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971): I, d. 17, c. 6, n. 8. Unless otherwise indicated, I follow the English translation of Philipp W. Rosemann in 'Fraterna dilectio est Deus: Peter Lombard's Thesis on Charity as the Holy Spirit', in Thomas A. F. Kelly and Philipp W. Rosemann (eds), *Amor Amicitiae: On the Love that is Friendship: Essays in Medieval Thought and Beyond in Honor of the Rev. Professor James McEvoy* (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), pp. 412–24.

²In his commentary on the *Sentences*, Bonaventure lists eight places where Lombard 'diverged from common opinions and adhered to a less probable position', of which *distinctio* 17 is the first (*Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, lib. II, dist. 44, dubium 3, in S. Bonaventurae *Opera theologica selecta*, editio minor, vol. 2 (Quaracchi: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1938), 1058; quoted in Rosemann, 'Peter Lombard's Thesis', p. 410). For a helpful, though rather cursory discussion of Aquinas' various positions on these disputed theses, see Edward A. Synan, 'Brother Thomas, The Master, and the Masters', in *St Thomas Aquinas, 1274–1974: Commemorative Studies* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1974), pp. 219–42.

³Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th edn, vol. 3 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964 [1910]), p. 620; quoted in Rosemann, 'Peter Lombard's Thesis', p. 410. Among thirteenth-century scholastics who rejected the thesis were Stephen Langton, William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales, St Albert the Great, St Bonaventure and St Thomas Aquinas. For a detailed survey of twelfth-century scholastic adherents to Lombard's thesis, see Aage Rydstrom-Poulsen, *The Gracious God: Gratia in Augustine and the Twelfth Century* (Copenhagen: Akademisk, 2002), pp. 393–434.

⁴Rydstrom-Poulsen, *The Gracious God*, p. 470. Rosemann cites Rydstrom-Poulsen approvingly in 'Peter Lombard's Thesis', p. 434.

⁵An important exception to this widespread interpretation of Lombard's theology can be found in the work of Marcia Colish, who in her 2-volume study of Lombard warns against drawing 'too much of a contrast between Peter and Thomas', *Peter Lombard* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), p. 501, n. 66. Colish, however, is perhaps guilty of reading too much of Aquinas into Lombard. For a critical analysis of Colish's

In the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas famously rejects Lombard's thesis on the grounds that it compromises the voluntary nature of charity. According to Aquinas, for charity to be voluntary 'the will has to be moved by the Holy Spirit toward an act of loving in such a way that it itself also effects the act'.⁶ However, for such cooperation to exist, there must be some principle in the soul – that is, a habit or virtue – through which the movements of the indwelling Holy Spirit are mediated. Aquinas argues that Lombard, by denying this, unwittingly undermines the integrity of the divinely given principle of meritorious action whose excellence he ultimately wishes to uphold.⁷ Although Aquinas does not put it in exactly these terms, one might say that what is at stake for him in his rejection of Lombard's thesis is the extent to which our acts of charity truly belong to us. If Lombard is correct that they are the immediate effects of the Holy Spirit's activity in us, then it would seem that our salvation comes at the cost of becoming entirely passive divine instruments. Were this the case, it would not be clear in what sense it could be considered *our* salvation at all, since we would seem to have no hand in the matter.⁸ As Jean-Pierre Torrell puts it, 'we would be excluded from the act of love of God and neighbor; we would only be the theater in which they occurred'.⁹

Those sympathetic to Lombard's thesis have often responded to this critique by pointing out what they consider to be an even more troubling deficiency in Aquinas' doctrine of charity as a created habit. According to them, Aquinas overcompensates, as it were, for Lombard's apparent confusion of divine and human activity, by too strongly distinguishing between the two. Thus, on the one hand, they criticise Aquinas for restricting the Holy Spirit's involvement in our salvation merely to the initial infusion of the created habit of charity, such that the justified seem to have no need of God's further help in order to attain salvation, having been made capable of acting meritoriously by their own divinely infused powers. As Karl Barth puts it, in Aquinas' doctrine of charity we seem to find 'under the guise of this supernatural quality a liberty which abolishes grace qua grace'.¹⁰ On the other hand, they take issue with Aquinas' understanding of the infusion of created charity as a divine act that 'is not proper to any of the persons, but is instead common to the whole Trinity'.¹¹ Although

study, see Philipp W. Rosemann, 'New Interest in Peter Lombard: The Current State of Research and Some Desiderata for the Future', *Recherches de Theologie et Philosophie Medievales*, 72/1 (2005), pp. 137–45.

⁶Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [hereafter *ST*] 2/2.23.2. Translations from the *Summa Theologiae* are taken from the Blackfriars Latin-English text (New York: Blackfriars in conjunction with McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), which uses the 1947 translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

⁷Cf. *ST* 2/2.23.2: *dicebat propter excellentiam caritatis*.

⁸Though I lack the space to discuss at any sufficient length Aquinas' doctrine of instrumental causality, it is important to note here that in taking this view Aquinas does not thereby deny a passive 'moment' in the operation of the indwelling Holy Spirit on the soul. However, for him this moment is not itself sufficient to bring about the exterior act of charity. Rather, this requires a distinct act commanded by the will, which can nonetheless only be brought to completion with God's further assistance. Whereas in the former mode (*gratia operans*) the soul is simply moved, in the latter mode (*gratia cooperans*) the soul is not only moved, but also moves itself. For an insightful discussion of this topic, see Daria Spezzano, *The Glory of God's Grace: Deification According to St Thomas Aquinas* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2015), pp. 332–3.

⁹Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Spiritual Master*, vol. 2 of *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 182.

¹⁰Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I/2*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), p. 375. We should note, however, that Barth is equally critical of what he describes as the "'doctetic" anthropology' implicit in Lombard's thesis.

¹¹*ST* 1.45.6, co. Of course, Lombard also holds this Augustinian view. This doctrine was the subject of a heated debate in the 1920s between the Thomists Franz Zigon and Johann Stufler SJ. For a detailed

Aquinas admits that this infusion should be appropriated to the Holy Spirit as its exemplar cause, such a view nevertheless makes it seem as if God effects our salvation from a distance, without revealing much of anything about His own trinitarian mystery.¹² For these and other reasons, scholars have sometimes been led to conclude that Aquinas' doctrine of created charity ultimately dissolves the trinitarian character of God's salvific action on the soul, which Lombard's thesis preserves.

But is this in fact the case? Recent Thomistic scholarship has done much to discredit this interpretation of Aquinas' thought by appealing to his scriptural commentaries and systematic discussions of the mission of the Holy Spirit as evidence of an often overlooked trinitarian dimension to his doctrine of grace and salvation.¹³ Foremost among these scholars is Gilles Emery, whose work sheds light on the question of how Aquinas understood the relation between the Holy Spirit and charity. In an article on the centrality of the divine missions in Aquinas' trinitarian theology, Emery explains that, for Aquinas, the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the justified consists of two aspects. He writes: 'The first, uncreated aspect is the divine person himself sent in accordance with his proper mode of existence' – that is, according to his identity as proceeding from the Father and the Son.¹⁴ Concerning this aspect, Emery notes that 'the missions bear in themselves the eternal mystery of the divine persons'.¹⁵ As Aquinas himself puts it in his commentary on the *Sentences*, 'the temporal procession is not essentially other than the eternal procession'.¹⁶ Thus, Emery concludes that, for Aquinas, 'the mystery of the Trinity in itself, that is, the mystery of the persons in their common divinity and in their personal properties, is revealed and made present within the *dispensatio* itself, since the eternal generation of the Son, and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, are really included in their mission'.¹⁷

Emery then goes on to discuss a secondary aspect of the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, which he describes as a 'new created effect [that] consists in the gift of charity'. This gift 'renders souls conformed to the Holy Spirit who is Love in person'.¹⁸ Here Emery is speaking precisely of charity as a created habit. Emery particularly wishes to emphasise how Aquinas sees created charity as a 'gift' – meaning that it is not something that allows God to remain at a distance from us, but is rather a means of our 'participation in the personal property of the Holy Spirit'.¹⁹ As Aquinas puts it in his

summary of the debate, see Geertjan Zuidwegt, "'Utrum caritas sit aliquid creatum in anima": Aquinas on the Lombard's Identification of Charity with the Holy Spirit', *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 79/1 (2012), pp. 42–53.

¹²Karl Rahner suggests that this is a result of Aquinas' division of the doctrine on God into two separate treatises, *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino*, which 'became customary only after the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard were superseded by the *Summa* of St. Thomas'. In contrast, 'the Master of the *Sentences* subsumed the general doctrine of God under a doctrine of the Trinity'. Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Crossroads, 1997), p. 16.

¹³The scriptural task is taken up effectively by Daniel A. Keating in 'Justification, Sanctification, and Divinization in Thomas Aquinas', in Thomas Weinandy, Thomas G., Daniel A. Keating and John P. Yocum (eds), *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), pp. 139–58.

¹⁴Gilles Emery, 'Theologia and *Dispensatio*: The Centrality of the Divine Missions in St. Thomas's Trinitarian Theology', *The Thomist* 74 (2010), p. 526.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 560.

¹⁶*processio temporalis non est alia quam processio aeterna essentialiter*. Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, ed. P. Mandonnet and M. F. Moos, 4 vols (Paris, 1933–47), I *Sent.*, d. 16, q. 1, a. 1, co.

¹⁷Emery, 'Theologia and *Dispensatio*', p. 528.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 526.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 527.

commentary on Romans 5:5, through this created effect ‘the Holy Spirit . . . [leads] us to the participation of Love, which is the Holy Spirit, and by this participation we are made lovers of God’.²⁰ Thus, in Emery’s study of Aquinas we find a view of Aquinas’ doctrine of created charity which sees it not as empty of trinitarian content, but as part and parcel of his broader teaching concerning the trinitarian mode of God’s salvific action.

This trinitarian aspect of Aquinas’ doctrine of created charity is likewise central to Jean-Pierre Torrell’s discussion of the virtue in his magisterial two-volume study of Aquinas. Torrell ties Aquinas’ trinitarian theology directly to his reception of Lombard’s thesis, noting that ‘we cannot conclude from [his doctrine of created charity] that Thomas rejects the partial truth that Peter Lombard’s thesis contains’.²¹ By this Torrell means to say that, for Aquinas, the infusion of a created habit neither excludes nor substitutes for the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, but rather is the condition for the possibility of the Holy Spirit’s presence in a rational creature who is a principle of its own action. However, while this is indeed a crucial point, there is nevertheless a further aspect of Lombard’s teaching to which Aquinas is attentive that is not acknowledged in Torrell’s treatment of it. That is to say, Torrell fails to specifically consider the personal role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about our acts of charity, which is also clearly at stake in Aquinas’ reception of Lombard’s thesis. This is a crucial trinitarian insight of Lombard’s that, as I will show in the next section, Aquinas only comes to incorporate into his doctrine of created charity in his mature work. Nevertheless, Torrell is well aware of the main developments in Aquinas’ doctrine of grace and charity over the course of his career, and suggests that a comparison of the texts where Aquinas presents the doctrine will reveal how his position is ‘reinforced and better organized’ in his later works.²² This suggestion has been taken up in a recent article by Geertjan Zuidwegt, who provides a helpful analysis of the four passages in which Aquinas specifically treats this disputed question.²³ However, in his analysis of Aquinas’ reception of Lombard’s thesis, Zuidwegt similarly fails to take note of how Aquinas’ doctrine of created charity gradually comes to be informed by Lombard’s trinitarian insight.

Thus, in the rest of this paper, my aim is to build on this body of Thomistic scholarship by defending an additional claim with regard to the development of Aquinas’ doctrine of charity, which has yet to be considered by the scholars discussed above. Namely, that this teaching was not merely ‘reinforced and better organized’, as Torrell imagines, but was also subject to significant development in light of Aquinas’ growing understanding of the Holy Spirit’s dynamic involvement in our acts of charity. As should be clear by now, in taking this position I am deliberately rejecting an assumption prevalent among certain medieval scholars that Aquinas’ rejection of Lombard’s thesis is an inevitable consequence of his assimilation of Aristotelian naturalism. On this view, Aquinas’ reliance on Aristotle automatically sets him in opposition to the evangelical heart of the Augustinian tradition. I believe that this faulty assumption rests on a twofold misunderstanding of the disagreement between Aquinas and

²⁰*Spiritus enim Sanctum, qui est Amor Patris et Filii, dari nobis, est nos adduci ad participationem Amoris, qui est Spiritus Sanctus, a qua quidem participatione efficimur Dei amatores*, Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolam ad Romanos Lectura*, in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura*, vol. 1, ed. R. Cai (Rome: Marietti, 1953), no. 392. My translation.

²¹Torrell, *Spiritual Master*, p. 180.

²²Jean-Pierre Torrell, *The Person and his Work*, vol. 1 of *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, revised edn, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), p. 66, n. 52.

²³Zuidwegt, ‘*Utrum caritas*’.

Lombard, which will be necessary to address, if only briefly, before examining the relevant texts of Aquinas.

On the one hand, it is commonly supposed that, in presenting his thesis, Lombard is suggesting that 'by the Holy Spirit God somehow merges with the human spirit'.²⁴ While it would take another entire paper to effectively defend Lombard against this interpretation, such an *apologia* might proceed by first noting that Aquinas never accuses Lombard of collapsing the ontological distinction between creature and Creator, and that elsewhere in the *Sentences* Lombard is clear about the need for the human being's voluntary collaboration with God's salvific action.²⁵ One might also advert to the work of Erich Przywara, who argues that Lombard's emphasis on the distance between Creator and creature was foundational for the Fourth Lateran Council, and prefigured the fully fledged scholastic teaching of Aquinas.²⁶ With these considerations in mind, it is perhaps not unreasonable for us to suggest that, despite his ongoing disagreement with Lombard, Aquinas was nonetheless aware of certain insights latent in Lombard's identification of charity with the Holy Spirit that would shape his own teaching over the course of his career.

On the other hand, Aquinas is sometimes seen as introducing a strict separation of divine and human spheres of action, that follows from his assimilation of Aristotelian naturalism. For example, this seems to be the view of Philipp Rosemann, who, in his intellectual biography of Peter Lombard, writes:

There is little doubt that Thomas Aquinas's critique of Peter Lombard makes sense once we accept the presupposition that the spheres of divine and human action need to be clearly separated, because the created world possesses an autonomy of action that flows from its own natural forms. Spiritually, however, the idea that the love of God and neighbor is the very presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst is of a powerful beauty. Being aware of possible criticisms, Peter Lombard opted for the less 'scientific', more spiritual account of charity.²⁷

Rosemann has rightly been criticised by Zuidwegt for his depiction of Aquinas as positing an autonomous sphere of human action. As Zuidwegt comments, 'Far from endeavoring to grant the subject a proto-modern autonomous sphere, Aquinas attempts to delineate the conditions that allow the subject to fully participate in the divine love.'²⁸ In other words, Aquinas distinguishes between the two spheres not in order to separate them, but rather to preserve the integrity of the human being's free participation in God's love.

Yet, as I have already observed, in his defence of Aquinas' position, Zuidwegt overlooks the significance of the personal role of the Holy Spirit as uncreated charity in this

²⁴Rydstrom-Poulsen, *The Gracious God*, p. 482. Or, as Rik Van Nieuwenhove puts it in his recent *Introduction to Medieval Theology*, Lombard's thesis 'blurs the distinction between creature and the transcendent God'. Rik Van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (New York: CUP, 2012), p. 154.

²⁵See e.g. his teaching on operating and cooperating grace in *Sent.* II, d. 27, c. 2, n. 3.

²⁶Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, trans. John Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), pp. 387–8. See also Giulio Silano's introduction to his translation of *The Sentences, Book 1: The Mystery of the Trinity* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007), pp. xxviii–xxix.

²⁷Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, p. 89.

²⁸Zuidwegt, 'Aquinas on the Lombard's Identification of Charity', p. 72.

discussion, leaving Aquinas' position vulnerable to the second part of Rosemann's critique. For it is precisely the dynamic involvement of the trinitarian God in human action that Rosemann rightly considers to be of such 'powerful beauty' in Lombard's thesis. If Aquinas cannot account for the Holy Spirit's role in effecting our acts of charity, it seems as if the crucial trinitarian insight shaping Lombard's thesis has simply been discarded, with the result that we will indeed be forced to choose between either Lombard's 'spiritual' account or Aquinas' 'scientific' one. It will therefore be the task of the second part of this paper to demonstrate why this is in fact a false choice. In what follows, I will attempt to show that Aquinas does not simply jettison the trinitarian insight of Lombard's thesis, as might appear to be the case in the above-mentioned treatments of his thought, but rather gradually integrates it over the course of his career into his doctrine of created charity. The synthesis of divine and human action achieved in his later works should thus be seen not as an outright abandonment of Lombard's thesis, but rather a significant improvement on Lombard's rudimentary attempt to explain how the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of the Christian.

II

Having clarified in the first section of this paper what is at stake theologically in certain recent interpretations of Aquinas' reception of Lombard's thesis, we are now ready to proceed with a consideration of the four texts in which Aquinas specifically discusses the topic: (1) the early *Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, written approximately in the period of 1254–6; (2) the *Lectura romana*, a recently recovered text which seems to consist of a student's report of a series of lectures, likely given in Rome in 1265–6, in which Aquinas comments for a second time on the *Sentences*;²⁹ (3) the *Quaestio disputata de caritate* and (4) the *Summa theologiae*, both of which were likely composed around 1272, and equally represent Aquinas' mature teaching.

Scriptum super libros sententiarum (1254–6)

Aquinas' treatment in the *Scriptum* of the question 'whether charity is something created in the soul' immediately presents us with his essential teaching concerning charity as a *habitus*. As I have already mentioned, this doctrine forms the basis for Aquinas' overall rejection of Lombard's thesis which he maintains consistently throughout his career. Beginning from the axiom that 'the soul's entire goodness is from charity', Aquinas argues in his response that this could not be the case unless the infusion of grace and charity were to change the human soul with respect to both its being and operation. 'Yet neither of these things will be able to be done,' Aquinas claims, 'unless charity is a created habit.'³⁰ In the rest of his response, Aquinas goes on to explain why exactly this is, employing the Aristotelian concepts of form, potency and act. The details of these arguments, however, will not concern us much here, since he retains this fundamental perspective throughout his career, although his application of these concepts

²⁹In this dating, I follow Leonard E. Boyle, who argues that the *Lectura Romana* is part of a *reportatio* from Aquinas' lectures on the *Sentences* delivered at the Dominican *studium* at Santa Sabina in Rome in 1265–6. For more details, see 'Alia lectura fratris Thome', *Mediaeval Studies* 45 (1983), pp. 418–29.

³⁰*Neutrum autem horum effici poterit, nisi caritas sit habitus creatus.* I *Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, co. English translation from Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the 'Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard'*, trans. Peter A. Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin and Joseph Bolin (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

gradually becomes more refined.³¹ Rather, what is important for this study is Aquinas' conclusion that 'charity is a habit created in the soul, which is indeed from the whole Trinity as efficient cause, but flows from love, which is the Holy Spirit, as exemplar cause'.³²

As we observed earlier, Aquinas holds that the infusion of the virtue of charity, though effected by the entire Trinity, is rightly appropriated to the Holy Spirit, insofar as it bears a likeness to that Love which proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. At this point, early in his career, it seems to be in this way alone that Aquinas thinks we can say that the Holy Spirit is the charity by which we love God and neighbour. In no way does Aquinas suggest in the *Scriptum* that the Holy Spirit is directly involved in bringing about the act of charity as an efficient cause. His rejection of Lombard's thesis is more or less unqualified. Thus, in this particular treatment of the issue, Aquinas seems rather unconcerned with squaring his commentary on Lombard's thesis with the crucial trinitarian insights contained in it. Aquinas' treatment utterly lacks the sort of inquiry into the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit that Lombard presents in his original discussion.³³ Still, it would be unfair to say that Aquinas is altogether unconcerned with the Holy Spirit in this discussion. For example, in the third *sed contra* he writes that 'it is necessary that there be some habit of charity created in the soul, according to which the Holy Spirit is said to dwell in the soul itself'.³⁴ However, without further explanation, such an ambiguous statement leaves it uncertain as to whether the Holy Spirit dwells in the human being in any way other than by virtue of his created effects. Thus, we find that this initial treatment of Lombard's thesis lacks crucial elements of Aquinas' mature teaching on the matter which will only be developed in his later works. Let us now turn to consider how in Aquinas' second commentary on the *Sentences* we find the beginnings of a change with respect to his treatment of Lombard's thesis.

Lectura Romana (1265)

Despite presenting a commentary on the same text, the *Lectura Romana* is a very different sort of document than the *Scriptum*. Likely a student's *reportatio* of Aquinas' second series of lectures on the *Sentences*, the text at times offers only provisional and unfinished comments on the topics under consideration. Nevertheless, it will be useful for this study insofar as it represents a phase of Aquinas' theological development that is noticeably distinct from his early writings, but which has not yet reached the maturity of his later work. In this particular treatment of created charity, two closely

³¹For a detailed discussion of these arguments, and of how they develop over the course of Aquinas' career, see Dominic Doyle, 'Is Charity the Holy Spirit? A Study of Thomas Aquinas' Disagreement with Lombard', in *Questions on Love and Charity: Summa Theologiae, Secunda Secundae, Questions 23–46*, ed. Robert Miner (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 313–35.

³²*caritatem esse habitum creatum in anima; quae quidem efficienter est a tota Trinitate, sed exemplariter manat ab amore, qui est spiritus sanctus.* I *Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, c.

³³Aquinas' movement beyond the context of Lombard's discussion in the *Sentences* was not unusual. By the time he received the text, due to its use in the schools it had developed to a point that went far beyond the letter of Lombard's original. As Marie Dominique Chenu notes, 'In a half-century, [the *Sentences*] passed from a regime of glossing to one of questions increasingly posited, treated, and organized outside the original text.' *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* (Chicago, IL: H. Regnery Co., 1964), p. 270.

³⁴*Oportet igitur aliquem habitum caritatis creatum esse in anima, secundum quem spiritus sanctus ipsam inhabitare dicitur.* I *Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, *sed contra* 3.

related arguments are made, both of which appear to be recycled versions of arguments presented in a more rudimentary form in the *Scriptum*. They each have to do with the Holy Spirit's relation to the act of charity, and seem intended to clarify what was left ambiguous in the *Scriptum*; namely, that the existence of created charity does not exclude, but rather depends on the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who disposes the Christian to perform acts of charity 'well and easily'.³⁵

On the basis of these arguments, Aquinas presents a conclusion that achieves a new synthesis of his doctrine of created charity with Lombard's thesis. He writes:

As in the other infused virtues, the Holy Spirit brings about two effects: he moves a man to the act [of charity] and, beyond this, he gives to the agent the capacity to act well and easily. And for this reason it is better to say something else [than the Master does] – that from one vantage charity is the Holy Spirit himself by whom we love God *effectively*, and in this regard it is something uncreated because it is the Holy Spirit himself; yet from a different vantage it is something created, insofar as we *formally* love God with the very charity given to the soul.³⁶

In this formulation of the 'two effects' of the Holy Spirit, Aquinas accounts in a new way for the dynamic involvement of the Holy Spirit in the act of charity itself. Here not only is the Holy Spirit considered (by appropriation) the cause of the created *habitus* of charity, as Aquinas had already claimed in the *Scriptum*, but the Holy Spirit is also said to have a direct role in bringing about each act of love, insofar as he 'moves a man to the act'. By thus affirming the Holy Spirit's involvement in moving the human being to the act of love, Aquinas has taken a significant step towards assimilating a crucial element of Lombard's thesis into his own doctrine of created charity. Zuijdwegt, in his commentary on the text, seems to recognize this when he writes that 'this statement could easily be understood as a variant of the Lombard's position'.³⁷ As we now turn to examine Aquinas' mature exposition of his doctrine of charity in his later works, we will see how this development is confirmed and clarified, such that we can confidently say that Aquinas eventually comes to affirm certain insights of Lombard's thesis in a way that was not conceivable to the early Thomas of the *Scriptum*.

Quaestio disputata de caritate and Summa Theologiae (1272)

These two treatments of Lombard's thesis share much of the same content, and present the same three essential arguments against it. As Zuijdwegt notes in his discussion of these passages, it is here that Aquinas finally brings the problem of human freedom

³⁵*bene et faciliter*. Thomas Aquinas, *Lectura Romana in Primum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, ed. Leonard Boyle and John Boyle (Toronto: PIMS, 2006): d. 17, q. 1, a. 2, co. English translation from *On Love and Charity*, trans. Kwasniewski, pp. 61–3.

³⁶*sicut in aliis virtutibus infusis, Spiritus Sanctus facit duos effectus: in quantum movet ad actum, et in quantum supra hoc dat agenti quod bene et faciliter operetur. Et propter hoc aliter dicendum est et melius, quod caritas est ipse Spiritus Sanctus quo diligimus Deum effective, et secundum hoc est quid increatum quia est ipse Spiritus Sanctus; est autem quid creatum in quantum secundum ipsam caritatem Deum formaliter diligimus. Lectura Romana d. 17, q. 1, a. 2, co.*

³⁷Zuijdwegt, 'Aquinas on the Lombard's Identification of Charity', p. 63. Similarly, Doyle notes that 'the initial blunt rejection of Lombard's position gives way to a charitable restatement of the truth that Thomas sees to lie behind Lombard's undifferentiated identification of charity with the Holy Spirit'. See Doyle, 'Is Charity the Holy Spirit?', p. 321.

to bear on Lombard's thesis, by showing how it compromises the voluntary and meritorious nature of charity.³⁸ But again, the details of these arguments will not be our primary concern.³⁹ Rather, what is of particular interest for this study is how Aquinas comes to articulate in these passages the proper mode of cooperation between the Holy Spirit and those in whom he dwells. In the *De caritate*, we find a particularly noteworthy statement in the addendum following the corpus of the article. Having concluded that 'there must be a habit of charity created in us so as to be the formal principle of our act of love', Aquinas subsequently clarifies that

even so, this view does not rule out that the Holy Spirit, who is uncreated charity, is in human beings with created charity, moving their souls to the act of love, just as God moves all things to their actions, although they are inclined to those actions by their own forms. That is how he orders all things sweetly, because he gives all things the forms and powers that incline them to what he moves them to, so that they tend to it without compulsion, but as it were of their own accord.⁴⁰

Here Aquinas presents for the first time, in the passages we have been considering, a fully integrated account of graced human action which specifies the conditions for our cooperation in God's salvific action on our behalf. What was only tentatively outlined in previous treatments of the question has now reached its mature form. Thus, we can more clearly see that created charity is given to the justified not in order for their graced action to proceed autonomously, without the dynamic involvement of the Holy Spirit, but rather in order to 'incline them to what he moves them to'. Aquinas thus affirms the Holy Spirit's personal involvement in the act of charity – not just as the exemplar cause of the virtue of charity, but also as the uncreated charity which, as efficient cause, moves the soul to the act of love.⁴¹ The presence of an inclination toward the act of charity does nothing to diminish the fact that it is ultimately God who moves us to this act. Still, it is truly *our* act insofar as we are not entirely passive divine

³⁸Zuijdwegt, 'Aquinas on the Lombard's Identification of Charity', p. 64.

³⁹For a thorough discussion of these arguments, and how they differ from those of the *Scriptum* and *Lectura Romana*, see Doyle, 'Is Charity the Holy Spirit?', pp. 322–6.

⁴⁰*Nec tamen per hoc excluditur quin spiritus sanctus, qui est caritas increata, sit in homine caritatem creatam habente, movens animam ad actum dilectionis, sicut Deus movet omnia ad suas actiones, ad quas tamen inclinantur ex propriis formis. Et inde est quod omnia disponit suaviter, quia omnibus dat formas et virtutes inclinantes in id ad quod ipse movet, ut in illud tendant non coacte, sed quasi sponte. S. Thomae Aquinatis Quaestiones Disputatae, vol. 2. De Virtutibus: De Caritate, ed. P. Bazzi et al. (Turin: Marietti, 1965): a. 1, co. English translation from *Disputed Questions on Virtue*, trans. Jeffrey Hause and Claudia Eisen Murphy (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 2010). Here I follow Zuijdwegt's translation of *sed quasi sponte* rather than Hause and Murphy's.*

⁴¹Though we lack the space for discussion of Aquinas' doctrine of habitual and actual grace, this study would further benefit from a comparison with Bernard Lonergan and Joseph Wawrykow's work on the role of operative *auxilium* in Aquinas' mature thought. In *God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), Wawrykow builds on Lonergan's study of operative grace in the thought of St Thomas Aquinas – later published as *Grace and Freedom* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). Wawrykow argues that in his later works Aquinas' focus is no longer exclusively on habitual grace as a form in the soul, but also on God's prevenience as mover of the free will by the grace of operative *auxilium*. This corresponds well with our finding that Aquinas moves from an exclusive focus on created charity to an appreciation of the importance of the Holy Spirit's dynamic role in graced human action as uncreated charity.

instruments, but voluntary cooperators with God who is effecting his salvific action in and through us.

This integrated account of graced human action is similarly found in Aquinas' treatment of the question in *Summa Theologiae* 2/2.23.2, where he provides a more streamlined version of the same set of arguments. Although here Aquinas does not explicitly argue for the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as uncreated charity alongside the created habit of charity, as he did in the *De caritate*, it is evident from what he says about the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the act of charity that such a view is being assumed. Indeed, Aquinas has already argued in the response of 1.43.3 that 'in the very gift itself of sanctifying grace, the Holy Spirit is possessed by man and dwells in him',⁴² and in the reply to the second objection of the same article that 'sanctifying grace disposes the soul to possess the divine person'.⁴³ Thus, one could say that, in the discussion of created charity in the *Summa*, Aquinas is not so much concerned with defending the fact that the Holy Spirit as uncreated charity dwells in the soul and moves us to the act of love, as he is with explaining more precisely how the Holy Spirit effects this movement in us.

This concern is evident in the response of the article, where Aquinas discusses what kind of divine causality is compatible with the voluntary and meritorious nature of the act of charity. Aquinas begins his response by describing two inadequate ways of explaining the Holy Spirit's involvement, each of which fails to capture a distinct aspect of voluntary action. First is the view that, in the act of charity, the Holy Spirit moves the soul in such a way that 'the human mind is only moved and is in no sense a principle of this movement'.⁴⁴ Such a view 'involves a contradiction', Aquinas argues, 'since love by its nature implies that it is a voluntary act', and yet an act can only be voluntary if it proceeds from a principle that exists in the thing itself.⁴⁵ In the absence of such an internal principle of action, the Holy Spirit's involvement can only be understood as a violent movement that is imposed on the soul from without.

The second view is that the Holy Spirit 'moves the will to an act of loving in the way that an instrument is moved'.⁴⁶ Aquinas seems to consider this a somewhat more adequate view, since it at least recognizes the human soul to be a principle of its own act of charity, and therefore provides a way to explain how this act is not simply imposed violently on the soul by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, he ultimately judges it to be inadequate, since 'it is not within the power [of an instrument] to act or not to act', and yet it is essential to voluntary action that it proceeds from a principle – namely, the will – that is capable of determining its own operation.⁴⁷ As Aquinas explains earlier on in the *Summa*, unlike other natural appetites, the will is not determined to a single effect, but is rather 'the master of its own act', meaning that it is open to opposite

⁴²*in ipso dono gratiae gratum facientis, spiritus sanctus habetur, et inhabitat hominem. Summa Theologiae* 1.43.3, co. In *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia*, vols 4–12. Leonine Edition. (Rome: R. Garroni, 1886–1906). English translation adapted from that of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947).

⁴³*gratia gratum faciens disponit animam ad habendam divinam personam. ST* 1.43.3.2.

⁴⁴*humana mens sit mota tantum et nullo modo sit principium huius motus. ST* 2/2.23.2, co.

⁴⁵*Quod implicat contradictionem: cum amor de sui ratione importet quod sit actus voluntatis. ST* 2/2.23.2, co. Cf. *ST* 1/2.114.4, co.

⁴⁶*moveat Spiritus Sanctus voluntatem ad actum diligendi sicut movetur instrumentum. ST* 2/2.23.2, co.

⁴⁷*non tamen est in ipso agere vel non agere. ST* 2/2.23.2, co.

movements, which depend on the exercise of free choice.⁴⁸ It is only because the rational creature ‘moves itself to act’ through the exercise of free choice that its operations can truly be considered voluntary, and can therefore be said to possess the character of merit.⁴⁹ Thus, Aquinas concludes that it cannot be the case that the love of charity, which is ‘the root of meriting’, proceeds from the will as a merely instrumental principle.⁵⁰

After explaining why these two ways of accounting for the Holy Spirit’s involvement in the act of charity are mistaken, Aquinas then identifies a way which he thinks can preserve our full voluntary cooperation, writing that ‘the will has to be moved by the Holy Spirit toward an act of loving in such a way that it itself also effects the act’.⁵¹ Although there is much that could be said about how Aquinas considers this to be possible, it suffices for the purposes of this study to note that, with this concise statement specifying the conditions for human and divine cooperation, Aquinas has effectively turned his original treatment of Lombard’s thesis on its head. Recall that in the *Scriptum* he had hesitated to speak of the Holy Spirit’s role in the act of charity in any but a very restricted sense, as exemplar cause of the created habit of charity. In no way does Aquinas at the beginning of his career suggest that the Holy Spirit is directly involved in bringing about the act of charity as an efficient cause. In the *Summa*, however, the personal involvement of the Holy Spirit is understood to be fundamental to all graced human action. Through his ongoing engagement with Lombard’s thesis, Aquinas is thus ultimately led to develop a doctrine of created charity in which the dynamic involvement of the Holy Spirit in human action does not threaten, but rather provides the ultimate ground of freedom. Far from imposing a violent motion upon the human mind, or using the human will as a mere instrument, the Holy Spirit moves the human soul to the act of love in such a way that it is no less of a voluntary human action because of his divine involvement. Again, as Aquinas puts it in the *De caritate*, ‘That is how [God] orders all things sweetly, because he gives all things the forms and powers that incline them to what he moves them to, so that they tend to it without compulsion, but as it were of their own accord.’

In conclusion, this examination of the four different *loci* in Aquinas’ corpus where he specifically treats Lombard’s thesis has shown that, despite consistently maintaining that charity is a virtue, Aquinas nevertheless comes to incorporate over the course of his career the genuine trinitarian insight that shapes Lombard’s thesis. The synthesis of divine and human action achieved in Aquinas’ mature thought should thus be seen not as an outright rejection of Lombard’s thesis, but rather as a further development of it, made possible by Aquinas’ assimilation of Aristotelian naturalism, with its central concepts of form, potency and act. Mediaeval scholars are therefore mistaken in their interpretation of Lombard’s thesis as representative of a theological perspective antithetical to that of Aquinas. Rather, it ought to be considered an initial attempt at explaining God’s involvement in graced human action upon which Aquinas’ doctrine of created charity significantly improves. Thus, we are not left with a choice between

⁴⁸ *domina sui actus*. ST 1/2.10.1.1. For a helpful survey of Aquinas’ account of the will, see David Gallagher, ‘The Will and its Acts’, in Stephen J. Pope (ed.), *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Washington, DC Georgetown University Press, 2002), pp. 69–89.

⁴⁹ *creatura rationalis seipsam movet ad agendum per liberum arbitrium*. ST 1/2.114.1, co.

⁵⁰ *dilectio caritatis est radix merenda*. ST 2/2.23.2, co.

⁵¹ *Sed oportet quod sic voluntas moveatur a spiritu sancto ad diligendum quod etiam ipsa sit efficiens hunc actum*. ST 2/2.23.2, co.

either a spiritual or scientific account of God's salvific action. On the contrary, we find that there may be, as Mario Coccia has eloquently put it, 'deeper, more scientific – as well as more spiritual – reasons to agree with St. Thomas in saying Lombard's position cannot stand'.⁵²

⁵²Mario Coccia, 'Credit Where Credit is Due: St. Thomas Aquinas Versus Peter Lombard on the True Nature of Charity', *Doctor Angelicus* 5 (2005), p. 167.

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