Unitas Spiritualis
An Analysis of Thomas Aquinas’ Participatory Biblical Exegesis of Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians

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1 Introduction

It should be said that love follows knowledge,
Since nothing is loved unless it is known. (Thomas Aquinas)

1.1 Presentation

Thomas Aquinas is undoubtedly one of the giant figures of medieval theology. His *magnum opus* *Summa Theologiae* has been greatly influential in Western civilization. But his systematic works, along with his philosophical commentaries and disputed questions, have largely overshadowed what was his main academic task as *magister in sacra pagina*.\(^1\) However, in the last few decades there has been a renewed interest in this portion of Aquinas' theological legacy (see the section on previous research for evidence of this *renaissance*).

In spite of the many monographs and articles that have been published, there is still a lot of terrain left to be covered. Aquinas' commentaries on the Corinthian letters have not received the same attention as his other biblical works, such as his celebrated commentary on the Gospel of John. However, the apostle Paul is very central to Aquinas' theological enterprise, which can be seen in the fact that in the treatise on Christ in *Summa Theologiae*, Paul is the most quoted authority.\(^2\) Moreover, the Pauline along with the Johannine texts are used by Aquinas as a lens to interpret other parts of the Bible.\(^3\) In other words, a closer look at the Corinthian letters is germane to widen the scope of Thomistic research.

This exploration of a road less travelled in Thomistic thought couples favorably with my interest in the way our philosophical ideas influence the way we read the Bible, and I am reminded of what my old professor Charles Morerod OP once told us; that everyone has a philosophical point of view, even those who reject philosophy. The difference is that the latter will be unaware of it and therefore accept their philosophy uncritically. I would like then, as an illustration, to show a theologian who uses philosophy (and theology) deliberately in interpreting the Bible and show the fruits that grow from the use of such a hermeneutical tool.

As this study will show, the notion of participation is crucial for Aquinas' interpretation of Scripture. Concentrating on his commentary on 1 Corinthians, I will analyze how his understanding of participation guides his interpretation of this Pauline letter.

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\(^1\)Healy 2005, 1  
\(^2\)Baglow 2002, 49  
\(^3\)Baglow 2002, 50
1.2 The Task and Method of This Study

In this study I intend to examine how Thomas Aquinas' participatory exegesis has influenced the way he interprets the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Aquinas' entire concept of biblical exegesis is characterized by his understanding of the people and events in the Bible (not to mention the biblical authors) as participating in God's action throughout history. This study will show how the idea of participation has influenced the way he interprets the Corinthian letter.

The historical-critical method has raised the question as to whether the “precritical” exegesis of Aquinas is to be considered eisegetical. Eisegesis means imposing one's own interpretation on the text rather than extracting the meaning intended by the author, which is the purpose of exegesis. That question will also be addressed in this study, especially in my discussion of the philosophical presuppositions, both in participatory biblical exegesis and the historical-critical method, when I present the findings of my analysis in the evaluation section of this study.

In order to do this I will first present a general view of what Aquinas understood participation to be and how he used it in his own work. I will also give a presentation of how the idea of participation is shown in his biblical exegesis specifically. After this has been established I will look at his commentary to the first Corinthian letter and see what insights this philosophically and theologically influenced reading has brought to the interpretation of the biblical text.

As a method for this study I have modified a version of Christopher Baglow's approach to the study of Thomas Aquinas' exegesis that he outlines and explains in chapter III of his monograph Modus et Forma.\textsuperscript{4} The reason I have chosen to modify it is because it is meant for a comprehensive analysis, whereas in this study there will only be room for a more cursory analysis. Baglow says that Aquinas was not only an explainer of biblical text but also a reconstructor.\textsuperscript{5} This reconstruction is not of the kind attempted by the practitioners of the historical-critical method, but it is rather a theological reconstruction. This is problematic from the perspective of modern biblical scholarship that would view such an interpretation as an anachronistic superimposition on the biblical author's intention and sitz im leben. Yet Aquinas' reconstruction remains closely bound to the biblical text he is commenting, and thus the text provides the frame on which he elaborates his theological reconstruction.\textsuperscript{6} In other words, specific context of the biblical text that he comments is influential to his theological reconstruction and thus differs from his systematic works, where he is not restrained in the same way by the biblical text. An analysis of participatory exegesis in the commentary on 1 Corinthians will have to take notice on how the text itself influences his

\textsuperscript{4}Baglow 2002, 89-112
\textsuperscript{5}Baglow 2002, 68
\textsuperscript{6}Baglow 2002, 68-69
theological ideas in the commentary (and also see how some of those same ideas differ when presented elsewhere), which is exactly what Baglow's approach aims to do.

With this in mind, I will present a general outline of Aquinas' commentary on 1 Corinthians that will contain a presentation of the theme and characteristics provided both by Aquinas and contemporary biblical exegesis (the latter giving us further historical insight to the context that shapes the theology of Aquinas' commentary). I have chosen Joseph Fitzmyer SJ, an established biblical scholar, to provide the perspective from the historical-critical method. This will give us not only a more accurate historical perspective but will also provide a contrasting view to Aquinas' participatory biblical exegesis.

The following is a modified version of what Baglow calls “the genre-identification approach” that will guide the presentation of Aquinas' commentary on 1 Corinthians:7

I. Pre-Analysis

1) The biblical text itself

1a) The type of text
1b) Its theme(s) and characteristics according to current exegesis

2) Thomas' Exegetical Framework

2a) The theme of the text according to Thomas
2b) Major divisions of the text according to Thomas
2c) Relationship(s) to other texts according to Thomas
2d) Characteristics of author and authorship according to Thomas

After the pre-analysis I will search for and present Aquinas' participatory interpretation within his exegetical framework (of which a closer presentation will be given in the part on theory). This will enable us to see how Aquinas' particular type of exegesis influences his general structure of the Pauline epistle.

Next we will arrive at the analysis of the major divisions, which will come along with a summary of said divisions. Each major division will be analyzed according to this (modified) outline:8

II. Thomas' Analysis of the Parts of the Text

a) Examination of Thomas' word and phrase analyses

7Baglow 2002, 91
8Baglow 2002, 92
1. Examination of significant terms and phrases understood by Thomas
2. Examination of significant terms and phrases in light of current exegesis
   b) Interpretive conclusion
       A summary of the most essential theological and philosophical points made by
Aquinas in his encounter with the biblical text

III. Overall Evaluation
   a) A short list and explanation of some characteristic traits of Aquinas' participatory exegesis
      found in his commentary on 1 Corinthians.
   b) A presentation of how Aquinas' theological and philosophical ideas in his commentary
      bring us a different perspective (from the historical-critical method) on the content in the first
      Corinthian letter.
   c) Concluding remarks.

The overall question guiding the investigation in this study is: what insights come from Aquinas' participatory understanding of 1 Corinthians? This will then be connected to the question: is this to be understood as exegesis or eisegesis?

1.3 Theoretical underpinnings: Participation and biblical exegesis

Thomas Aquinas did not invent the idea of participation; it was first propounded by Plato to explain our knowledge of universal ideas.\(^9\) Plato noticed that the world is constantly changing, yet we do perceive unchanging entities. So how does one account for this phenomenon? According to Plato, our souls have an innate knowledge of eternal, unchanging ideas that can only be perceived by the senses in a shadowy and elusive state. The unchanging principle of a thing is therefore its idea, in which the thing participates and receives its identity. For instance, all birds participate in the idea of the bird (an entity of its own), which enables us to identify them as such. This doctrine of participation was rejected by Aristotle, Plato's most prominent disciple, who insisted that we derive our universal notions from concrete things, not the other way around.\(^10\)

This becomes interesting because Aristotle had a tremendous influence on Aquinas' thinking, and on the question of where we derive our universal notions from, he surely sided with Aristotle. Even so, he retained the doctrine of participation, and here is where it becomes really interesting. For even though he accepted participation, it was not as if he put aside the influence from Aristotle.

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\(^9\)Maritain 2005, 38-39
\(^10\)Maritain 2005, 44-45
Rather he would modify the Platonic understanding of participation in a manner more in line with Aristotelian thinking. As Ralph McInerny said: for Aquinas “Platonism must always justify itself at the bar of Aristotelianism.”\textsuperscript{11} Aquinas, for instance, did not accept the idea that a common name for a genus or species constituted a proper name for a subsisting (and separate) idea in which the worldly things of that category would participate. Instead he opted for an Augustinian Neo-Platonic understanding where the ideas rather than being subsisting entities, were “patterns” in the divine mind, such as an architect might have before the building of a house.\textsuperscript{12} It is in connection to this that Aquinas' Aristotelian influence makes itself known; for in knowing the ideas of the divine mind, we do not receive illumination from that same mind, but rather we are “illuminated” by the light of our own intellect, which is a created light that participates in the uncreated divine light.\textsuperscript{13} The difference then between the Platonic understanding of participation and Aquinas' is that in the latter created beings have their principle of identity, their \textit{raison d'être}, within themselves rather than in some elusive world of ideas, and yet still participate in God's being, insofar as God has caused their being into existence.

For Aquinas participation is key to understanding the difference between God and creation. Everything that can not account for its own existence needs to receive its existence elsewhere. So, since I did not cause my own existence I must point to an external cause; e.g. my parents. Yet, they in turn can not account for their own existence (so they do not provide the primordial momentum of act), so their existence is also received elsewhere and so on. But not everything can exist this way; in order to account for our type of existence, i.e. contingent being, there needs to be something that does not receive its existence elsewhere but that exists by itself. And this, as Aquinas would say, everyone understands to be God. His existence is not contingent, but necessary. Since every contingent being receives its existence, they are said to participate in God's being who gives all things their existence. The difference between God and creation then becomes clear; contingent things have existence added on to their being, which is therefore composite of both essence and existence. In other words, their being is actualized, i.e. made reality. God on the other hand does not need to be actualized since God's existence, i.e. act, stands on its own. God is not composite of essence and existence, but the two are one and the same in God. This means that existence is necessary to God's essence, but not to ours, because then we would not need to receive it in order to exist. Our participated existence then, is determined by God's existence and therefore limited, whereas God's existence is not determined by anyone and therefore unlimited.

\textsuperscript{11}McInerny 1977, 118
\textsuperscript{12}McInerny 1977, 114-115
\textsuperscript{13}McInerny 1977, 118
Aquinas' doctrine of participation affirms both God's transcendence and immanence in relation to creation. The transcendence is manifested in that God is radically different from creation. Only God exists by necessity and is absolutely independent from everything else. Yet God as the source of existence is the cause of all contingent beings, and as such always connected to them, for Aquinas sees creation as an ongoing process that is upheld by God's creative activity.

Aquinas defines participation as “nothing other than to receive from another in a partial manner.”14 “Partial” implies the imperfect manner in which creation receives what exists perfectly in God, such as existence itself. However, and this I would argue is crucial for Aquinas' biblical exegesis, it also implies the connection that created beings have to the divine reality. God, as its cause, is always present in creation; thus creation becomes a sign of the divine, and transcends the limits of time and space.

It is this aspect of participation that is of special importance when speaking of Aquinas' understanding of Scripture. Matthew Levering's monograph Participatory Biblical Exegesis presents Aquinas as an exemplary exponent of a type of exegesis where biblical people and events reflect God's mystery and therefore function as signs of divine realities. This is made possible because the view of history is not merely “a linear unfolding of individual moments, but also as an ongoing participation in God's active providence, both metaphysically and Christologically-pneumatologically.”15 This understanding of history transcends the limits of time and space that characterizes the linear understanding of history and makes room for what Levering calls the “vertical presence” of God's action,16 which makes the difference between salvation history and mere human history. Participation then becomes a way of showing how things in the Bible become signs of divine revelation but also, as we shall see, instruments of divine revelation.

Of course things in the Bible reveal God's mystery in different ways. As Jeremy Holmes explains, Aquinas sees things in the Old Testament as an anticipation of things and events in the New Testament, with Christ being the most eminent of these.17 Yet things and events in the New Testament are also an anticipation of something that lies ahead, namely the second coming of Christ. The closer the thing or event is to Christ, the greater the participation in the divine mystery. From this it follows that the New Testament participates in Christ's mystery more perfectly than the Old, even though there is a unity between them that Aquinas describes as two parts moving toward the same goal.18 It also means that things in the Old Testament can signify things pertaining both to the New Testament and the future glory of everlasting life, only in the latter case it occurs

14Holmes 2015, 92. “Participare nihil aliud est quam ab alio partialiter accipere”. In Libros de coelo et mundo , Lib. 2, lect. 18
15Levering 2008, 1
16Ibid
17Holmes 2015, 91
18Holmes 2015, 96
indirectly; that is, only insofar as they signify the realities of the New Testament, which in turn signify eschatological realities. Aquinas sees people and events in the Bible as participating in the mystery of God, and this constitutes their revelatory character. However, the degree of participation is ascertained by their ontological resemblance to that same divine mystery.

Levering also touches on this subject in his piece about Aquinas' comment on the Gospel of St. John in *Aquinas on Scripture*, wherein he discusses Aquinas' different meanings of “fullness”, and one of those meanings is “causal fullness”, which is a fullness that is able to share its fullness with others. Aquinas thus sees participation as the “incomplete sharing” in Christ's fullness. What we know about the divine realities we have received, and that is why participatory biblical exegesis makes a connection between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Doctrine. Scripture contains what God wants to teach mankind in order to receive salvation, and in this the human authors are but instruments, serving this higher purpose. The goal of this kind of exegesis is not to attain insight into the mind of the human author of Scripture, but rather to participate in the divinely revealed teaching in a manner that enables the reader to understand more fully the divine reality being taught. Levering would thus characterize this exegesis as not being confined within the epistemic boundaries of the human author of the text.

1.4 The Material and Parameters of This Study

The focal point of this study will be Thomas Aquinas' commentary on 1 Corinthians. The original work in Latin, named *Super I Epistolam B. Pauli ad Corinthios Lectura* (in this study it will be abbreviated as *Ad Corinthios*), is available on the website *Corpus Thomisticum*. An English translation of this text has been made by Fabian Larcher OP, and has been edited by The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine in Wyoming, U.S.A. This translation, paralleled with the original Latin, is available on their website: http://theaquinasinstitute.org/online-texts/

All quotations from the text will therefore be written both in English and Latin, so that they can be compared by the reader. The commentary has been re-edited into numbered paragraphs (they come from a 1952 edition by Marietti, an Italian publishing house), which will make it easier when making references.

The material also indicates the boundaries for this thesis, as no other biblical commentaries will be considered in this study. Since the commentary on chapter 16 of 1 Corinthians provides little interest for the purpose of this study, I have decided to omit this section from the analysis entirely.

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19Levering 2005, 101
20Levering 2005, 102
21Levering 2005, 103
22Levering 2005, 104
Biblical citations come from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) unless stated otherwise.

Secondary material is presented in the next section.

1.5 Previous Research

Historically, Aquinas' biblical commentaries have received little attention compared to his philosophical and systematic theological works.\(^{23}\) His *Summa Theologiae* has been very influential on both past and present theologians, but his biblical commentaries have not. Lately, however, this portion of his intellectual *opus*, has received a lot of interest. The anthology *Aquinas on Scripture*,\(^{24}\) that introduces several topics in Aquinas' biblical commentaries, are one of the examples to attest to that fact. It features various contemporary Thomistic scholars, such as Matthew Levering (whose work on participatory biblical exegesis I have already mentioned, and whose understanding on the subject I am following here) and Daniel Keating. Keating's contribution to the anthology is called “Aquinas on 1 and 2 Corinthians: The Sacraments and Their Ministers”, which provides an overview of Aquinas' commentaries to these letters. However, this work is more popular than academic in its scope and presentation.

I have already mentioned the work of Christopher Baglow. There he assesses the analyses of Aquinas' biblical commentaries made by previous Thomistic scholars and provides his own method (or “approach”) for analyzing these commentaries. This work will prove to be very important for my own investigation. It also discusses an article by Otto Herman Pesch that speaks of, among other things, how the text of 1 Corinthians affects Aquinas when he comments on the “convenience” of the crucifixion. More on this later on.\(^{25}\) The particular passage that this refers to (1 Cor 1:17-25), will not be analyzed in this study, but the article of Pesch will be mentioned when discussing the way the biblical text influences Aquinas' theological/philosophical thinking.

Another anthology has come out as late as 2015, called *Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas*. This anthology differs from *Aquinas on Scripture* in that it gives greater attention to Aquinas' hermeneutical tools. It features a contribution by a scholar named Jeremy Holmes called “Participation and the Meaning of Scripture”, which will be of particular interest for this study.

For Aquinas doctrine and Scripture were intertwined; for him, Scripture is the source of theology. Per Erik Persson, professor of Theology at Lund University, wrote a dissertation about

\(^{23}\)Roszak and Vijgen 2015, ix
\(^{24}\)Weinandy, Keating, and Yocum 2005
\(^{25}\)“Paul as Professor of Theology.” *Thomist* 38 (1974), 584-605
Aquinas’ view on the relationship between reason and revelation called *Sacra Doctrina*, where the centrality of Scripture to Aquinas’ thinking is presented.

All this interest aside, I have not seen the question of participation in 1 Corinthians covered in any academic work. In fact, Aquinas’ commentaries on the Corinthian letters have received comparatively little attention, and it is my hope that this study will contribute with new insights to the field of Thomistic research.

Regarding Aquinas’ idea of participation, there has been many publications. Even though there have been more recent published works on this topic, such as *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (1995), by Rudi A. Te Velde, for the purpose of this study it suffices to give a more general presentation, and for this I have chosen Ralph McInerny’s work *St. Thomas Aquinas*, where the subject is treated with great clarity and brevity.

2 Analysis

This chapter constitutes an exposition of Aquinas’ commentary on the first Corinthian letter. Here I will give an introduction to the commentary, along with explanation of terms, historical-critical input from Fitzmyer, and a discussion of Aquinas’ reading of the Pauline epistle.

2.1 Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: Pre-analysis

This section presents an overview of Aquinas’ commentary on 1 Corinthians; its general outline and the historical background of the biblical text itself. It also introduces the difference between Aquinas’ participatory biblical exegesis and the historical-critical method. Furthermore, it provides some details on the commentary’s present composition and its relation to other commentaries on the Pauline corpus.

Aquinas, following an old tradition of the Church fathers, presents what he identifies as the overarching theme of the epistle, in the form of a biblical quote.26 This is called *accessus* in Latin and would correspond to the Greek term σκοπός, which the Church fathers used.27 The quote is from the Book of Wisdom 6:22:

“I will not hide from you the secrets [sacraments] of God, but will trace out her course from the beginning of creation and make the knowledge of her clear and will not pass by the truth”

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26 *Ad Corinthios, Proemium.*
27 Young 1997, 21
The reason that the word “sacraments” is in brackets is because the Vulgate translation Aquinas availed himself of, translates “secrets” with that word, *sacramenta*. The Latin word for secret is the same as the word assigned for sacred things, and Aquinas clarifies that it is in this latter sense that he uses the word *sacramentum*. The theme for the epistle according to Aquinas are the sacraments of the Church and according to Daniel Keating, he seems here to follow an earlier exegetical tradition. But how is it then that their course can be traced from the beginning of creation if the sacraments did not appear until the time of the New Testament? We can already sense the “anticipatory participation” in which things of the Old Testament function as foreshadowings of the New.

To understand Aquinas' major divisions of the epistle, it is important to see what he considers a sacrament to be. It is a sign of God's grace, yet a sacrament also has the quality of containing what it signifies, so that the recipient of the sacrament not only becomes aware of divine grace but also receives it along with the sign of the sacrament. Furthermore, the sacraments also signify something that is not contained in them, but is anticipated as the goal of the human person infused with supernatural life: the glory of the resurrection; the state of eternal bliss where God and Man are finally reconciled; the beatific vision. And when looking at the commentary we can see that Aquinas has organized the major divisions of the text according to his understanding of the sacraments. Aquinas himself gives us the major divisions in the commentary, but it is Keating who provides us with an overview that is more easily accessible:

I. General teaching on the sacraments (Ch. 1-15)
   A. The sacraments themselves (Ch. 1-11)
      1. Baptism (Ch. 1-4)
      2. Marriage (Ch. 5-7)
      3. Eucharist (Ch. 8-11)
   B. The reality contained and signified: grace (Ch. 12-14)
   C. The reality signified, but not contained: the resurrection (Ch. 15)
II. Particular teaching for the Corinthians (Ch. 16)

We can see that the structure of the different sections follows the definition of the sacrament. It is noteworthy that he only discusses three sacraments when he would certainly concede that there are

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28Ibid.
29Keating 2005, 131
30*Ad Corinthios* n.19
31Ibid.
32Keating 2005, 130-131
seven sacraments, as he does in the *Summa Theologiae*.33 It is the clearest sign that he does not consider his commentary to be a treatise on the sacraments, because then all seven of them would have been presented. Here is instead an instance of where he keeps to the content of the epistle itself, which only brings up three of the sacraments.

Yet one can see why someone would call this kind of structure a superimposition. Can we really expect that Paul himself had this order in mind when he composed the epistle? In order to consider this closer, a presentation of the epistle with data from current exegesis might be helpful.

What is evident from this new kind of exegesis is the emphasis on the *ad hoc* nature of the Corinthian letter. Notwithstanding the claim from Fitzmyer that it is “less personal and more topically oriented”, he also stresses the scandals among the Christians in Corinth that induced Paul to write the letter in the first place.34 Whereas Aquinas sees the Corinthian letter primarily as a teaching on the sacraments, Fitzmyer says that the purpose of the letter is “to bring order and unity into the Corinthian community.”35 Fitzmyer provides us with a general outline that is much more detailed than Aquinas,36 and it is sufficient to lay out the main sections of his divisions of the letter and for each section give examples of the topics that appear for each of them in order to compare his outline to the one Aquinas made:

I. Introduction (1:1-9): The address and greeting of the Apostle, along with thanksgiving.

II. Scandals Reported Orally to Paul about the Corinthian Church (1:10-6:20): The scandals mentioned here are preacher-factions, incest and association with immoral people, Christians litigating against one another, and prostitution.

III. Answers to Queries about Moral and Liturgical Problems (7:1-14:40): The questions concern marriage and celibacy, eating meat sacrificed to idols, sacred assemblies, and the problems caused by charismatics in the body of Christ.

IV. Instruction about the Kerygma, Gospel, and Resurrection of the Dead (15:1-58): The instruction concerns Christ, His resurrection and the general resurrection of the dead that follows.

V. Conclusion (16:1-24): Here we have Paul's plea for a collection for other Christians, his travel plans, concluding exhortation, greetings, and final farewell.

This outline reveals a higher priority for the particularities of the historical circumstances of the Corinthian community, which is to be expected since Fitzmyer utilizes the historical-critical

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33ST III q. 65 a.1
34Fitzmyer 2008, xi
35Fitzmyer 2008, 52
36Fitzmyer 2008, 57-58
method, a hermeneutic tool that was not available to Aquinas. Yet it would be wrong to assume that Aquinas took no interest in the particular circumstances of the Corinthians. He too comments on topics like preacher-factions, meat sacrificed to idols, and other things not connected to the topic of sacraments. As Baglow points out, the accessus is a thematic but not a controlling concept. But the difference between the exegesis of Aquinas and the modern kind represented here by Fitzmyer is plain to see: modern exegesis concentrates more on the historical dimension, and has more efficient means to analyze this dimension with a developed knowledge of form and source criticism etc.

In light of this new exegesis it is easy to criticize Aquinas' characterization of Scripture as anachronistic and eisegetical, and indeed he has been criticized for it. Still I think that Aquinas' way of identifying the theme speaks to the ecclesial manner in which the Corinthian letter was received, even in the early church. If the content of that letter concerned only the Christians in Corinth, it would not have been included in the canon. What this means is that the letters of Paul were preserved for posterity not because of their ad hoc nature, but for what they could teach God's people at all times and at all places, in other words: for their doctrinal content. This is exactly the aspect that Aquinas has chosen to emphasize, which implies a knowledge that is passed on to the faithful so that they can take part of it. Furthermore, as both Aquinas and Paul would acknowledge, what is Christian doctrine is revealed by God. Therefore, to accept Christian doctrine is to participate in divine knowledge. What we see here is the intrinsic connection Aquinas makes between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Doctrine. Aquinas views Scripture as divine teaching, which has God as its primary teacher but that relies on the mediation of the bishops of the Church for the expounding of its meaning and the preservation of its integrity. Scripture then is a participation in sacred teaching, and the exegesis Aquinas employs means to expand our participation in it. The notion of the teacher in the doctrine of participation is accounted for in Aquinas' De Veritate, and its role in participatory biblical exegesis has been explained thoroughly by Levering.

However, Baglow says that the biblical text does influence Aquinas in ways that makes his biblical commentaries differ from his systematic works. Even if the outline Aquinas draws up was not the one St. Paul had in mind, it fits remarkably well with the order of the topics discussed; he does discuss the sacraments of baptism, marriage, and Eucharist (even though he might not have used that terminology); and then the saving grace of faith, hope and charity (which are contained in the sacraments); after that the everlasting glory of which saving grace leads to.

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37Baglow 2002, 75
38Baglow 2002, 72-75, where Baglow discusses the criticism of O.H. Pesch.
39De Veritate, q. 11
40Levering 2008, 63-89
This is what Baglow refers to as Aquinas' “theological reconstruction”, which he compares to the work of a molder working with a pre-existing frame (this in reference to the biblical text itself) on which he elaborates, and makes a product inseparable from the existing frame.\textsuperscript{41} This is exactly what Aquinas has done in his general outline of the First Corinthian letter.

His theological construction does not only involve 1 Corinthians, but the entire Pauline corpus. Aquinas sees grace as the main theme for the entirety of Paul's letters.\textsuperscript{42} In the letter to the Hebrews the theme is grace found in Christ, as head of the Church. 1-2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon treat grace in the principal members of the Church, i.e. the apostles. The remaining letters treat grace as it exists in all the members of the Church, that is, the mystical body of Christ. In this last category, the Corinthian letters form part of a trilogy; Romans treats grace in itself, 1 Corinthians treats grace in the sacraments, and 2 Corinthians treats grace in the purveyors of the sacraments, that is, men in holy orders. It is worth mentioning, however, that Aquinas' definition of grace is fairly broad, seeing how so many different subjects are treated under the theme of grace, such as: Christology (Hebrews), grace itself (Romans), sacraments (1-2 Corinthians), etc.\textsuperscript{43}

The characterization of the Pauline corpus as doctrinal teaching emphasizes the participatory exegetical reading Aquinas makes in his theological reconstruction featured in his commentaries on the Pauline letters. This reconstruction, as we have seen, is closely connected to the biblical text itself, and it is this interplay between Aquinas' participatory biblical exegesis and Paul's letter that will be examined closer when we analyze the major divisions in Aquinas' commentary.

Further information of importance is that Aquinas' lecture on 1 Corinthians is assembled by different pieces, and only the first piece (that comments on 1 Cor 1-7:14) can be said to be written by Aquinas himself. The piece covering chapters 11-16 are reportationes, that is, classroom notes, and the piece covering Chapters 7:15-10 is missing; in its place there is a commentary by another medieval theologian, Peter of Tarantaise, which will not be analyzed in this study.\textsuperscript{44} However, the main outline remains intact, and the reportationes of Aquinas' lectures are considered reliable.\textsuperscript{45} Therefore there is no good reason not to treat this commentary as an integral work.

2.2 The Sacraments: signs of divine grace

Aquinas divides 1 Cor 1-11 according to the themes of Baptism, Marriage, and Eucharist. Thus he connects these chapters with the doctrine of the sacraments. We will see how this structure affects

\textsuperscript{41}Baglow 2002, 69
\textsuperscript{42}Keating 2005, 129
\textsuperscript{43}Baglow 2002, 74
\textsuperscript{44}Keating 2005, 127-128
\textsuperscript{45}Persson 1957, 12
the way he interprets the different chapters, but also what insights from the biblical text can be
detected in Aquinas' commentary concerning this doctrine.

2.2.1 Baptism (Ch. 1-4)

He begins the discussion of baptism by stating that the dissension among the Corinthians was due to
some thinking they had received better instruction and baptism and had begun to look down on
others. The cause of the strife was that “they glory in some of Christ's ministers and look down on
the other ones.” Aquinas connects these factions with the vice of schism, which is a threat to
ecclesial unity. For Aquinas, schism is a special sin, in which one intends to sever oneself from the
unity that results from the bond of charity, either from other particular members or the Church as a
whole. It is a vice contrary to the virtue of peace, which he describes as union (or concord), both
between persons and within oneself (i.e. harmony of the appetites). This Aquinas identifies as the
reason that Paul urges them to agree (1 Cor 1:10), which Aquinas interprets as “all confess the
same faith and hold the same opinion in matters that must be done in common.” Fitzmyer sees this
call to agreement as a general call for unity, rather than specifically calling for them to have the
same faith, although he does say that baptism is linked by Paul with the experience of union with
Christ through faith.

The unity of the Church has the character of perfection that signifies the good of the whole
rather than merely the partial good, which has not the same level of perfection. This, Aquinas says,
is what Paul has in mind when he says “but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same
judgement.” (1 Cor 1:10, Vulgate translation) The translation of the NRSV has the word “united”
instead of “perfect”, but the word in Greek is κατηρτισμένοι, from the verb καταρτίζω, which
means to “mend, restore, set right, make complete”, etc. “Make complete” can surely be
substituted with “perfect”, which makes Aquinas' interpretation a plausible one.

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46 Ad Corinthios n.20
47 Ad Corinthios n.21, Quod gloriabantur de quibusdam, et alias Christi ministros contemnebant.
48 ST II-II q.39 a.1
49 ST II-II q.29 a.1
50 Ad Corinthios n.23, Vulgate translation used by Aquinas: ut idipsum dicatis omnes.
51 Ad Corinthios n.23, Omnes eadem fidem confiteamini, et eandem sententiam proferatis de his quae sunt communiter
agenda.
52 Fitzmyer 2008, 140
53 Fitzmyer 2008, 146-147
54 Ad Corinthios n.23, Sitis autem perfecti in eodem sensu, et in eadem sententia.
55 Newman 2001, 95
All of this pertains to baptism in as much as baptism incorporates you into the community of the Church, which proclaims one faith that unites all the members into the bond of charity. Or at least that is the way it is supposed to be, which is precisely the crux of the matter here.

When they divide themselves according to the people who instructed and baptized them (as Aquinas says they do when they say “I belong to Paul” (1 Cor 1:12), or Apollos, or Cephas) they strike against the unity of the Church. Because the grace of Christ (that works in baptism) constitutes ecclesial unity, the divisions among the Corinthians work against the unity effected by Christ, which gives name to the Christian members: “the baptized are called Christians from Christ alone and not Paulians from Paul.”56 And since the unity comes from Christ, it follows that Christ is divided if the Christians divide themselves into separate groups.

Aquinas focuses on the aspect of Christ as the cause of the effects in baptism, and he is pointing to the absurdity, which is the point of Paul himself (and Fitzmyer agrees with this assessment),57 to attribute importance to Paul (or someone else) when it is the sacrifice of Christ that has brought about the effects in baptism. Aquinas thus comments on the words “Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Cor 1:13) with “As if to say: were Paul's sufferings the cause of our salvation, so that baptism depends on him for its saving power? As if to say: certainly not.”58 The unity of the Church is not merely a moral one, but rather the incorporation of human beings into the supernatural life of the Trinity, something that only God can bring about and that is realized in Christ. Whatever doubts there may be today concerning the apostolic Church's belief in the divinity of Christ, Aquinas does not have such doubts and attributes the effects of baptism both to Christ's divine and human nature, of which the former has the crucial importance as it cleanses from sin inwardly.59 Seeing then how baptism is of divine origin, the importance the Corinthians give to those who instruct and baptize (whom Aquinas view as instrumental causes) becomes rather outrageous.

Aquinas then discusses the ministers of baptism, who can not claim any honor for themselves, for they are mere servants and not masters.60 He interprets the question “What then is Apollos and what is Paul?” as asking about their dignity and power (according to Fitzmyer, asking “what is...” is an imitation of the question in Ps 8:5: “What is a man...”).61 Here he relativizes the importance of the minister of God by comparing him to a minister of a king (although king is a title often used of God). He says that a king's minister might have importance if the king can not be

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56Ad Corinthios n.24, Baptizati a solo Christo denominantur Christiani, non autem a Paulo Paulini
57Fitzmyer 2008, 146
58Ad Corinthios n.31, Quasi dicat: numquid passio Pauli causa est nostrae salutis, ut secundum ipsum baptismus habeat virtutem salvandi? Quasi dicat: non.
59Ad Corinthios n.29
60Ad Corinthios n.133
61Fitzmyer 2008, 193
approached in any other way than through him; but as the believer has direct access to God, His minister is therefore diminished in both dignity and power.

The work done by the ministers of baptism differs from the effect caused by God, in that the ministers work from without whereas God works from within; and Aquinas underlines this difference by calling the ministers “instruments” while calling God the “principal cause.”

This he says in commenting the words “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” The conclusions he draws from this is that the ministers are completely dependent on God for the effects on baptism and, since the ministers have nothing but what they receive from God, that they are equal in their ministry, so that none of them can claim a higher honor for himself or provide a more efficient baptism. Ergo, there is no good reason for the division according to ministers.

From this total dependence on God it follows that this community of baptized members is constituted as a spiritual union, and this is what Aquinas refers to when he says that “the apostles delivered spiritual things to spiritual men, teachings that sensual men were not able to apprehend.”

And the criticism that Paul delivers to the Corinthians is that they have not matured in spiritual matters, wherefore he calls them “infants in Christ” (1 Cor 3:1). When Aquinas comments on the words “you are still of the flesh” (1 Cor 3:3), he says that they can not grasp spiritual things because they still have a taste of worldly things, i.e. of the flesh. Aquinas says that the proof Paul gives for this spiritual immaturity is exactly the factions of the Corinthian community. In commenting on the words “are you not merely human?” (1 Cor 3:4), he says that in grouping themselves according to preferred ministers, they indulge in jealousy and strife for human things, i.e. things of the flesh. If indulging in worldly things causes strife, the implication is that taking pleasure in spiritual things causes peace since these things are not limited like material things. Neither can anyone claim any special honor since it is God who accomplishes spiritual things, whereas human beings are merely instruments with which he accomplishes these things. Ecclesial unity then is only clearly manifested to the world when the members live and take pleasure in the spiritual benefits given to them in baptism.

According to Aquinas, the reason for the dissension among the Corinthians was that they assumed they had received a better teaching and a better baptism from the person they sided with, and looked down on the others. This claim finds no historical support from Fitzmyer. Although he mentions that the factions could be interpreted as aligning with those who baptized them, there is nothing to suggest that differing views on baptism was the cause of the dissension. Furthermore,

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62 Ad Corinthios n.137
63 Ad Corinthios n.123, Apostoli quidem spiritualia documenta spiritualibus tradebant, quae animales homines percipere non poterant.
64 Ad Corinthios n.127
65 Fitzmyer 2008, 139
there are various theories as to what kind of factions there were: Judaizers, Gnostics, Sophists, different social groups etc.\(^{66}\) The claim that each group thought itself having the better teaching is a plausible one, yet the different views about the nature of the different factions makes it difficult to determine what specific teaching they were disputing. It seems then that Aquinas' commentary in this instance is not very much attached to the specific historical situation of Paul and the Corinthian community.

Yet, a bigger issue one might have with this section (Ch. 1-4) is that it is classified as treating baptism, when most of the things discussed in those chapters do not treat that subject. To clarify this issue, Aquinas does not say that the section treats baptism exclusively, but “what pertains to baptism.”\(^{67}\) Keating points out that Aquinas joins baptism and teaching the faith from Christ's command to the apostles that names the tasks of teaching and baptizing together (Matt 28:19), which allows Aquinas both to diversify the section's subject matter and find an intrinsic connection between baptism and catechetics.\(^ {68}\) From a historical-critical point of view this might be unacceptable, but from the participatory understanding that lies under his view of Scripture as doctrine, it fits rather well.

However, there is a specific way in which the biblical text has influenced Aquinas' theological reconstruction, and that is the emphasis on the unitive aspect of baptism. This sacrament unites the members to each other and, most importantly, to Christ. Christ is not only the constitutive aspect of the Church's unity, but is also the one causing it into being. Expressed differently, He is both the formal and efficient cause of ecclesial unity. The supernatural grace received in baptism (which unites the members to each other and to Christ) is totally dependent on and sustained by God, who is the source and giver of that grace in which the Church's members partake. Thus God unites the members to Himself in a similar manner as He unites creation to Himself, in virtue of being \textit{prima causa non causata}. The participatory understanding of the relationship between man and God in the supernatural order is therefore present in a way that is subtle yet undeniable. All this is an elaboration of the point Paul is trying to make, that Christ stands for unity, not division, in response to the factions that emerged in the Christian community of Corinth.

\subsection*{2.2.2 Marriage (Ch. 5-7)}

This section of Aquinas' commentary does not go further than 1 Cor 7:14, due to the missing piece, as I have explained above.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textit{Ad Corinthios n.19, Ea quae pertinent ad sacramentum baptismi.}
\item Keating 2005, 133
\end{itemize}
Along with the main theme of marriage, this section also treats topics pertaining to this theme, such as fornication and virginity. Marriage, as we shall see, is treated less from its sacramental quality than from the aspect of sexual morality, which is in keeping with the discussion conducted by Paul in these chapters. Yet, as we shall discover, the image of marriage is pertinent to Paul’s explanation of the damage to the unity of the Church caused by the immoral behavior of the Christians in Corinth.

Aquinas discusses fornication in commenting the words of Paul about the immorality not even found among pagans, that of a man living with his father's wife, which even if there is no blood relation (and this point is not clarified in the text), can be considered as incest. Yet Aquinas comments little on this specific form of sexual immorality. Instead he discusses fornication in general. Fitzmyer stresses the legal point rather than the moral one, saying that adultery was a legal offense in Roman law, attached with specific penalties, but which rather amplifies the moral scandal since the Christians in Corinth failed to deal with something that was thoroughly dealt with in the pagan legal system.

In commenting the words “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial” (1 Cor 6:12), Aquinas mentions things that are lawful, but not beneficial (and he sees marriage as belonging to this category), but also things that are neither lawful nor beneficial, and he lists fornication in this category. The unlawfulness does not refer to the legal law (although this was also the case at the time) but rather to the natural law. This point Aquinas stresses in commenting the words “The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body”, saying that the body belongs to Christ, and is destined for the life of glory (the resurrection) where no one will procreate ever again. This he compares to the use of the stomach, which is for food, and that Aquinas says has only this purpose. But the body has a purpose beyond earthly existence, and is therefore not made primarily for indulging in sensuous pleasures. Yet Aquinas does recognize the earthly need for man to procreate in order perpetuate human existence, but says that this is to be “ordained by reason”, and in this context comes the use of marriage.

Aquinas says that marriage has three goods. The first one is what he calls “a function of nature”, that tends to the generation and rearing of offspring, and this is preceded by the conjugal act. Aquinas describes coitus as a unitive act. He cites Aristotle when assigning the male as providing the active principle in the act of generation, whereas the passive principle lies in the

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69 Fitzmyer 2008, 231-232
70 Ad Corinthios n.292
71 Ad Corinthios n.298
72 Ad Corinthios n.299: ordinata ratione
73 Ad Corinthios n.318
74 Officium naturae
female. He says that in some animals both of these principles are united in the same body, but in the case of human beings they are not. So when coming together in the sexual act the two principles are united and thus becoming like one. But the union of man and woman does not consist only in the act of coitus, but also in raising their children. Aquinas sees this task as belonging to both the man and the woman, and this Aquinas says is the reason that the union has to be a permanent one.

The second good of marriage is that it provides a remedy for desire. In Latin it says *remedium concupiscentiae*, and so he discusses concupiscence, which he describes as a “harmful heat.” In the *Summa*, Aquinas describes concupiscence as the craving for sensuous pleasure. Marriage then is an ointment to cool the concupiscible heat of sexual arousal. It gives the sexual desire order and limitation because it restricts the act to one person, and for this marriage requires fidelity. Aquinas interprets the words “aflame with passion” (1 Cor 7:9) to refer to concupiscence. Fitzmyer strengthens this assertion, reporting that many scholars interpret this phrase as a metaphor for sexual desire.

The third good of marriage is the sacramental aspect, which signifies the union between Christ and the Church. Aquinas quotes Ephesians 5:32, where Paul, after describing marriage as man and woman becoming one flesh, says: “This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.” Aquinas focuses on the sign of the sacrament marriage (Christ and the Church) rather than the grace it contains, and he brings it up in commenting on Paul's exhortation regarding fornication.

“Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her?” (1 Cor 6:16) Aquinas says that this refers to an unclean union, which is unbecoming because they are already in union with Christ, a union described as matrimonial. However, this marital union with Christ is spiritual, unlike the union with the prostitute, which is carnal. It is therefore a contradiction of the spiritual bond with Christ to have sexual relations outside of wedlock (be it with a prostitute or someone else) and amounts to a kind of marital infidelity. Being the members of Christ describes the intimacy of the spiritual matrimony between Christ and His Church (being one flesh), and having sexual relations with a prostitute would also make one united to her (or him), which is what Paul means to say in 1 Cor 6:16, and to be a member of a prostitute (1 Cor 6:15) while at the same time being a member of the mystical body of Christ is unacceptable, both for Paul and Aquinas. It is a break with the spiritual nature of the matrimony with Christ, which is described as the body being the temple of the Holy Spirit, that is, an indwelling of God's presence. The sign of the sacrament of marriage is...

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75 *Ad Corinthios* n.304, cf. Aristotle 1941a, 676
76 *Ad Corinthios* n.317
77 *Ad Corinthios* n.335: *calor quidam noxius*
78 ST I-II q.30 a.1
79 Fitzmyer 2008, 284-285
80 *Ad Corinthios* n.304
marriage plays an important role in Aquinas' commentary, but it is used to describe the relationship of the Christian members to Christ rather than the relationship between man and woman in holy matrimony.

This section, as mentioned in the beginning, is largely about sexual morality, and in this Paul and Aquinas do not differ much. Therefore it is fair to say that Aquinas stays close to the biblical text and does not stray far in his expanding comments. Staying close to the topic of these chapters, Aquinas focuses more on questions of morality, and uses the image of Christ and the Church in marriage as a tropological interpretation of Scripture to comment on the instances of sexual proclivities among the Corinthians.

Aquinas, with his explanation of the nature of marriage, also sheds light on the theme of ecclesial unity expounded in the previous section. Christians become one with Christ through baptism; their unity is like that of a marriage (albeit a spiritual one), and immoral acts are not only contrary to natural law but a break of the sacred bond one has made with Christ, thus causing a rift in the ecclesial unity. For the unity, as explained earlier, is spiritual and a preference for material things is therefore contradictory to the Church's unity in Christ. Aquinas explains this in relation to sexual immorality but, as will be seen in the next section, the “marital infidelity” manifested in indulging in material things has a wider application.

2.2.3 Eucharist (Ch. 11)

As explained above, the fragment that contains the comments on chapters 7:15-10 is missing. This means that a great portion covering the topic of the Eucharist (chapters 8-10) is not available to us. But while the missing part dealt with matters such as actions contrary to the Eucharist (e.g. eating food offered to idols),

chapter 11 brings us to the heart of the matter: the Eucharist itself.

But his comments on chapter 11 also contain thoughts on the liturgical celebration of this sacrament and thus Aquinas also discusses what a proper conduct is during this celebration. Aquinas comments on this extensively, but for the purpose of this study it is sufficient to list them briefly. As instances of improper conduct at the Eucharistic table he mentions women not wearing veils, and quarrelling at these gatherings. What these things have in common is that they all strike against the unity that the Eucharist is an expression of and thus their celebration, in a negative sense, becomes a sign of contradiction.

Aquinas discusses unity from a philosophical point of view in paragraph 622, where he brings up man's natural need to congregate. Since man is a “social animal” (referring to Aristotle's

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81 Ad Corinthios n.582
people should act according to reason and utilize this need to congregate for the improvement of the community. The implication here is that the need to come together will not automatically lead to good actions or betterment of the group, but that assemblies can be formed around evil deeds, and this is what Aquinas sees happening in the Eucharistic celebration of the Corinthians. For instance, when dissension arises in their gatherings they act contrary to the unity that the gathering is supposed to signify, which is the nature of the Church. This he says in reference to the inequitable distribution of food mentioned in 1 Cor 11:21.

Commenting on the subject of Eucharistic fasting, Aquinas compares the Eucharist with the Paschal meal that Christ celebrated with the apostles, and here we see an example of how Aquinas sees the events of the Old Testament as a participation in the events of the New Testament. According to Aquinas, the Corinthians wanted to celebrate the Agape feast before receiving the Eucharist because Christ had given sacrament of the Eucharist after the Passover meal. But the reason for this, Aquinas says, was because the Paschal lamb was a sign or “shadow” of the Eucharist, and as such has to come before the reality it signifies. The measure of fullness of divine reality is implied when the sign (or figure) is called a shadow whereas Christ (who is fully present in the Eucharist) is called “body” (that is, substance). With the coming of this new reality, the custom was changed so that a fast was to be observed before receiving the Eucharist, out of respect for this sacrament, which the Corinthians, according to Aquinas, disregarded. Fitzmyer mentions several theories to what it was the Corinthians did to profane the celebration of the Lord's Supper; none of them includes Aquinas' explanation. The closest one says that the wealthy Christians of Corinth ate a secular meal separate from the common Eucharistic table, which caused division among the believers and led Paul to insist that the Eucharist is for everyone and that those who preferred the secular meal was unworthy of the Eucharist. However, no mention is made that a Eucharistic fast was demanded at this time.

In discussing the sacrament itself, Aquinas gives very elaborate expositions on its nature; its different species and how they relate to each other (doctrine of concomitance), how it differs from other sacraments, and heretical notions on the Eucharist. I have opted not to include these parts in the analysis since they do not comment on the biblical text and are, to use Baglow's terminology, pedagogical rather than exegetical.

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82 Ad Corinthios n.622, cf. Aristotle 1941, 1129
83 Ad Corinthios n.623
84 Ad Corinthios n.631: The use of “shadow” and “body” makes a perfect illustration of Aquinas' application of participation in Scripture, since it simultaneously shows both the difference and intrinsic connection between OT and NT.
85 Fitzmyer 2008, 427
86 Baglow 2002, 92
However, he does comment on the Eucharist in relation to the biblical text itself, in regard to the words of consecration in 1 Cor 11:23-25. He finds meaning in that Christ gave the sacrament during the night time, saying it is suitable because the Eucharist illumines the soul.\(^{87}\)

In explaining the use of bread in celebrating the Eucharist, Aquinas explains the crucial difference between this sacrament and baptism. For whereas baptism is the cause of generation (as one born into a new life), the Eucharist is the cause of spiritual nourishment. A key difference between these causes is that the cause of generation is not joined to its effect according to its substance but according to its power; however, the cause of nourishment (i.e. food) is joined to the effect according to its substance.\(^{88}\) This principle, Aquinas would say, holds true both for regular food and the bread of life. What this means is that the Eucharist causes an even greater union with Christ than in baptism which accentuates the scandal of the immoral behavior of the Corinthians at the Eucharistic table but also underscores the unitive aspect of the sacrament, that they become one with Christ, more so than in the other sacraments.

The Eucharist is a sign (indeed, a seal) of the New Covenant, and just like baptism, is a sacrament that purveys spiritual goods, indeed, the highest spiritual good. This dignity of the sacrament and its spiritual nature underline the contradiction of the behavior of the Corinthians at the Eucharistic table, which is marked both by greed (not sharing with others) and materialistic indulgence (gluttony and drunkenness).

As we could see with the other sacraments, there is here an emphasis on the unitive aspect of the Eucharist and the damage being done to this aspect through dissension. It shows first of all that the Corinthians do not understand the spiritual nature of the sacrament, for their gatherings are marked by both gastronomic indulgence and strife (which there is no need for in the spiritual realm, because there everyone gets their fair share). Second, it shows what kind of community the sacraments effect in the Church. It is one where one's actions affect the reception of the sacrament, especially the Eucharist. Received in the right spirit followed by good actions, it will lead to supernatural growth and eventually salvation. However, all who receive it unworthily will “eat and drink judgement against themselves.” (1 Cor 11:29)

2.2.4. Conclusion

The interplay between the biblical text and Aquinas' sacramental theology is characterized particularly in that the sacraments are discussed from the perspective of unity, which is the concern of Paul in these chapters. More will be said on this later.

\(^{87}\)Ad Corinthios n.648
\(^{88}\)Ad Corinthios n.651
2.3 Grace: the divine reality in the sacraments

In this chapter of the study I will look at the graces that flow from the sacraments, the different charisms. First Aquinas discusses spiritual gifts in a general way; then dedicates himself particularly to charity, the greatest of the spiritual gifts; lastly he explains the role of the spiritual gifts in the life of the Church.

2.3.1 Charismatic graces (Ch. 12)

Here, as we shall see, the image of the Church as the body of Christ is used in a more detailed fashion as the difference between the members and the role they play in the Church is described closer. The reason for this exposition is, as Fitzmyer explains, that there had been some problems with how Christians handled their received spiritual gifts, “with a certain competitiveness that does not always conduce to the good of the community...”\(^{89}\) And this, yet again, would cause division. Therefore the nature of unity is described in yet a greater detail.

About the charismatic graces Aquinas explains that no one has all of these graces but for one exception, for they exist in their totality only in Christ “to Whom the Spirit was given without measure.”\(^{90}\) Christ, the head of the Church, could also be called the fountainhead because it is from Him that the charismatic graces flow to the members of His mystical body. We see here the doctrine of participation not only as a component of Aquinas' hermeneutical apparatus, but also in explaining the nature of the charismatic graces, who by their participatory character are fragmentary and imperfect. But it also refers back to the point made by Paul about Apollos watering but God giving the growth, which Aquinas explained as God being the principal cause while the apostles were the instrumental causes. The fact that Christ is the head of the mystical body is a strong indication of the instrumentality of the other members, for they are being directed from the head, as in a physical body. It also emphasizes the spiritual nature of the Church; Aquinas says that just as no member of a body partakes in it without being moved from the head, thus no one is a member of the Church without participating in some grace of the Spirit.\(^{91}\)

The participatory nature of the charismatic graces also helps us understand that no member is sufficient by himself, but is part of a higher order and is performing a service not determined by him. The purpose of these graces is to act for the salvation of others.

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\(^{89}\)Fitzmyer 2008, 454
\(^{90}\)Ad Corinthios n.721 cui datus est spiritus non ad mensuram
\(^{91}\)Ad Corinthios n.725
In mentioning the different graces (1 Cor 12:8-10), Paul emphasizes that they all come from “one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.” (1 Cor 12:11)

What follows after is explaining the relationship of graces to one another and it is here that the image of the body is used in a greater detail. Aquinas begins by describing different kinds of unity, leaning on Aristotle's different definitions in his *Metaphysics.*\(^{92}\) The unity of the Church as the body of Christ is a unity of wholeness, which unlike the unity of a point or a line on a surface, does not exclude multitude. In fact, by its very definition its unity consists in various parts forming an integral whole, and therein lies its perfection.\(^{93}\)

This little philosophical reflection serves Aquinas to explain Paul's words in 1 Cor 12:12-31 where he shows how all the members of the Church are necessary for their mutual edification. The bodily members, be they more exalted, like the hands, or more humble, like the feet, all serve the wholeness of the body's unity. Therefore no member is left out of the unity on account of its lowlier nature, but everyone serves the same final purpose, the life and health of the body, and in the case of the mystical body of Christ, the salvation of human beings. Also, because of the integral nature of the body's holistic unity, none of what Aquinas calls the “nobler” parts of the body can say that they have no need of the other parts, for by themselves they are of no value. By the initial philosophical reflection, Aquinas explains the nature of the Church's unity that is only implicit in Paul's text. Fitzmyer says that Paul stresses the unity in Christ that dominates the diversity of the members, which precludes them from vaunting “his or her individual endowment over that of others at the expense of such unity.”\(^{94}\) Fitzmyer, like Aquinas, sees a priority of unity over diversity.

Then Aquinas explains the foundation of the ecclesial unity, which is the Holy Spirit, in reference to 1 Cor 12:13: “For in the one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body...”\(^{95}\) Now, the unity of a body is constituted in the soul, and this is what Aquinas says in ST I q.76 a.8. From this line of reasoning, it would be natural to conclude that the Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church, which would be a traditional description.\(^{96}\) Yet Aquinas refrains from this. Perhaps he found that this description did not fit well within the frame of the hylomorphic anthropology he adopted from Aristotle, which would hint at a panentheistic unity between God and mankind.

When commenting on the different functions of the various members of a body, Aquinas enumerates different categories not mentioned in the biblical text. In 1 Cor 12:15, the foot is paired up with the hand, and Aquinas identify them as the category of “members involved in motion.”\(^{97}\) The foot is described as the more ignoble member of the two mentioned because it gets to step on

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\(^{92}\)Aristotle 2004, 122-124, 146

\(^{93}\)Ad Corinthios n.732: The perfection of the body in its multitude is explained in n.738.

\(^{94}\)Fitzmyer 2008, 474

\(^{95}\)Ad Corinthios n.734

\(^{96}\)Congar 2004, 55

\(^{97}\)...membris deservientibus motui.
the soil and carry the load of the whole body. The hand is the nobler member and is called “the organ of the organs.” Aquinas describes the members involved in motion as those involved in the active life of the Church, of which the feet are the subjects and the hands are the prelates.

The next category is the members that serve knowledge, to which the eye and ear (who are mentioned in 1 Cor 12:16) belong. According to Aquinas, the eye serves knowledge by way of discovery. This is connected with the epistemological idea of abstraction by which the intellect gains knowledge by abstracting universal notions through the observation of particular things; an idea that Aquinas received from Aristotle. The ear serves knowledge by way of receiving doctrine. Aquinas derives this primarily from Romans 10:17: “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ”, which he mentions briefly in ST II-II q.1 a.4 and more in depth in his commentary on Romans. Aquinas sees the eye as the nobler member of the two, on account of being “more spiritual” and for its ability to reveal more things. Therefore he assigns the eye as the sign of the contemplative life, whom he describes as “teachers who investigate truth.” The ear on the other hand designates the disciple, who hears the truth of the teacher, and thus the disciple needs the teacher in order to hear the truth. But reverse is also true, and this Aquinas illustrates by quoting Job 29:11: “When the ear heard, it called me blessed.” (Vulgate translation)

In these two categories, the foot and the ear are identified by Aquinas as the inferior members because it is they who feel left out of the body on account of them not being a hand and an eye respectively (1 Cor 12:15-16). But if all members were to become noble members, the body as a whole would not only lack perfection but also miss important functions. This Aquinas says in regard to 1 Cor 12:17: “If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?” The disadvantage of this scenario should be evident to anyone, and that is why Aquinas calls it an “awkward conclusion”, since the body obviously functions better when all its members are intact and work in unison.

Rather, none of the functions performed by the different members should be lacking in the body, but come together as God has arranged them in the body (1 Cor 12:18) instead of living a separate existence.

98 *Organum organorum.*
99 *Ad Corinthios* n.738
100 Colón-Emeric 2012, 86
101 *Spiritualior*
102 *Doctores, qui per seipsos veritatem inspiciant.*
103 *Ad Corinthios* n.739
104 *Ad Corinthios* n.740
105 *Ad Corinthios* n.741: *inconveniens quod sequitur.*
106 *Ad Corinthios* n.742
After he has dealt with the relationship of the particular members to the body as a whole, he discusses the different members in relation to each other. He employs the different categories of members used earlier when commenting on the words “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’”, where he compares the contemplative life of the Church to the active life, saying that contemplatives need to be sustained by the labors of the active members.107

Another comparison Aquinas makes is between useful and noble members. Those that seem to be weaker are in fact necessary for the body (1 Cor 12:22), such as the intestine. The nobler members can not function without these members, but the inferior members could function without the nobler kinds. This is what characterizes the “uselessness” of the nobler members, that they are ornamental rather than necessary. For what is useful is determined by its means to an end, but what is most noble is not useful in this sense, because the noblest things are ends in themselves.108

When giving reasons for the above mentioned care, Aquinas uses an Aristotelian methodology. When commenting on “God has so arranged the body” (1 Cor 12:24), he assigns this as the efficient cause of the care to be shown to the more humble members, showing it to be a divine command.109

The final cause of the care he sees in the phrase “that there may be no dissension within the body.” (1 Cor 12:25) Even though the care in the Church is divinely arranged, God has no personal use for this; it is entirely for the benefit of the members. If there is discord in the body, the body as a whole suffers (1 Cor 12:26). In order that there be peace within the body of Christ, everyone should strive to give each member what is necessary.110 And what is necessary is specified in the next paragraph; namely, that they show solicitude for one another. Here Aquinas again compares with a natural body, saying that just as the bodily members are naturally inclined to protect each other from blows, so should the members of the Church look out for one another.111

Since every member has a different role in the Church, everyone has been given different spiritual gifts. However, Aquinas sees that some members, on account of the importance of their mission, have been given more gifts than the others. These members are the apostles. First, they have been given the apostolic office, which is the authority to govern the people of God. Second, the authority to teach, and third, the power to work miracles in order to confirm the doctrine. The miracle work is subservient to the teaching, and the teaching in turn is directed to the governance of God's people, which Aquinas illustrates with a quote from Jeremiah 3:15: “I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.” Because of

107 Ad Corinthios n.745
108 Ad Corinthios n.746
109 Ad Corinthios n.749
110 Ad Corinthios n.750
111 Ad Corinthios n.751
their special mission in governing the Church, the apostles were given a “primacy in spiritual graces”,\(^\text{112}\) for which Aquinas quotes Romans 8:23, that talks about them receiving the first fruits of the Spirit. It is, however, not clear from the context in the Roman epistle that this passage refers to the apostles exclusively, and Fitzmyer attributes this to Christians in general. He also says that the expression “first fruits” comes from agriculture, which refers to the harvest and is supposed to signify a guarantee of what is to come.\(^\text{113}\) Aquinas says that the office of teaching and power to work miracles belong primarily to the apostles, but that other members can also participate in these spiritual graces, and so some of the tasks of the apostles can delegated to others, such as baptism, but also teaching and the performance of miracles.\(^\text{114}\) Aquinas sees a hierarchy of spiritual gifts that are ordered according to the hierarchy of the Church, an idea very similar to what Dionysius the Areopagite expresses in his work *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*.\(^\text{115}\)

Aquinas gives a lot of space to ecclesiological questions in what is a discussion about spiritual gifts; but this only serves to underline the spiritual nature that he prioritizes in the Church. The spiritual gifts are distributed according to the needs of the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ and as such diversified in its different members. So the members will be given different gifts in order to perform different tasks, all in order to serve the good of the Church and the will of God. The problem in Corinth is that this perspective has been lost; they show a predilection for certain kinds of spiritual gifts and no longer see the big picture. Paul's intention is to rectify this erroneous view and show them the true nature of the Church, and this is what Aquinas elaborates on, with insights not explicit in the text but that brings a new understanding of it.

What is obvious in this section of Aquinas' participatory biblical exegesis is the influence from Aristotle, whom he refers to several times and whose philosophy he uses to develop his theological construction of the biblical text. In this section Aquinas brings together Athens with Jerusalem, and thus achieving the “fusion of horizons” that Gadamer spoke of, an observation made by Baglow about Aquinas' biblical exegesis in general.\(^\text{116}\) For those unfamiliar with this expression, a “fusion of horizons” is what happens a person analyzes history, wherein a person's particular perspective affect the way he or she interprets a historical instance, and where that historical instance in turn can influence a person's present perspective.

Another thinker brought into play is, at least in my estimate, Dionysius the Areopagite. Of course one could argue that the correlation of the hierarchy of spiritual gifts and the hierarchy of the Church can be found in the Bible (and the closeness with the biblical text that Aquinas keeps in his

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\(^\text{112}\) *Primatum in spiritualibus gratiis.*

\(^\text{113}\) Fitzmyer 1995, 854

\(^\text{114}\) *Ad Corinthios* n.755

\(^\text{115}\) Corrigan and Harrington 2015

\(^\text{116}\) Baglow 2002, 71-72
exegesis is what makes the tension between his horizon and that of Paul's so interesting), but one can not expect to find it in such a neat and elaborated way as Aquinas has done in his commentary. Also, according to Fitzmyer, the quote from Romans about the “first fruits” that Aquinas invokes as support for his thinking in this respect is not warranted by modern biblical scholarship. We must therefore conclude that this correlation of hierarchies is yet another fusion of horizons, not only of Paul and Dionysius (whom scholars now say is not the real Areopagite converted by Paul, although Aquinas believed this to be the case), but probably also his own medieval period, which experienced a heightened importance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

2.3.2 Charity: grace *par excellence* (Ch. 13)

In order to remedy the Corinthians' inordinate desire for certain spiritual gifts, Paul said that he would show them a more excellent way (1 Cor 12:31), before proceeding to speak about charity, which is the unifying factor for all the charisms and the life of the Church.

Aquinas says that charity, which he connects with sanctifying grace, surpasses the other spiritual gifts in three ways. First, as to necessity, because without charity, the other gifts are insufficient. This is in reference to what Paul says in 1 Cor 13:1-3, where he mentions several spiritual gifts that are meaningless if “[I] have not love.” The second way in which the excellence of charity is manifested in is its utility, because it is conducive to do good and avoid evil. Examples of this are seen in 1 Cor 13:4-7. The third mark of its excellence is its permanence, for while the other spiritual gifts will cease along with earthly existence, charity will remain forever.\textsuperscript{117} And this is what Paul says in 1 Cor 13:8-10.

Since Aquinas identifies charity as sanctifying grace, which is the supernatural gift of everlasting communion with God, anyone who lacks charity is spiritually dead. Therefore, anyone speaking who is dead in spirit, even if this person has the gift of tongues, is like a cymbal or a brass gong; an inanimate object giving sound.\textsuperscript{118}

Aquinas also explains the four charismatic graces mentioned in 1 Cor 13:2, which he categorizes as graces pertaining to knowledge. Prophecy has been mentioned earlier by Aquinas as knowledge of future contingent;\textsuperscript{119} here he emphasizes that the impulse to prophesy always comes from God, quoting 2 Pt 1:21: “because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” The phrase “understand all the mysteries” Aquinas understands to be the grace of wisdom, which is the knowledge of divine secrets, hidden from the

\textsuperscript{117}Ad Corinthios n.759  
\textsuperscript{118}Ad Corinthios n.761  
\textsuperscript{119}Ad Corinthios n. 728
world. Third is knowledge about everything else, whether it be acquired in a human fashion or 
divinely infused. Fourth is faith, which Aquinas in ST I q.12 a.13 calls “a kind of knowledge.”

The phrase “all faith” can have two meanings according to Aquinas. Either it can mean all the 
articles of faith or it can signify a perfect faith, able to “remove mountains.”

All these graces pertain to the perfection of the intellect, which is not edifying without charity.

The same goes for certain actions performed by believers like good works, or acts of piety, 
and martyrdom which Aquinas interprets 1 Cor 13:3 to be; that is, give away one's possessions and 
deliver one's body to be burned.

After discussing the insufficiency of the spiritual gifts, Aquinas proceeds to the efficacy of 
charity and how through it all the virtuous works are completed.

Being virtuous means being well disposed to endure evil things and accomplish good things. 
So when Paul says “Love [charity] is patient” (1 Cor 13:4), Aquinas interprets this as meaning that 
charity enables us to endure evils patiently, which is one of the spiritual works of mercy in the 
Christian tradition. Aquinas says that one endures these evils out of love for God. This love then, 
bolsters a man's virtue.

What comes after in the biblical text is some specific virtuous works that comes from 
charity, whether it means avoiding evil or doing good. The ones mentioned in 1 Cor 13:4-6 pertain 
to avoiding actions that are evil, which are jealousy, arrogance, rudeness, insisting on its own way, 
irritability, resentfulness, and rejoicing in wrongdoing. Then come the actions connected with doing 
good, which are rejoicing in truth, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and 
enduring all things (1 Cor 13:6-7). In these good actions, Aquinas distinguishes different kinds; 
there are good actions towards one's neighbor and towards God. The rejoicing in truth and and 
bearing all things corresponds to the first category in Aquinas' commentary. To rejoice in truth is to 
rejoice in some good of one's neighbor, and to bear all things Aquinas takes to mean enduring the 
evils of a neighbor. The other good actions are ordered towards God. Believing and hoping all 
things correspond to the theological virtues faith and hope along with charity. Enduring all things is 
the perseverance needed in order not to let hope be discouraged by the delay but to patiently await 
God's promises.

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120 Fides cognitio quaedam est. 
121 Ad Corinthios n.764 
122 Ad Corinthios n.766 
123 Ad Corinthios n.768-769 
124 Ad Corinthios n.771 
125 Ad Corinthios n.772 
126 Ad Corinthios n.774-785
Lastly, Aquinas discusses the permanence of charity, and compares it to the transitoriness of the other spiritual gifts. The reason Aquinas says that charity is permanent is because Paul says “Love never ends” (1 Cor 13:8),\(^{127}\) whereas the other gifts will cease.

Prophecy (1 Cor 13:8), Aquinas says, will cease for two reasons. The first reason is because prophecy regards the future, but the everlasting glory includes the consummation of time and so there will be no more future “ahead.” The second reason is because prophecy occurs in figures and enigmatic knowledge, but this kind of knowledge will in heaven be replaced with clear vision,\(^ {128}\) something Aquinas discusses later on.

The gift of tongues will cease because in heaven the language barrier will have been overcome: “For in future glory each one will understand each tongue.”\(^ {129}\) The complete unity of heaven will be manifested even in the human tongue.\(^ {130}\) For Fitzmyer, the cessation of “tongues” in this context is connected more with knowledge and its limits compared to the eschatological state;\(^ {131}\) a point that Aquinas also makes, but not in his explanation of the word “tongues.”

After showing the transitory nature of the spiritual gifts in contrast to charity, Aquinas says that Paul seeks to prove that they are transitory. The proof that Aquinas ascribes to Paul he presents in the form of a syllogism. The major proposition is “when the complete [perfect] comes, the partial [imperfect] will come to an end.” (1 Cor 13:10) The translation Aquinas uses has the words “perfect” and “imperfect” instead of “complete” and “partial”, but they amount to the same for Aquinas who says that to know imperfectly is to know partially. The minor proposition is “For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part.” (1 Cor 13:9) Since the arrival of the perfect (or complete) will do away with the imperfect (or partial), and the spiritual gifts mentioned by Paul are imperfect, the conclusion is then that with the coming of everlasting glory (a perfect state) the spiritual gifts will cease to exist.\(^ {132}\)

The comparison of Paul's present state with that of his childhood (1 Cor 13:11) is, according to Aquinas, an illustration of the proof he has given. Aquinas describes childhood as something that by its nature is something transitory, for the natural goal of a child is to reach adulthood. In his childhood, his abilities were that of a child's, that is, undeveloped and therefore imperfect. When reaching adulthood his abilities were developed and so the childish imperfections vanished. This is the reason that Aquinas does not see charity as transitory; for although people in heaven will love God more perfectly, there is nothing in the notion of charity that implies imperfection.\(^ {133}\) In fact,

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\(^{127}\)Ad Corinthios n.787  
\(^{128}\)Ad Corinthios n.788  
\(^{129}\)In futura enim gloria, quilibet quamlibet linguam intelliget.  
\(^{130}\)Ad Corinthios n.789  
\(^{131}\)Fitzmyer 2008, 497  
\(^{132}\)Ad Corinthios n.792-794  
\(^{133}\)Ad Corinthios n.795-796
Aquinas says in ST II-II q.27 a.5 and a.6 that man can love God in a complete manner (according to a human capacity) and that charity consists in loving God without measure.

Aquinas explains further the examples that Paul gives as childish abilities, “I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.” To speak like a child, says Aquinas, is to speak unclearly, i.e. babbling. This is improved by the gift of wisdom, which however still will leave one in an incomplete state and thus like a child. To think like a child is to accept or reject things foolishly, that is, without proper discernment. To reason like a child is to reason about vain things. Now, Aquinas notes that Paul has placed these abilities in the wrong order, for to speak one needs first the judgement of reason (thinking), and judgement needs the activity of reason, that is, deliberation (reasoning). Aquinas says that this reverse order is befitting to describe a child, who speaks without thinking, and thinks without reasoning. Aquinas also connects these (childish) abilities to the gifts of tongues (speech), prophecy (thinking), and knowledge (reasoning).134

The second last part of the commentary on chapter 13 is dedicated to the beatific vision, which is the complete knowledge of God attained in heaven. For this is how Aquinas interprets the phrase “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.” (1 Cor 13:12)

To see in a mirror is to know something imperfectly. The imperfect knowledge Aquinas speaks of here is when something is known through the reflection of something else. This is how Aquinas views our knowledge of God; for we do not know God's essence, but only the effects of divine activity. God can be known through creation, similar to the way an artist can be through his or her work. This, however, constitutes a great disparity between the knowledge we have of God's effects and how God is really like, because God is infinite and creation is finite. Because of this disparity, a clear knowledge of God will always be lacking (in this life) and instead be enigmatic (like a riddle), and this is what Aquinas understands the word “dimly” to refer to.135

Commenting on the word “face”, Aquinas says it only applies metaphorically to God. When we see a human being in the face, we see that person as he or she really is. And this is what the blessed in heaven shall do with God, says Aquinas and quotes from 1 John 3:2: “we will see him as he is.” Since knowing God through His effects is imperfect knowledge, a perfect knowledge would be to see God’s essence (i.e. as He really is), and this is what Aquinas says that Paul means with the words “see face to face.”136 Fitzmyer says that this expression comes from the Septuagint, which describes Jacob's experience of God (Gen 32:31).137 This is interesting because in paragraph 802, Aquinas explicitly mentions Jacob's experience, saying it was not a vision of God's essence, but rather a sensuous vision of a higher degree. This means that Aquinas was aware of the origin of the

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134Ad Corinthios n.797
135Ad Corinthios n.800-801
136Ad Corinthios n.802
137Fitzmyer 2008, 500
expression “face to face” in the Old testament, yet opted for a different interpretation of this expression in 1 Cor 13:12.

The last part of this section is a remark on the theological virtues; faith, hope, and charity, as they are numbered in 1 Cor 13:13. Aquinas says that the theological virtues join us directly to God, whereas the other (natural) virtues only do this through the mediation of the theological virtues. But he also says that practicing the other virtues will prepare the hearts of men for the theological virtues. The reason for this difference between these virtues is because the theological virtues have God as their immediate object whereas the other virtues have a natural goal as their object (although even natural virtues can be directed towards God through the mediation of the theological virtues).\(^{138}\)

Having laid out the characteristics of the Church's spiritual unity, Aquinas in this chapter comes to the thing that holds this unity together: charity (or love). Fitzmyer calls charity “the greatest gift of God”, surpassing the other spiritual endowments (πνευματικὰ) mentioned in chapter 12.\(^{139}\) This is exactly what Aquinas wants to show in his commentary; how radically different and superior charity is to the charismatic graces, especially the gift of tongues that was so coveted by the Corinthians. The permanent nature of charity makes Aquinas inquiere into its eschatological state, and also that of the other charismatic graces, which in the latter case would be a state of annihilation; for those charismatic graces are tied to our earthly existence (although their function is ordered to the spiritual life) whereas charity will last forever. Eschatology is also brought up when Aquinas comments on the fuller knowledge and seeing face to face. He interprets the perfect state this passage speaks of to mean the everlasting glory of the ἔσχατον, and Fitzmyer makes the same interpretation.\(^{140}\)

But for the most part, the commentary on chapter 13 treats moral theological issues. Aquinas is heavily influenced by Aristotle's virtue ethics; thus he categorizes the different behaviors according to the definition of virtuous action, which is doing good and avoiding evil. The influence from Aristotle is also noticeable in the syllogism that Aquinas ascribes to Paul. It is unlikely that Paul made a conscious use of a syllogism, yet one can draw logically coherent conclusions without knowing Aristotelian logic.

2.3.3 Charismatic graces in the life of the Church (Ch. 14)

\(^{138}\)Ad Corinthios n.805
\(^{139}\)Fitzmyer 2008, 488
\(^{140}\)Fitzmyer 2008, 502
Aquinas says that the Apostle here compares the charismatic graces to each other,\textsuperscript{141} but he also discusses their place in the life of the Church, especially in the liturgy. For although charity is far greater than the other spiritual gifts, the charisms are not to be despised but earnestly desired for the edification of the Church.\textsuperscript{142} The word edification here is key, for it is on account of this that Paul gives priority to the gift of prophecy over the gift of tongues.

Before explaining this priority, Aquinas gives further clarifications concerning prophecy. It is not merely a matter of seeing into the future. He gives several modes of prophecy before declaring which mode of prophecy is referred to in chapter 14; it is a divine intellectual light enabling a person to explain visions made to him and others.\textsuperscript{143}

When speaking of the priority of prophecy, Aquinas gives two reasons for this priority, one is based on the relationship between God and the Church, and the second between men and the Church.\textsuperscript{144}

As for the first reason, Aquinas says that things done for the glory of God and the benefit of one's neighbors is better than things done solely for the glory of God. Aquinas says that the gift of tongues only leads to the glory of God, and that is why Paul says that “those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God” (1 Cor 14:2), which can either mean to speak to the honor of God or the comprehension of God.\textsuperscript{145} The gift of prophecy, on the other hand, is both for the honor of God and the benefit of our neighbors; for it benefits men insofar as they are edified by the spiritual things interpreted by the prophets and honors God, as the prophets fulfill the command to instruct men about spiritual things.\textsuperscript{146}

The second reason is that a deed that is only useful to the one doing it is less than a deed that profits others, and this is what the gift of tongues is. But the gift of prophecy is useful to others, for reasons mentioned above. But here Aquinas specifies, it is the Church's members who are edified, as they are instructed by the prophets on spiritual matters.\textsuperscript{147}

Next, Paul says that he wants the Corinthians to speak in tongues. This, Aquinas says, is to exclude any ideas that Paul would scorn this spiritual gift. But Paul also reiterates his point about prophecy having the priority, saying he wants even more for them to prophesy.\textsuperscript{148} The reason for this is what has been touched upon above, namely that speech of tongues is unintelligible without the interpretation provided by prophecy, and thus less beneficial for the edification of the Church.\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{141}Ad Corinthios n.807
\textsuperscript{142}Ad Corinthios n.809
\textsuperscript{143}Ad Corinthios n.813
\textsuperscript{144}Ad Corinthios n.816
\textsuperscript{145}Ad Corinthios n.817
\textsuperscript{146}Ad Corinthios n.818
\textsuperscript{147}Ad Corinthios n.819
\textsuperscript{148}Ad Corinthios n.820-821
\textsuperscript{149}Ad Corinthios n.822
What Paul is adding here that is new are different examples to prove his point; first from himself (which will be omitted in this study for the sake of brevity), then from inanimate objects, and third from men speaking different languages.

But before commenting on these examples, Aquinas explains what is meant by speaking in tongues in this context (1 Cor 14:5-12). According to Aquinas, it means either an unknown language or whatever sign that is not understood.150 Fitzmyer would not agree with this, but describes speaking in tongues as “utterance beyond the patterns of normal human speech.”151

Then comes the example from inanimate objects (“lifeless instruments”). Aquinas distinguishes sounds from inanimate objects from sounds made by animals (here it should be assumed that also man is included, whose definition is “rational animal”). The sound that is uttered from the mouth of an animal is called a “voice.” Inanimate objects do not have a voice, but can be said to have one only metaphorically. This clarification is only relevant when looking at the Vulgate translation Aquinas is using when commenting on 1 Cor 14:7. The Latin words used for “produce sound” is vocem dantia, from the word vox (meaning “voice”), which is different from the Latin word for sound that is sonus.152 The Greek word used in the biblical text is φωνὴ, which can mean both sound and voice. But even if Aquinas’ explanation stems from the particularities of the Latin language, it is pertinent to the exegesis at hand. For a voice is not just a sound, it is a sound that expresses meaning. This applies mainly to human beings, but even animals without reason can produce sounds to express certain sentiments. Lifeless instruments, on the other hand, can not do this of themselves but only through someone else using them to express something with meaning. It is this distinction between the sound of inanimate objects and animals with a voice that will be crucial for its application to the difference between speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Now, if lifeless instruments do not give any distinct sounds (denoting some specific meaning), how are they to be understood? Aquinas means to say that anyone speaking in tongues without interpretation is like an instrument giving an indistinct sound; the hearers will not be able to make sense of it.153

The last example comes from the diversity of human language. Here a clarification is made concerning the unintelligibility of the speech of tongues. It is not that it is unintelligible in itself, but only to the hearer who will not understand unless someone is there to interpret. This is what Paul means when he mentions the many languages in the world whom all have their voice (that is, meaning) (1 Cor 14:10-11, Vulgate translation).154 The NRSV has the word “sounds” instead of

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150 Ad Corinthios n.824
151 Fitzmyer 2008, 510
152 Ad Corinthios n.828
153 Ibid
154 Ad Corinthios n.831
languages ("many different kinds of sounds in the world"), and saying that "nothing is without sound." The Greek words used here is φωνή (language/sound) and ἄφωνος (voiceless/dumb). It would be interesting to examine the differences between the Vulgate and the NRSV in this passage, but there is no room for this. Suffice to say that the Greek words allow for both translations.

So the phrase “I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me” (1 Cor 14:11) illustrates the uselessness of speaking in tongues without interpretation; even though it makes perfect sense (like someone speaking a foreign language can), if someone does not speak that language it will not make sense to that person without translation, which is what prophecy is to the speech of tongues.155

Having shown the excellency of prophecy over the gift of tongues in exhortation, Aquinas goes on the explain its excellence in relation to prayer.

Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of prayer: private prayer and public prayer. Aquinas says that the gift of prophecy in both cases is more valuable than the gift of tongues. Here it is important to keep in mind that prophecy is still understood as illumination of the mind, for the point he makes about private prayer is that it is better to pray and understand the prayer than just to pray without understanding the words one is praying with. The reason for this is that with the addition of understanding one is refreshed both in intellect and affections, whereas praying without understanding only refreshes the affections.156 This is how Aquinas explains the words “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive.” (1 Cor 14:14) He interprets the word “spirit” to mean the Holy Spirit, who moves inside man to prayer, even when he doesn't know how to pray as he should (Rom 8:26).157 Fitzmyer sees “spirit” as the affective part of the human soul, the one that wills and reacts emotionally and is open to the influence of the divine Spirit.158

Since it is better to be refreshed both in intellect and affections, Aquinas provides us with the words of Paul as an answer: “I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit; but I will sing praise with the mind also.” (1 Cor 14:15)

Next Aquinas explains the role of prophecy and tongues in public prayer, by which Aquinas means the celebration of the Church's liturgy, such as the Mass and the Divine Office. When Paul talks about blessing (1 Cor 14:16), Aquinas interprets this as a “blessing given in the name of the Church.”159 In liturgical gatherings, how can someone who does not understand the blessing (because he does not understand the language) say “amen” to it? Aquinas says that a man could conform to a blessing even if he does not understand, but only in a general way, in knowing that he

155 Ad Corinthios n.832
156 Ad Corinthios n.837
157 Ad Corinthios n.838
158 Fitzmyer 2008, 516
159 Ad Corinthios n.844, benedictioni...factae in persona Ecclesiae.
is receiving a good thing, but without knowing the specifics of it. Because the man does not understand in detail, Aquinas says that the man is not edified in his intellect (although he could very well be edified in his affections). The conclusion then is that, for the maximum edification, it is better for the faithful in the liturgy not only to receive blessings, but to understand them as well. And according to Aquinas, this is the complementary role that prophecy had to the gift of tongues in the liturgical gatherings of the people of God.

After evaluating the spiritual gifts, Paul sets a specific order for their use in common worship. No one speaks in a tongue unless there is someone to interpret; there is to be a specific number of prophets speaking and all has to be done in an orderly fashion (1 Cor 14:27-33). The number of two or three prophets is to Aquinas in keeping with the biblical view of having two or three witnesses in order to have testimonial legitimacy.

Aquinas sees the order of the liturgy originating from this instruction by Paul. The tongues correspond to the biblical readings at Mass (which in Aquinas' time were two, the epistle and the gospel) or at Matins (where they had three readings). The prophets correspond to the preacher (who explains the biblical texts being read), who in Mass would be a man in holy orders. But there is only one preacher (in Mass or other liturgical occasions), and that is why Aquinas says that the order from Paul is only partly observed by the contemporary Church.

Since Aquinas measures the worth of the charismatic gifts according to the spiritual edification they give to the Church’s members, he comments on the efficacy of the charisms discussed by Paul according to this criteria. It emphasizes the ecclesial nature of the charismatic graces, which is in keeping with the theme in the section about the charismatic graces in general.

2.3.4. Conclusion

The second part of Aquinas' commentary focuses on the reality contained in the sacraments, which is grace. Of course, Paul does talk about spiritual gifts in chapters 12-14, but he does not connect them to the sacraments, and neither does Aquinas in his analysis of these chapters. Yet it is clear that Aquinas sees the use of the sacraments as conducive to the kind of behavior envisioned by Paul: acting in charity (that for Aquinas means specifically to have sanctifying grace, which means a relationship with God not corrupted by mortal sin), using the charismatic graces received to build up the spiritual unity of the Church, and to care for one another.

160 Ad Corinthios n.846
161 Ad Corinthios n.873
162 Ad Corinthios n.870
However, because the Church is a spiritual unity, with God as the center and ultimate end, it is clear that the present state (even if one lives according to charity) is only a transitional one, waiting to be consumed by the second coming of Christ and the ἔσχατον. This is the dimension hinted at in the sacraments and that Aquinas addresses in the third part of the commentary.

2.4 The reality signified in the sacraments: the glory of the resurrection

(Chapter 15)

In chapter 15, the Apostle dedicates himself to the resurrection, which Aquinas connects with the graces he discussed in the previous chapters. He says that the glory of the resurrection is not contained in the sacraments because one does not receive it all at once, but the grace received in the sacraments are conducive to the reality of the resurrection. The connection that Aquinas makes of chapter 15 with the theme of sacraments, enables him to unite this eschatological discourse with the other chapters that mostly deal with ethical and theological issues that are closely related to the earthly existence of the Church in Corinth.

2.4.1 The first resurrection

In order to lay the ground for the doctrine of the general resurrection and the life of glory that awaits the elect, Paul begins to talk about the resurrection of Christ, which has a pivotal place in the gospel that he preaches. The things Paul handed on to the Corinthians “as of first importance” (1 Cor 15:3), Aquinas enumerates to four: The death, burial, resurrection, and appearance of Christ.

Aquinas gives an elaborate exposition on these doctrines, which will be omitted in this study for the sake of brevity. Suffice to say that, having stressed the importance of these doctrines, Paul goes on to connect the resurrection of Christ with the general resurrection.

2.4.2 The general resurrection

In this section, Aquinas begins to delve into the reality that is signified but not contained in the sacraments.

Seeing how essential the resurrection of Christ is to the Christian faith, it is absurd to assert that the dead will not rise. Christ, says Aquinas, is the efficient cause of the general resurrection,

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163 Ad Corinthios n.888
164 Ad Corinthios n.895
how then, he asks, citing a gloss, if Christ the efficient cause rose from the dead, could one say that the dead will not rise? Christ is also called the exemplary cause, as he in himself carries to the fullness the reality of the resurrection (the model) that will be given to all men.  

“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised” (1 Cor 15:13), and Aquinas says that this leads to incongruities. Because this would mean that the apostles’ proclamation has been in vain (also the faith of the Corinthians) (1 Cor 15:14), i.e. false, in spite of Paul’s assertion that he has not labored in vain (Phil 2:16). They would even be misrepresenting God since they testify to God raising Christ from the dead (1 Cor 15:15). Aquinas sees this as a most serious offense, since it is not only a lie (which he calls a mortal sin), but a false witness against God, which is sacrilege. And Aquinas sees a greater offense in praising something false in God than if the truth were reviled. For this could give the impression that the intellect understands something greater than God; that we attribute to our (false) conception greater value than the reality of God, something that amounts to idolatry.

These things lead to three incongruities (and it should be clarified that they are incongruous only to those who accept the Christian faith. Aquinas does not think the faith can be proven, yet the faith has an intelligible structure that the believer accepts as intrinsic to the faith, and it is this structure that is being misconstrued by those who deny the resurrection of the dead): the first one is that falseness does not have the power to cleanse from sin, yet this is what the faith does (Aquinas quotes Ac 15:9, which mentions cleansing of sin by faith). If faith is false, it is futile, and Christians remain in their sins (1 Cor 15:17). The second incongruity is tied to the phrase “those also who have died in Christ have perished.” (1 Cor 15:18) Aquinas sees this as answering an objection to those who would assert the salvation by good works instead of by faith. But those who have died in Christ can no longer perform any works and therefore do not have that option. The third incongruity is in refuting the view that the eternal life does not matter as long as one is happy in the present life. This would not apply to a Christian since he or she has put all hope in the resurrection; without it they are “of all people most to be pitied.” (1 Cor 15:19) Aquinas says that this is the case because Christians in this life have suffered a lot of tribulations in hope of eternal life, while others at least have been able to take pleasure in worldly goods.

Aquinas presents two objections against the last incongruity, and the first deserves to be treated in this study because it reveals an interesting insight into Aquinas’ influence by the biblical text in philosophical and theological issues. I will omit the second objection since it is of less interest. The answer to the first objection is more interesting because it shows a view of the

\[\text{165} Ad\ Corsinthios\ n.913\]
\[\text{166} Ad\ Corsinthios\ n.920\]
\[\text{167} Ad\ Corsinthios\ n.921-923\]
immortality of the soul that differs from the one presented in *Summa Theologiae*. The objection is of a Platonic kind, saying that although there is no hope of a bodily resurrection, there is still eternal life for the immortal soul. However, Aquinas says that without the resurrection of the body it is difficult to assert the existence of an immortal soul. The reason is because he accepts the hylomorphistic anthropology in which body and soul are essentially integrated. Yet he also accepts that the soul is subsistent since it has a separate activity from the senses (even if it is dependent on the phantasms that the senses provide to procure knowledge). Therefore he accepts a separate existence of the soul, but only *per accidens* (that is, not in a way that corresponds to its essential nature). If there is no bodily resurrection, what chance can there be for the existence of a soul that can only accidentally be separated from the body? It may not be impossible, but to Aquinas it does not seem plausible.\(^{168}\) This differs from his approach to the discussion of the immortality of the soul in ST I q.75 a.2, where Aquinas wants to show a philosophically defensible view of the immortal soul. But rather than a contradiction, Aquinas’ view in the commentary is a clarification; there is a rationality in positing the existence of the immortal soul. Yet, from a Christian point of view, Aquinas would say that it can not be sustained (or only with difficulty) without the resurrection of the body. What is interesting here is that this clarification is occasioned by commenting on Paul’s assertion that the Christian faith is hopeless if the dead do not rise.

Aquinas says that in order to avoid the incongruities, Paul asserts that Christ in fact has been raised from the dead, and is called “the first fruits of those who have died.” (1 Cor 15:20) Aquinas explains “first fruits” as Christ being the first, both in time and in dignity, of the dead, and here Aquinas adds “who rest in the hope of the resurrection.”\(^{169}\) For Fitzmyer, the term “first fruits” has the same meaning here as it did in chapter 13, that is, a guarantee of what is to come.\(^{170}\)

At the end (which Aquinas explains to be the resurrection), Christ will hand over the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor 15:24). The kingdom Aquinas understands to be the believers that Christ acquired with his blood. “Deliver to God the Father” he interprets as the manifestation of God the Father reigning. Aquinas says that in the Bible something is said to be done when it first becomes known, and so the manifestation of the Father would show that his will is done.\(^{171}\)

The general resurrection is part of the reality to which the use of the sacraments lead. Yet, all people will rise, not only those who are saved. Therefore, Aquinas goes on to comment on the more specific traits to which a sacramental life is conducive.

### 2.4.3 The glorious body

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\(^{168}\) *Ad Corinthios* n.924

\(^{169}\) *Qui in spe resurrectionis quiescunt.*

\(^{170}\) Fitzmyer 2008, 569

\(^{171}\) *Ad Corinthios* n.937
To distinguish the elect from the damned, Aquinas describes the bodies that the former will have at the resurrection, which Aquinas calls “glorious.”

Having addressed the denial of the resurrection, Paul moves on to discuss the quality of the resurrected body. In the question “How are the dead raised?” (1 Cor 15:35) Aquinas sees an error of a naturalistic objection that supposes a strictly natural causality. In the same verse, in the question “With what kind of body do they come?” he sees an error that supposes that the resurrected body will be the same as the earthly. Aquinas mentions as examples a view among some philosophers that Plato would rise again and have the same scholars in Athens as he had before. Also mentioned are the Sadducees who asked Jesus about the woman and her seven husbands (Matt 22:24-28).  

Aquinas claims that Paul means to answer these errors in reverse order; first answering the second question and then the first question. One may wonder about the reason of this reverse order. Fitzmyer does not give any indication that Paul intended to answer the errors in the way Aquinas supposed. The most likely explanation is that Aquinas is mistaken about Paul's intention here.

Nevertheless, we shall follow the order set by Aquinas. He says that Paul answers the second error by using a simile, where the body is likened to a seed; and just as the seed must die (i.e. decay) in order to grow (1 Cor 15:36-37), so a man's body put in a tomb is a form of sowing that will come to life when it rises. This is not to say that the resurrection of the body comes from nature, but the point is that the risen body will be different from the earthly body. This is what Paul means with “you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed”, because what sprouts will be different from the seed that was planted. However, Aquinas insists that the difference between the outgrowth of the seed and the risen body is that the latter will be numerically the same as the earthly body, albeit transformed (more on this later).

What follows next is the description of the “sprouting.” Explaining the words “God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body” (1 Cor 15:38), Aquinas sees the description of the teleological quality of created things, even in non-rational entities like plants, who grow in a determinate way from seeds. This end-driven activity is a result of the same divine mind that will bring about the risen body. Hence in both cases of seeds and human bodies, God is the ultimate cause. However, because God acts through secondary causes, these activities do not happen without consideration of the nature of each thing. Since man is endowed with free will, he co-operates with divine grace, and thus his resurrected body will be proportionate to the merits of the dying person.

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172 Ad Corinthios n.964-965
173 Ad Corinthios n.966
174 Ad Corinthios n.968-970
175 Ad Corinthios n.973-974
Then Paul applies these differentiations to the resurrection of the dead; just as the bodies familiar to us differ from each other, so will the resurrected body differ from the earthly body, and here Aquinas identifies four marks of the glorified resurrected body.\textsuperscript{176}

The first mark is its incapacity of suffering, by which Aquinas means it will no longer die (“What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable” (1 Cor 15:42)), but also that it will be free from afflictions, and in this way it will differ from the resurrected body that is not glorious. This difference cannot be detected in the biblical text itself, but is more likely the result of Aquinas' view of man resurrecting according to his meritorious acts (n. 974) connected with the figure of “sowing.” His reading of this biblical passage seems to be informed by the Church's doctrine of eschatology.\textsuperscript{177}

The second mark is clarity. When Paul says “It is sown in dishonor” (1 Cor 15:43), Aquinas interprets it as the deformities and miseries inherent to the mortal body. When Paul says “it is raised in glory”, Aquinas sees this signifying clarity, quoting Augustine's commentary on the Gospel of John, which says that the bodies of saints will be clear and shining, which in turn is alluding to the Gospel of Matthew: “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (Matt 13:43)\textsuperscript{178}

The third mark is agility. The mortal body is weak (“It is sown in weakness”) and moved slowly by the soul, says Aquinas, quoting the Book of Wisdom 9:15: “for a perishable body weighs down the soul.” The mark of agility then (“it is raised in power”), is characterized by the body's facility of movement, and here Aquinas quotes more biblical passages, saying that the just will run like sparks through the stubble (Wis 3:7), and those who have faith in God will renew their strength, mounting the skies like eagles, and running without becoming weary (Isa 40:31).\textsuperscript{179}

The fourth mark is subtlety, which is signified by the words “It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Cor 15:44) This, says Aquinas, does not mean, as some suppose, that the body will be changed into a spirit and be like the air or the wind (things otherwise associated with “spirit”). Rather, Aquinas sees it as the enhancement of a human being's spiritual activities. By spiritual activities, Aquinas means those pertaining to the mind, i.e. operations of the intellect. As the soul is no longer “weighed down” by the body, it gains an agility of its own. Following an Aristotelian teaching on the soul, where the soul is the principle of the body's generation, nourishment, growth, and decay, Aquinas says the soul will be more focused on spiritual activities since at the resurrection the generative, nutritive, and augmentative activities of the body will cease.

\textsuperscript{176} Ad Corinthios n.979-980
\textsuperscript{177} Ad Corinthios n.980
\textsuperscript{178} Ad Corinthios n.981
\textsuperscript{179} Ad Corinthios n.982
Aquinas also counts four things that the soul gives to the body that will be perfected in the glory of the resurrection, and thus making the soul more virtuous.\textsuperscript{180}

Then comes the answer to the first question, first by explaining the difference between the earthly body and the glorious body of resurrection. Paul makes a comparison between the principles of the two bodies: Adam and Christ (1 Cor 15:48). According to Aquinas, Paul does this to show the difference of quality of the two bodies, shown by reason.\textsuperscript{181}

When Aquinas explains Adam as a principle of human generation according to nature, he lays out a biblical anthropology. Aquinas connects Paul's words “The first man, Adam, became a living being” (1 Cor 15:45) with Genesis 2:7, where Adam becomes a living being through God breathing life through his nostrils. The life breathed into Adam, Aquinas identifies as the soul, for the life of the body is the soul or, as Aquinas also puts it, it perfects the body. This he also explained earlier when talking about the resurrected body. The Vulgate translation he uses has the phrase “living soul” (anima vivente) instead of “living being.” For Aquinas, soul and spirit are the same in man, only that “soul” is the dimension concerned with the care of the body, whereas “spirit” is concerned with the intellectual operations of a human being. In Aristotelian terms, the soul/spirit of man is also his form, i.e. the principle by which he is a man and not a bird or a rock.\textsuperscript{182}

From this Aquinas marks the difference between Adam and Christ as to the life in them; for Adam was merely made an animal (one having life) through the soul (anima) that perfects his animal condition, but Christ is in addition “a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45) through the Holy Spirit, which perfected the body of Christ rather than his human soul. Therefore Christ is not only living, but has life-giving power.\textsuperscript{183}

Then come the effects of the first principles; because Adam was of dust, all men are of dust (that is, mortal); and because Christ is of heaven, those who belong to him will be of heaven (that is, spiritual and immortal) (1 Cor 15:48). Aquinas says that as to our sinful nature, we have borne “the image of the man of dust”; but through the life of grace that will be completed in the life of glory, we will bear “the image of the man of heaven.” (1 Cor 15:49)\textsuperscript{184}

Then Aquinas discusses the specific mode and order of the resurrection. In commenting on the words “I tell you a mystery” (1 Cor 15:51), he defines “mystery” as divine knowledge, inaccessible to the unaided human reason. The communication of such as mystery is exactly what constitutes revelation for Aquinas. And the mystery that Paul reveals is “We will not all die, but we will all be changed”, and on this Aquinas comments further. “Sleep” for Aquinas is a metaphor for

\textsuperscript{180}Ad Corinthios n.984-988
\textsuperscript{181}Ad Corinthios n.989
\textsuperscript{182}Ad Corinthios n.992
\textsuperscript{183}Ad Corinthios n.993
\textsuperscript{184}Ad Corinthios n.997-998
death, calling it the “death of sleep” (*mors somnus*), for death is, in light of the resurrection, an impermanent state awaiting eternal life.\(^{185}\)

After follows a commentary on “the last trumpet”, where Aquinas detects the order of the resurrection in relation to its immediate cause; for Aquinas identifies the last trumpet as Christ, either as his voice or his presence in the world made manifest. Since Christ, described metaphorically as a trumpet, is identified by Aquinas as the cause of the resurrection, what follows next are the effects: “the dead will be raised imperishable...” (1 Cor 15:52), but not everyone will rise to the same final destination, and therefore there are two effects caused by Christ at the second coming: The first effect is the common resurrection of all human beings, for everyone will rise to everlasting life, for everyone has communion with Christ in nature, even the damned. Aquinas disagrees with Augustine's view that the damned will rise with deformities, saying that Christ will restore everything that pertains to nature. The second effect is that which is conferred only on the elect, namely the change from the state of misery to the state of glory, hence the last words of 1 Cor 15:52: “we will be changed.”\(^{186}\) Fitzmyer says that the trumpet is a trapping typical of apocalyptic literature, often accompanying a theophany. He also says that since the same verb for “raised” is used for “the dead” as for Christ in verses 4 and 12-17, the implication is that the raising and the change will be produced by God.\(^{187}\) This may sound similar to Aquinas' conclusion of Christ being the cause of the resurrection, only that Fitzmyer as a historical-critical scholar might be hesitant to equate Christ with God.

After explaining the necessary effect of the resurrection from its cause, Aquinas discovers two things in the biblical text that corresponds to the effect. The first applies to all risen bodies, when Paul says “For this perishable body must put on imperishability” (1 Cor 15:53), and the next line applies specifically to the saints: “and this mortal body must put on immortality.”\(^{188}\) However, Aquinas does not provide a distinction between imperishability and immortality.

He interprets the words “must put on” to describe a necessity of the human condition, for the soul not in its proper element without integration with body, and thus the body's permanent union with the soul is proper to human nature. It is in completion of its nature that a human being can reach full beatitude. It is also necessary from the point of view of divine justice, so that those who have done good and evil in their bodies can be rewarded and punished accordingly. Thirdly, it is necessary for the conformity of the members to the head (Christ), for just as he was raised from the dead, so shall those who belong to him (Rom 6:4).\(^{189}\)

\(^{185}\) *Ad Corinthios* n.1001-1003  
\(^{186}\) *Ad Corinthios* n.1010-1011  
\(^{187}\) Fitzmyer 2008, 605  
\(^{188}\) *Ad Corinthios* n.1012  
\(^{189}\) *Ad Corinthios* n.1013
Aquinas also provides an explanation for Paul's metaphorical language of imperishability and immortality as a garment one puts on. For Aquinas, this is an explanation that the risen body is of the same numerical nature; someone who puts on a sweater remains the same person with the sweater on, and this is the point Aquinas makes with Paul's metaphor, and applies to the state of the resurrection of all men who will rise. He also sees it as proof against those who imagine a mere spiritual resurrection.\(^{190}\)

In this section, Aquinas has clarified what the specific marks of the glorious body are, and thus distinguished between the bodies of people infused with grace and the bodies of those who are damned, to show what awaits those who live faithfully in virtue and grace.

2.4.4. Conclusion

This part of Aquinas' commentary may seem to have strayed from the theme of unity, but actually it accentuates its spiritual reality; the incomplete state of the Church's earthly existence will come to pass in the final consummation of creation, and the unity with Christ will no longer be marred by any defects but rather the Church will be a bride without a spot or wrinkle (Eph 5:27).

Now that the analysis of this commentary is concluded, I will summarize my findings in the next part of this study.

3 Results

Here I will summarize what I have found to be the most important insights from the analysis. I will also address the questions of philosophical presupposition and how this connects to the issue of exegesis and eisegesis.

3.1 Participatory biblical exegesis in the commentary on 1 Corinthians: some characteristics

What becomes evident upon reading Aquinas' commentary up close is that the anticipatory participation (in which things in the Bible become foreshadowings to a higher or lesser degree according to their ontological resemblance to the mystery of Christ) that was so obvious when he structured the different parts of 1 Corinthians is largely absent when commenting on the biblical

\(^{190}\textit{Ad Corinthios n.1014}\)
text itself. Seeing how Aquinas, like many other scholastic theologians of his time, gave priority to the literal interpretation over the non-literal interpretations, this should come as no surprise.\textsuperscript{191} It has even led some to depict Aquinas as a sort of precursor to the historical-critical method.\textsuperscript{192} This however, I believe to be misleading.

In spite of the common interest in the text itself, Aquinas' approach to biblical exegesis is radically different from that of the historical-critical scholars, not mainly in the tools of research but in philosophical presupposition. The historical-critical method is concerned strictly with the actions of men, and more specifically within the boundaries of their historical settings. The implied immanence would be alien to Aquinas' theological outlook on the Bible. Rather, his participatory understanding is what enables him to view Scripture as a doctrinally integrated unity, something that is anathema in historical-critical scholarship.

3.1.1 Biblical cross-references

Aquinas' view of the Bible as an integral whole is clearly manifested in his cross-references. Not that cross-references are not employed by historical-critical scholars, but the nature of their cross-references is very different. They would look with disapproval at his collection of different biblical texts (written in different time periods by different human authors) he employs to explain a theological point as a means of exegesis. The reason for this is because it presupposes a doctrinal unity of the entire Bible, something that at least the majority of historical-critical scholars would find deeply problematic. This type of cross-referencing is very similar to those he made at the margins of his commentaries of some Old Testament books, which Jean-Pierre Torrell OP calls \textit{collationes} (an expression from monastic tradition).\textsuperscript{193} Could this type of cross-referencing be a force of old habit in an otherwise academic approach to biblical exegesis? (After all, Aquinas was a Benedictine oblate before entering the Order of Preachers) Perhaps, yet it is difficult not to see these instances as characteristic of a participatory biblical exegesis in which the doctrine of Scripture transcends the historical limitations of the human authors.

3.1.2 Pedagogical \textit{quaestiones}

As Baglow points out, Aquinas is known in his biblical commentaries to raise theological questions that are not directly but only occasionally connected to the biblical text, also saying that it is in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[191]ST I q.1 a.10  
\item[192]Levering 2008, 92-93  
\item[193]Torrell 2005, 29-30
\end{footnotes}
these “pedagogical quaestiones” that the fusion of Aquinas' horizon with that of the biblical text is most clearly seen.\textsuperscript{194} In other words, this could be said to be the perspective of his participatory biblical exegesis where the “vertical presence” of divine revelation made manifest by the teaching of Aquinas who, by providing a doctrinally informed exegesis, deepens the understanding of his students by linking the biblical text to the doctrinal questions of their day, thus underlining the essential unity between Scripture and doctrine that clearly characterizes Aquinas' participatory biblical exegesis.

A quaestio was in scholastic circles simply a question on a theological or philosophical point about which there was doubt. The doubt was resolved in a dialectic exchange of arguments called a disputatio. Here the opponent's arguments are examined and countered with authorities (like the Bible or the Church fathers), but most importantly with one's own line of argumentation.

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians these pedagogical quaestiones are most elaborate when discussing different issues concerning the Eucharist, addressing theological opinions that were current in the academic circles of his day.

### 3.1.3 Church doctrine

The structuring around the sacraments that Aquinas gives us of the Corinthian letter surely reveals an influence of Church doctrine in his reading of the same letter. But also in the commentary of the text itself we can see traces of this influence.

Although it is strictly speaking not doctrine, the practice of a Eucharistic fast that Aquinas ascribes to the church in Corinth seems to stem from the Church's elaborated medieval theological understanding of the Eucharist rather than elicited from the biblical text. A second example comes from Aquinas' understanding of ecclesiastical hierarchy, which he sees as being endowed with spiritual gifts according to rank. Although one could argue that this can also be detected in the Bible (for instance, the Holy Spirit was given to people only through the hands of the Apostles (Acts 8:14-17)), it can not be shown to be found in the Corinthian letter, at least not as something Paul intended to convey. Rather, I suggested that this idea came from Dionysius the Aeropagite, who wielded a considerable influence on medieval theology, and the medieval Church's own understanding of its hierarchy, whose importance was stressed to a greater extent than it is today.

These examples show us how important Church doctrine was for Aquinas in his reading of the Bible. He never saw a contradiction between the two, but rather understood them to be part of the same divine revelation. It is in light of this understanding that we must interpret Aquinas' claim that

\textsuperscript{194}Baglow 2002, 108-109
the Bible is the only source of theology (*sola canonica Scriptura est regula fidei*).\(^{195}\) Per Erik Persson has tried to see in this an affinity with a Reformational understanding of theology (as opposed to a Counter-reformational one).\(^{196}\) Yet, the *sentire cum Ecclesia* that clearly guided Aquinas in his biblical interpretation is diametrically opposed to Luther's idea of *Sola Scriptura*, which clearly sought to abandon the context of Church doctrine and hierarchy in search for a supposedly pure biblical theology. Sure, Persson has a point when he says that the Reformers followed an already existing Church tradition when they stressed the sufficiency of the Bible as source of revelation,\(^{197}\) but they were rather selective about what traditions to observe because the magisterium of the Pope was, at least for Aquinas, a *sine qua non* in the conditions for a proper interpretation of Scripture, something that also Persson acknowledges.\(^{198}\)

### 3.1.4 Aristotelian understanding

The non-Christian authority that wields the greatest influence in the commentary is Aristotle, as I think this study has sufficiently shown. “The Philosopher” was still controversial among theologians at this time, but Aquinas was decidedly in favor of him and thus made Aristotelian philosophy the gold standard of scientific method. For Aquinas theology was, apart from wisdom (a knowledge of first principles), also a science; something that is subject to meticulous research, analysis, and argumentation.

Aristotle's influence on Aquinas' commentary is best described as methodological. Aristotle is never invoked as an authority in questions of sacred doctrine, but he is used to show logical structures and illustrations that clarify a theological point. This I think shows an established point in philosophy of religion; that there is no distinct “religious language”; that even the lofty subjects discussed in theology are based on ordinary human understanding, and Aquinas saw Aristotelian philosophy as the greatest tool to build this basic human understanding in order to teach theology with greatest clarity and sublimity.

I would argue that this is the metaphysical part of participatory biblical exegesis. In order to participate in divine revelation, people need to make some kind of sense of it; it needs to be made comprehensible (though not fully comprehensible) to human reason. This is exactly what Aristotelian metaphysics set out to do: to optimize human understanding through the detection of first principles and the search for new knowledge. But what also characterizes metaphysics is its universality (a rather

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\(^{195}\)Persson 1957, 54

\(^{196}\)Persson 1957, 70

\(^{197}\)Ibid

\(^{198}\)Persson 1957, 63
sore spot for postmodern sensibilities); having first principles that transcend historical circumstances because they belong to an objective order that can not be changed. This is what really enables people to participate in divine revelation, which makes us detect the ontological likenesses in people and events in the Bible to the mystery of Christ. It is also what makes the Church able to claim an essential unity of doctrine in the midst of changing historical settings.

I know this type of metaphysics is far from widely accepted in this day and age, but I will not offer a defense of it here. I merely wish to show that this understanding is the metaphysical substratum of Aquinas' biblical exegesis.

3.2 Exegetical insights from the commentary on 1 Corinthians

In the previous section I listed some influences that shaped Aquinas' participatory exegesis of the first Corinthian letter. It is now time to highlight some of the insights that comes from his exegesis that may shed a new light on our understanding of this letter.

As Fitzmyer pointed out, the purpose of writing the letter was to bring order and unity to the Corinthian community, and as I have shown in my analysis, Aquinas has largely built his comments around the themes of order and unity. If we look at three sections in which Aquinas has divided chapters 1-15, we can see that the text handles these themes in the following way:

1) The part that Aquinas says treats subjects pertaining to the sacraments of Baptism, Marriage, and the Eucharist expounds on the nature of the spiritual unity of the Church, which is communion with Christ; a communion in which there is no room for rivaling claims of worldly goods and mere human ambition. No more is this clear than in the part about the Eucharist.

2) The part about grace shows us how one must act in this unity, and here is where the aspect of order is clearly visible, and I am thinking specifically of Paul's use of the image of the Church as a body as an explanation of the order of the Church. Here Aquinas' idea of the common good as the greatest good comes in handy. It helps to demonstrate how no single member within the body is of any use by itself, and this helps counter any envy, ambition, and glorification of self within the Church. In chapter 13, where Paul praises the gift of charity, we see the grace that is needed to remain in the spiritual unity of the Church, and the merits of this grace is explained thoroughly by Aquinas. The other spiritual gifts feature in a more practical manner, in which Aquinas elaborates on what Paul says about them and explain their use in the Church's mission, both regarding the conversion of non-believers and the edification of the existing members.
The last part is about the final goal of the Church's unity, in which an ever greater unity comes into fruition in the eschatological reality of Heaven. Compared to this, the existing unity of the Church is a mere shadow, but in that an anticipation of what is to come.

These insights, as I think the analysis part of the study shows, go way beyond the *sitz im leben* that delimits the use of the historical-critical method. The question arising here is whether this is to be considered as eisegesis. From the perspective of historical-critical scholarship, the answer to that question is most likely yes. Aquinas is ascribing many things to Paul that are, if not impossible, at least extremely unlikely to have been part of his thinking. Even accepting the idea that words can transcend their historical setting, expressions like “the intention of the Apostle” become simply untenable in the light of modern historical scholarship, and to that extent the criticism from those scholars are completely valid, for Aquinas does not seem to give an accurate view of Paul's intention when he, for instance, views the letter mainly as a teaching on the sacraments.

However, the more interesting question is whether this type of exegesis, that transcends the historical situation and arrives at conclusions not perceived by the human author and yet not necessarily contradictory to what that author conveyed, is to be considered eisegetical. The historical-critical method only considers that which is part of human action, and then confined to its historical setting. Practitioners of this method may claim that this is done for the sake of intersubjective testability, but if this is indeed the criteria for authentic exegesis, would not then any interpretation that supposes the interaction of God with human beings be considered to be eisegesis? Quite a narrow perspective, and not one that can *a priori* be seen as a more valid perspective than a “precritical” one. This is the name given to, for instance, patristic biblical exegesis. Yet, as Frances Young has so convincingly shown, this “precritical” exegesis did not lack sophistication in either method or insight, but rather the great dividing line seems to be that the Church fathers assumed a world susceptible to divine action. Aquinas was in many ways a follower of patristic biblical exegesis, and with the use of the scholastic method, with its love of structure and definitions, he developed this exegesis but retained the outlook of God transcending time and space with revelation.

I have already written of the metaphysical foundation of Aquinas' participatory biblical exegesis, and I have written in the analysis part about the theological and philosophical insights brought about by his commentary. Still, some examples might be helpful: a) Aquinas’ explanation of food as cause joining itself to its effect according to substance (rather than effect) is a philosophical explanation of the Eucharist that highlights the Church's teaching of transubstantiation but that also casts a light on the scandal that occurs at a celebration of unity with a behavior that runs contrary to

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199 *Ad Corinthios* n. 787
200 Young 1997, 139
its very nature. The scandal that is elucidated by this philosophical explanation is apparent even without assuming the doctrine of transubstantiation. b) With the help of Aristotle's different definitions of unity, Aquinas describes the Church (the body of Christ) as a unity of wholeness, which helps one to see how the Church's unity is in fact enriched by the diversity and mutual dependence of the members. c) When Aquinas employs a syllogism in order to explain the reasoning of Paul (n.792-794) he may not accurately present what the Apostle was actually thinking, but he gives a very clear view of the logical structure of Paul's claims. These are but few examples of how Aquinas' exegesis provides us with an understanding of the biblical text that differs from the one provided by the historical-critical method.

Yet, it was not only the case that Aquinas' philosophical and theological presuppositions influenced his exegesis; the biblical text itself exerted a certain influence on Aquinas' philosophical/theological thinking. One example of this in his commentary has not been discussed because the part concerned has not been analyzed in this study, but still it is worth mentioning. Otto Hermann Pesch wrote an article about Aquinas' commentaries on the Pauline corpus. There he mentions how Aquinas' view of the Cross is modified in his comment on 1 Corinthians compared to the one he provides in the *Summa Theologiae*, where the role of Christ's death on the Cross is given an “argument of convenience” (showing the fittingness of the crucifixion in God's plan for saving mankind). In the commentary, when discussing the Cross as folly to the Gentiles, he rather stresses the inaccessibility of the crucifixion to (unaided) human reason, and instead placing any “convenience” of the Cross within the context of divine mystery (i.e. that which surpasses human reason and that it can only receive through divine revelation).201

The other example is the one mentioned in this study about the immortality of the soul. In the *Summa Theologiae* he sets out to show in a philosophically cogent way that the soul can survive the corruption of the body. However, in the commentary, in the light of Paul's words that Christian faith is hopeless if there is no resurrection of the dead, Aquinas says that immortality of the soul is a position that is very difficult (if not impossible) to hold without the resurrection.

Considering that Aquinas viewed the Bible as the main theological source, I would argue that the positions presented in the commentary better represent Aquinas' theological outlook than those presented in the *Summa*. This would make it even more remarkable that Aquinas' biblical commentaries were neglected for so long.

3.3 Concluding remarks

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201 Baglow 2002, 78
In this study I have analyzed the interplay between Aquinas' theological hermeneutics and the text of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. This can be seen as the practical application of the principles laid out by Aquinas in his systematic works, such as the *Summa Theologiae*, employed in his main task as master of the Sacred Page. The doctrinally and philosophically informed hermeneutics, that Levering calls “participatory biblical exegesis”, have produced many interesting insights worth exploring further.

However, some of those insights come not from Aquinas' hermeneutics, but from the biblical text itself; thus a clear indication that Aquinas, as Baglow points out, does let his theological pre-understanding be challenged by the biblical text. This is yet another area worth exploring; considering how central Aquinas thought the Bible to be in theology, surely it would be interesting to find out if other nuances in his theological thinking can be found in his biblical commentaries that can not be found in his systematic works.

Then there is also the question of whether Aquinas' hermeneutics is to be considered exegesis or eisegesis. In my discussion of participatory biblical exegesis and the historical-critical method, the question of exegesis and eisegesis has been a part of it. The assumption has long been, at least in academic circles, that the historical-critical method provides the criteria for authentic biblical exegesis. Yet, as I have pointed out earlier, the position of historical-critical scholars is by no means a neutral one; rather, their interpretation is determined by an immanentistic presupposition that is not evident, but needs to be argued for philosophically.

I am not alone in seeing the limits of this method. In fact, later trends in biblical scholarship are more interested in other aspects of the text than the historical one. There is for instance a method of narrative analysis, where the Bible is analyzed as literature. The Bible can also be analyzed and assessed through the lens of the many variations of contextual theologies, of which the most typical interpretational tool would be the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” Many of these newer approaches go beyond the historical dimension of the text, according to the hermeneutical principle of “the death of the author.” The interest in this type of approach goes to show that a purely historical study of the Bible is not enough to discover its relevance for our time. But what I do not see is a challenge of the philosophical presupposition that underlies the immanentistic view of history in the historical-critical method.

This is indeed what is so radically different about the participatory biblical exegesis of Thomas Aquinas; it has a different philosophical foundation that alters the view of history itself. Instead of being confined to the limits of the human author's *sitz im leben*, the biblical text can be illumined by other parts of Scripture as well as Church doctrine and its exposition by human

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2Baglow 2002, 77-78
teachers (such as Aquinas) which are all participating in the knowledge of God who, for Aquinas, is the main author of the Bible. From this standpoint, is it not the immanentism of the historical-critical method that becomes eisegetical? The merit of the historical-critical method (as opposed to a “precritical” exegesis), it has been said, is that it is scientific. Yet, unless science is defined according to a strictly positivistic understanding, I do not see why it would be more scientific than the “precritical” exegesis of Aquinas.

The other point I would like to make concerns the division between biblical exegesis and systematic theology, that is due (at least in part) to the impact of the historical-critical method, even at theological faculties that are confessional. Because of this, speculative theology has been kept at arm's length from biblical studies, and this is especially a hard blow for confessional theology, whose only option to the historical/literary criticisms of the Bible (which are mostly secular in nature) is mere devotional reading. Here I think in particular of the state of Catholic theological faculties (I am not saying the situation is the same everywhere): if they would rethink their notions of what constitutes a scientific study, they could find in Aquinas' biblical commentaries a sophisticated and insightful philosophical and theological analysis of the content of the biblical text that is not devoid of faith but that also is not mere spiritual reading, but an academically rigorous way of reading the Bible.

Of course, I am not proposing that we ignore the discoveries and insights brought about by the historical-critical method; that would be intellectually dishonest. Anyone who would want to employ a participatory biblical exegesis would have to take this into account. Levering has in his proposal for a participatory biblical exegesis suggested an integration of the linear understanding of history provided by the historical-critical method into the exegesis he is proposing. So it goes without saying that it can not be done exactly the same way Aquinas did it.

However, the participatory biblical exegesis does represents a radically different way of reading the Bible from the methods that are predominant in academic theological circles today. Its understanding of history as open to the transcendent reality of God makes it possible to see church doctrine and tradition as the uniting principle in the polyphonic character of human history in the Bible, thus overbridging not only the sitz im leben of the various authors and redactors, but also the world of the text and the world of the reader. Whether one accepts this uniting principle as divine revelation depends on whether one has the faith.

At the very least, people should see in the participatory biblical exegesis a challenge; a realization that the philosophical presupposition of the historical-critical method is not to be taken
for granted, and that anyone who accepts its immanentism should argue for its validity. I would look forward to such an exchange of arguments, in the scholastic spirit in which Aquinas relished.

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