

The Christological mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ in the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas

Author: Son Van Trinh

Persistent link: <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/bc-ir:108883>

This work is posted on [eScholarship@BC](#),
Boston College University Libraries.

Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2020

Copyright is held by the author, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise noted.

The Christological Mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in the Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the S.T.L Degree

Boston College School Of Theology And Ministry

By Son Van Trinh

**Mentors: Primary Co-Mentor: Palazzi Von Buren, Felix J:
Systematic Hispanic Theology and Ministry Global
Catholicism,
Theological Anthropology**

**Co- Mentor: Ernesto Valiente: Hispanic Theology and
Ministry Liberation Theology, Systematics**

The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Writings Of Saint Thomas Aquinas

Introduction

Jesus Christ is the central object of the Church's faith. He is also the object of Christology. Christology is the study of what Christian faith teaches about the mystery of Christ (who he is) and His work of redemption (what he did, i.e. soteriology). Christology begins with faith and infallibly affirms the truth of who He is which then affirms the truth about everything He said. "It is one of the key areas of theology and constitutes the study, in light of faith, of

what that faith teaches regarding the mystery of Christ and his work of redemption.”¹ It is important to begin with faith, which is the belief that Jesus is divine, and then apply reason to explain this belief. In a certain way, “the profession of faith that Jesus is the Christ is a resume of the Christian faith, and Christology is nothing other than the theological development of the content of that profession.”² It is something that God has revealed to us, although our human minds can never completely understand it. As Richard of St. Victor states in his work, *Trinity and Creation*,

There are some of those truths (the divine substance) which we are ordered to believe seem to be not only above reason but also contrary to human reason, unless they are scrutinized with a profound and very subtle investigation, or rather, unless they are revealed by divine revelation. And so, in the knowledge or assertion of those truths we usually rely more on faith than on reasoning, and authority rather than argumentation, just as the prophet said: *unless you believe, you will not understand.*³

Although the object of faith is always something unseen, it is a necessary mode of knowing because of our epistemological limitations. Thus faith precedes knowledge. Believing is seeing—we must first believe to truly see.

The study of the Mystery of Christ is similar to the study of other theological mysteries; we must first study what faith teaches about this mystery. The study of Christology must start with faith, the belief that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. This is a theological development of the truths expressed in the Creed about Him. We can't claim that historical research is above what faith tells us about the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus

¹ Fernando Ocariz, Lucas F. Mateo Seco, and José Antonio Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ: A Christology and Soteriology Textbook*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994), p. 1.

² Ibid, p. 2.

³ Richard of St. Victor, *On Trinity and Creation*, Introduction and Translation by Christopher P. Evans, (Hyde Park, N.Y. : New City Press, 2010), p. 213.

Christ. Also, we cannot claim through historical research alone that he is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). As Ocariz, Seco, and Riestra say concerning *the mystery of Christ*, “we should always remember that by itself alone, historical research is never sufficient to give one complete knowledge of the mystery of Christ, because true knowledge of Jesus implies believing that he is the Son of God.”⁴ Likewise, Walter Kasper concurs, “theological study must not start out from such a “critique of pure reason,” but from the New Testament evidence, according to which God has revealed to us his innermost nature and mystery in an eschatological- definitive way in Jesus Christ.”⁵ This means that, for faith, there is no dark mystery of God ‘behind’ his revelation. God in fact reveals himself in Jesus Christ unreservedly and definitively as the one who he is.

Any doctrine of the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, therefore, “cannot aim at being a perfect comprehension of God. It is not a definition that confines a thing to the pigeonholes of human knowledge, nor is it a concept that would put the thing within the grasp of the human mind.”⁶ Moreover, an authentic understanding of the mystery of Christ only takes place within the Church since she has passed on the faith about the Incarnation of our Lord. Although we can never completely understand the mystery of Christ, we can come to a deeper understanding by learning more about this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. However, the Church has never ceased studying and contemplating this mystery in order to help her children better understand and believe in it because the Mystery of Incarnation, a-

⁴ Ocariz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 6.

⁵ Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, (London ; New York : T & T Clark, 2011), p. 169.

⁶ Cardinal Ratzinger Joseph (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity*, trans by J.R. Foster and Michael J. Miller with a new Preface, (Ignatius Press, 2004), p. 171.

long- side the mystery of the Trinity, is the central mystery of the Christian faith. This objective faith of the Church is what one believes about God and His plan of salvation. As a Dogmatic Constitution produced at the Second Vatican Council, *Dei verbum*, refers to revelation by the phrase "the Word of God" that primarily this Word of God is the eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, who for us and our salvation, assumed a human nature.⁷ Ocariz, Seco, and Riestra concur, "the fact that Christ Jesus is God and man; he is one subject, one person, subsisting in two natures, divine and human, He who is God and Man. The oneness in Jesus has always been a presupposition in the Church's faith regarding the humanity and divinity of our Lord."⁸ The essence of the mystery of the Incarnation is the *hypostatic union*, which the Council of Chalcedon defined as the union of the two real natures, human and divine, in the one person of the Logos. The Chalcedonian dogma solemnly confirms that Christ is the Son of God, true God who truly became man. One and the same Christ, our Lord and Savior, is indeed God and man.

When we speak of "Christology" in Aquinas, we mean what Aquinas typically calls "the mystery of the Incarnation" (*mysterium incarnationis*), which he identifies as the most excellent of all mysteries.⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas is regarded as the greatest of all medieval Christian thinkers. He thinks as a Christian, and uses his ability to think in a way which, in his view, does all that it can to show that the revelation given in Christianity is not merely a creed for those

⁷ Vatican Council II: "*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Dei Verbum*," Pope Paul VI, On November 18, 1965, n.7, accessed at: [www.vatican.va › documents › vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en](http://www.vatican.va/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en).

⁸ Ocariz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 90.

⁹ Daniel A. Keating, "*Exegesis And Christology in Thomas Aquinas*," *Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas: Hermeneutical Tools, Theological Questions and New Perspectives*. Edited by Piotr Roszak and Jürgen Vijgen (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2015), Book chapter, p. 507-530, p. 507.

who cannot give reasons for what they believe.¹⁰ The *Summa's* 'treatise' on Christ is in three parts (tertia pars) and contains fifty nine questions. The tertia pars aspires to comprehensiveness in Christological topics addressed, and in organization and writing, display considerable skill.¹¹ The Christology of the tertia pars is a masterful achievement, a testimony to Aquinas' lifelong encounter with Christ, his fidelity to Scripture and to the theological traditions of both West and East, and his skill as a theologian, intent on teaching Christ most adequately.¹²

St. Thomas begins with the Incarnation, since "the fundamental cause of all human salvation is God's entering into human life in Jesus Christ."¹³ Aquinas gives careful account of the classical doctrines of the hypostatic union and has a number of reasons for holding these views. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas divides his Christology according to three major themes: Ontology, Christ's 'psychology', and the mysteries of the life of Christ.¹⁴ He treated his Christology according to the central theme of ontology, or the being of Christ (who he is - quis). Aquinas begins with faith, the belief that Jesus is the Word (Logos) of God, a divine person whose being subsists in two natures, divine and human. But how are the two natures of Christ united in the one person of the Word (in the hypostasis), and why is Christ a true man but not a

¹⁰ Samuel George, "the Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ in the Writing of Thomas Aquinas: An Enquiry." A doctoral Student in the department of Christian Theology at United Theological College, Bangalore. Theological Forum Bangalore Theological Forum, XL, n. 1 (June 2008), 1185-184. (ISSN: 0253-9365), p. 121.

¹¹ Joseph P. Wawrykow, "Christology of Thomas Aquinas in its Scholastic Context," (Oxford University Press, 2015), book chapter 15, p. 233.

¹² Ibid., p. 233.

¹³ Shawn Bawulski and Stephen R. Holmes, "Christian Theology: Classics," (Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), p. 74.

¹⁴ Gilbert Narcisse, O.P., "Christ According to Saint Thomas," Nova et Vetera, English Edition of International Theological Journal, Vol. 8, No.4 (2010): 813-826, p. 817.

human person? Thomas offers numerous illuminating explanations of this dogma.¹⁵ He also often mentions that the mystery of the ‘hypostatic union’ largely exceeds anything that the theologian can say. His Christology in its simplest definition means the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. For him, Christ is the starting point. Everything he has to say about Christ is an attempt to explore the sense and significance of what he understands to be the teaching of Chalcedon.¹⁶ Thomas is orthodox in his teaching about Christ from that point of view. “He accepts without qualification the doctrine of the Incarnation laid down by the Council of Chalcedon”¹⁷ because “it gave what was the clearest and most systematic formulation to date of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation.”¹⁸ It is noted that St Thomas as a teacher summarized the principle conclusions about Christ offered by the Christian traditions in theology that preceded him, especially that of the patristic age.

Following the basic points of St. Thomas’ thought concerning the hypostatic union of Christ, this thesis will give a brief account of the theory of Thomas’ *hypostatic union* which describes the unity of Christ. First, I will focus on historical Christology, which is concerned with the unity of the humanity and divinity of Christ. It considers some of the heresies concerning this topic, and how the Fathers of the Church and the various church ecumenical councils responded to these heresies in defense of the two natures in the one person of Jesus Christ. Second, I will show how the two natures have come together in the one person of Jesus Christ. I

¹⁵ Ibid., 817.

¹⁶ Bawulski and Holmes, “*Christian Theology: Classics*,” p.74.

¹⁷ George, “*The Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ in the Writing of Thomas Aquinas: An Enquiry*,” p. 123.

¹⁸ Michael Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 3.

will then focus on Saint Thomas' theory of the hypostatic union and explain the orthodox teaching of why Christ has a human nature but is not a human person. The last chapter is an examination of Saint Thomas' perspective on the purpose of the Incarnation and its eschatological significance: Christ's restoration of man's imago Dei is the fulfillment of man's ultimate end.

Chapter one

The Historical Christology: The Issues of the Unity of the Humanity and Divinity of Christ.

Saint Thomas knew well the Christological teachings of the great ecumenical councils. He always applied himself to the task of making them intelligible, especially the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon, which defined the dogma of Christ as one divine person subsisting in two natures: divine and human. Thomas attained a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ with the help of many citations from the Fathers of the Church. Wawrykow, in his work with *Christology of Thomas Aquinas in its Scholastic Context*, says that "Aquinas' Christology is incarnational, explicitly in conformity with what has been determined by the Church Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II and III."¹⁹ Moreover, Aquinas did not ignore heresies. He explains that the theologian should know not only the truth of his discipline but also the errors.²⁰ Before considering St. Thomas Aquinas' theory of the hypostatic union, I will address, in response to heresies, the orthodox teachings of the fathers of the Church, and a number of the great Ecumenical Councils which defined the unity of Christ's divine and human

¹⁹ Wawrykow, *Christology of Thomas Aquinas in its Scholastic Context*, p. 233.

²⁰ Dominic Legge, O.P., *The Trinitarian of Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, (Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 103.

nature. It will be primarily ontological, a treatment focused on Christ's being (who he is) as opposed to soteriological (what he did).

Nestorianism and the Council of Ephesus (431)

It is thought that Aquinas carefully read (in Latin) the councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II and III. As a result he became sensitive to the importance of Cyril's single - subject Christology and he then developed a more focused analysis and critique of Nestorianism as a form of heterodoxy.²¹ The development of Christological doctrine in the early Church can only be understood in the light of this background of theological history.²² In the fifth century other doctrinal disputes arose that included concerns about divine impassibility and the unicity of Christ's person. This was the controversy between Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, and Saint Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, leading to the teaching of the Council of Ephesus (431).²³ The controversy between Nestorius and Cyril raised the fundamental question of the unity in Christ in connection with a practical challenge of using proper theological language. The question was whether the Logos is the one subject or whether the unity in Christ continues a tertium quid made up of Godhead and humanity.²⁴

Nestorius was the Patriarch of Constantinople in 428. Educated in the school of Antioch, he was influenced by the ideas of Theodore of Mopsuestia. Nestorius emphasized the two natures

²¹ Thomas Joseph White, OP, *The Incarnation of the Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology*, (Washington, D.C. : Catholic University of America Press, 2015), p.78.

²² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 223.

²³ Robin Ryan, CP, *"God and the Mystery of Human Suffering: A Theological Conversation Across the Ages,"* (Paulist Press New York/Mahwah, NJ, 2013), p. 100.

²⁴ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 223.

in Christ, two subjects each subsistent in itself, and two persons.²⁵ But he objected to attributing the properties of human nature to the divine person because it implies that God is somehow passable. An authentic human experience would have been impossible if his divinity were fused with his humanity. The two natures remain unmixed, and each retains its own properties and operation. Each of the two natures had its own *prosopon* (a synonym for hypostasis/ person/ subject). He was trying to say that each nature was objectively real, but the term Nestorius uses implies that there are separate subjects in Christ. In other words, there is in Christ, according to Nestorius, a divine person (The Word) and a human person (Jesus the man), but they are so closely linked to one another that in practice it is as if there were only one person: they constitute a kind of united person. It is not a matter of there being just a man in whom God dwells, but something between that and a physical and substantial union.²⁶ Also, it logically leads Nestorius to deny Mary the title of "Mother of God" because she would only be the mother of man, a human person, though one specially united ("assumed") by the union of the person (union *prosopon*) to the divine person of the Word.²⁷ Nestorius was asked whether or not it is correct to call Mary "God-bearer" (Theotokos). He said no, she was "Christ bearer" (Christotokos). God could never have a mother; no creature can give birth to the creator. This implies that there is a separate subject in Jesus: God and "the Christ". But Mary did not generate the divine nature, she generated the human nature which belongs to God. Nestorius presumes that a unity of hypostatic subsistence implies a unity of nature, and vice versa.²⁸

²⁵ Ocariz, Seo, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 91.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁸ White, *The Incarnation of the Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology*, p. 80.

Nestorius thought that because he just reasoned Jesus as two subjects that separated each other.

Saint Cyril learned of Nestorius' heresy and stated that it sounded like Nestorius held that there are two separate subjects in Christ that are unified by a moral union. Cyril responded by describing the union as hypostatic: the union of the two natures took place in the one hypostasis of the Logos without any change or confusion. Cyril saw in Nestorius' teaching the theory of two sons: a mere external association with the Word and eternal man. If this is the case, then Christ's actions were not of God. Therefore, redemption is not effected. The redemption of the human race needs an intimate union, a hypostatic union. Also, if Nestorius' theory was right, then the Eucharist would be cannibalism: we would be consuming the body of a man rather than the body of God. Cyril described the union as hypostatic: the hypostasis of the Word (possessing divine nature) was truly united to a human nature. The Lord's humanity became a nature when it was united to the hypostasis of the Word. The humanity of the Incarnation never existed apart from the Word. The union of the two natures occurs without confusion or mixture: each remains distinct and retains its own properties. Cyril applied the attribution of properties to its proper sense: the Word of God suffered in the flesh, but the Word did not suffer in his divine nature.

The debate over the title of Mary is a Christological debate. Christ is one subject only (hypostasis) and one person only (prosopon); He who is also man, through a union of divine and human nature. Therefore, Mary is truly Mother of God, because she gave birth according to the flesh to the 'Word of God made flesh'; Christ is the Son of God and it is an error to say that Jesus the man is a divinized man and an adopted son of God; Christ's flesh is life-giving, because

it is the flesh of the Word; Christ should be worshipped with one adoration, and not worshipped as God and separately worshipped as man; to the Person of the Word should be attributed not only the divine action but also the human action and passions of Jesus.²⁹

Nestorius asked Emperor Theodosius II to convoke the council in Ephesus (431), thinking the results would be his vindication. Cyril arrived first and held a session without Nestorius and his supporters. This council condemned Nestorius as 'the new Judas'. When Nestorius' supporters arrived, they condemned Cyril. Papal delegates were sent to determine which council decision was correct, and they upheld Cyril. The Council defined the hypostatic union of two natures, divine and human, in the one divine person of Jesus Christ. The Council of Ephesus' "*Formula of Union*" is as follows:

We acknowledge that our Lord Jesus Christ...Son of God, perfect God and perfect man...born of Mary the virgin according to his humanity, one and the same, consubstantial with the Father in Godhead and consubstantial with us in humanity, for a union of two natures took place...Mary is the mother of God because God the Word took flesh and became man and from his very conception united to himself the temple he took from her.³⁰

The concern of the Council Fathers at Ephesus was exactly the same as had already been decisive in Nicaea, and which was in fact the fundamental contention of Scripture and of all tradition: It is God himself who meets us in Jesus Christ.³¹ The only new addition in the Ephesus decision was from the basic Nicene Christological idea, which predicated the identity of one

²⁹ Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *Second letter to Nestorius* (AD 430), which was read and approved by the Council Ephesus (431). (Cf, Ocariz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 93).

³⁰ Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum Latin*- English edited by Peter Hunermann, 43rd edition, (Ignatius Press San Francisco, 2012); 271-273: Formula of the Union between Cyril of Alexandria and the Bishop of the Church of Antioch, Spring 433.

³¹ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 224.

subject of Jesus Christ, who from eternity is with the Father and who in time has become man, having both a divine and human nature. As a result, we can and must say that Mary is the Mother of God.³² The results of Ephesus are as follows: Cyril's anathemas were set aside because they were provocative and contained confusing language regarding the one nature (since he was focusing on one person). There are also clarifications that the only person in Jesus is the eternal Word and that the natures were not united by conjunction. It also emphasizes the duality of the natures.

What kind of union does Nestorianism posit, then, if it refuses a union in the nature of Christ and a union that is hypostatic? For Thomas Aquinas, his knowledge and use of conciliar and patristic sources has received much well-deserved scholarly attention. Question 2 of the *Tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* often serves as a focal point of this attention due to its reliance on the texts previously unused in scholastic Christology. These texts include the acts of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II as well as supporting documents such as Pope Leo's *Tomus ad Flavianum* and Cyril of Alexandria's third letter to Nestorius and its anathemas.³³ In question 2 of article 6 of the *Tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* on whether human nature was united to the Word accidentally, Aquinas notes quite rightly that:

The heresy of Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia separated the persons. For they held the Person of the Son of God to be distinct from the Person of the Son of man and said these were mutually united: first, "by indwelling," inasmuch as the Word of God dwelt in the man, as in a temple; secondly, "by unity of intention" inasmuch as the will of the man was always in agreement with the will of the Word of God; thirdly, "by operation," inasmuch as they said the man was the instrument of the Word of God; fourthly, "by greatness of honor,"

³² Ibid., p. 224.

³³Corey L. Barnes, *Thomas Aquinas's Chalcedonian Christology and its Influence on Later Scholastics*, the Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review, Volume 78, Number 2, (April 2014), p. 189-217, p. 198.

inasmuch as all honor shown to the Son of God was equally shown to the son of man, on account of His union with the Son of God; fifthly, "by equivocation," i.e. communication of names, inasmuch as we say that this man is God and the Son of God. Now it is plain that these modes imply an accidental union.³⁴

All of these trace back in some way to the moral unity of wills: Christ as man thinks and acts in coordination with the wisdom and will of the Word of God. The union is accidental to each hypostasis or subject because it characterizes or qualifies that subject but is distinct from the subject itself.³⁵ Previously in this question, Aquinas had argued for the equivalence of person, hypostasis, and suppositum in the rational natures, with the result that assuming a hypostasis or suppositum amounts to assuming a person (STh III, q. 2. a.3).³⁶

In this basic argument, Aquinas reasons that the first opinion inevitably affirms two persons in Christ, protests to the contrary notwithstanding.³⁷ The first opinion necessarily lapses into the heresy of Nestorius because it divides the person in Christ under one name or another and because the union of these divided persons can be nothing other than accidental.³⁸ Aquinas shows, then, the true position which lies between the extremes. With the first position and against the second, Christ is one subject and person and so one must affirm in Christ a substantial union of God and man. The Word incarnate is one entity. With the second position and against the first, however, Christ is truly God and truly man. Thus, two natures remains distinct, without mixture or confusion, and the union must not occur in the nature of Christ but in the substance of Christ. It is a union in the person.

³⁴ Summa theologiae, STh III, q. 2, a. 6.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 82.

³⁶ Barnes, *Thomas Aquinas's Chalcedonian Christology and its Influence on Later Scholastics*, p. 200.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 200.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 200.

In the Word made flesh there is one concrete, individual person and hypostasis subsisting in two natures.³⁹ What we see, then, is that Aquinas is beginning to refine his concept of Nestorianism in the analysis of these later positions so as to apply it even to theories that seek explicitly to uphold a unity of person in Christ.⁴⁰ The problem with such theories is that they share a common theme with classical Nestorian ideas. This is the theme of merely an accidental union of two subsistences or substances by means of a share quality or set of habitual relations. The union is not in the individual subsistent person of the Word strictly speaking, or otherwise said, the union is not hypostatic.⁴¹ But Jesus Christ is a kind of *homo assumptus* who is brought into accidental unity with the person of the Word.⁴² Therefore, “if the union have been accidental, the Word would not have become man. It is important to remember also that to equiparate the hypostatic union to the union with God which results from his indwelling through grace, would be to deny the truth of the Incarnation.”⁴³

The reason why the human nature of Jesus Christ cannot be accidentally united to the Word is because the union which a suppositum has with its own nature is never accidental, for if it were accidental it would not subsist in it.⁴⁴ The fact that Christ pre-exists from all eternity does not apply that the human nature was united accidentally to him afterwards, for He assumed it in such a way that he is truly man. To be a man is substantial mode of being. Since the hypostasis of the Word is man in virtue of the human nature, the later did not come to Him

³⁹ White, *The Incarnation of the Lord, A Thomistic Study in Christology*, p. 82.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁴³ Ocariz, Seo, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 116.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.117.

accidentally because accidents do not confer a substantial formal act.⁴⁵ In conclusion, the union occurred in the Person, leaving the natures not confused but united, precisely because they belong to the same person.

Monophysitism and the Council of Chalcedon (451)

Monophysitism was the heresy of one nature. This heresy objected to the idea that there could be two natures in Christ because they thought it would lead to two subjects in Christ. Monophysitism denied that Christ's human nature remained a human nature once it had been united to the Word. It held, then, that Christ is one Person with one nature.⁴⁶ This position was originally promoted by Eutyches in Constantinople. He was the equivalent of a head abbot. He emphasized that Christ had two natures before the union, but after the union with flesh, Christ had one nature, which was the nature of the God made flesh become man. After the union, Christ's two natures were fused into a third entity: the human nature was swallowed up by the divinity. In this understanding, he rejected the suggestion of two natures as unscriptural and contrary to the teaching of the Fathers. Christ's flesh was not the same as ours; he was not consubstantial with us. He feared that admitting two natures would result in two subjects. He said the human nature was transformed into the substance of the divinity. The problem with this is that there was no human nature before the union, so there is a chronological error in his position.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.117.

⁴⁶ Ralph J. Tapia, *The Theology of Christ: Commentary Reading in Christology*, (New York: Bruce, 1971), p. 161.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 161.

The Monophysite thesis of Eutyches was condemned by Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople, who deposed Eutyches in 448. Pope Saint Leo the Great, who in his letter known as the Tome of Saint Leo, agreed to condemn the one nature theory, approve Flavian's actions, and send him a Dogmatic Letter. In his letter, the Pope reaffirmed the true doctrine concerning the hypostatic union, teaching that in Christ there is only one Person and two natures, while remaining distinct and not confused.⁴⁸ There were four main points in Leo's Tome which summarized the theology of the west: (1) The person of the God-man is identical with the person of the Logos. (2) The divine and human natures co-exist in this one person without mixture or confusion. (Each nature retains its own natural properties unimpaired). The redemption required that the same mediator should be able to both die in respect to one nature (human) and not die with respect to the other nature (divine). (3) The two natures are separate principles of operation, but they always act in harmony with each other. (4) The oneness of the person in Christ justifies the communication of properties. It's correct to say that the Son of God died in his human nature.⁴⁹

At last, in 451, a genuine ecumenical council was held at Chalcedon, which solemnly defined the hypostatic union.⁵⁰ The Council confirmed that there is one person in two natures in Christ. The Council clarified the terms with precision: two natures (substance/nature/ousia), one person (hypostasis/prosopon) and emphasized the preposition "in" two natures and not "from" two natures. This rejects the Eutychian notion of a mixture of the natures. Christ is in

⁴⁸ Ocáriz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 96.

⁴⁹ Vincent Zamoyta, Ph.D. "*Theology of Christ: Sources*," (The Bruce publishing Company/Milwaukee, 1967), p. 71-75.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

two natures or of two natures but not from two natures. The significance of Chalcedon is: First, the Ecumenical Council included both the east and west. It reached a synthesis of the two eastern schools: Alexandria and Antioch. Second, it clarified the terms with precision: two natures (fusus/substance/nature/ousia), one person (hypostasis/ prosopon). Third, it emphasized the preposition "in" two natures and not "from" two natures. This rejects the Eutycean notion of a mixture of the natures. Eutyches taught that Christ was one person that came from two natures. This also emphasizes that Christ is in two natures or of two natures but not from two. To say "from" implies that he no longer had them, that before he had two and after there was one. But this is illogical because he never had two natures before the union. This is considered a triumph of western theology and Antioch (which stressed two natures).

Aquinas does not agree with the view of Monophysitism. For him, if it is so, then the divinity and humanity in Christ is only accidental.⁵¹ In addition to that, Aquinas comes to conclude that Chalcedon was right to speak of divinity and humanity coming together in one person but not in one nature. For Aquinas, the humanity and divinity come together in Christ in one person, that is so say that one subject can be truly spoken of as we speak of a human, and that the same subject can be truly spoken of as we speak of God. A human being has a body since human nature includes a true body. So, as one can say that Christ has a body, one can also say of God that he is omniscient and omnipotent. So we can also say of Christ that he is also the same.⁵² Christ Jesus is one subject, existing in two natures, divine and human.

Monothelitism and the Council of Constantinople III (680-681)

⁵¹ George, *"The Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ in the Writing of Thomas Aquinas: An Enquiry,"* p. 128.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

Monothelitism (monothelism) was the theory that Christ had only one will. Many monophysites refused to accept the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon: Sergius was patriarch of Constantinople who thought he could end the controversy between the orthodox and monophysites by proposing that Christ had only one will. Monothelitism held that the human nature was the instrument of the divinity and an instrument is not moved by its own will, but by the will of its user. Therefore, Christ did not have a human will because his humanity was used as an instrument of his divinity.⁵³ Saint Sophrinus (Jerusalem) and Saint Maximus the Confessor opposed Monothelitism and taught that Christ had to have two wills and two intellects which were not opposed to each other. The human will follows the divine will, but actively. If Christ had a human nature without a human will, then he was not truly man and was certainly not perfect man.

The Council of Constantinople III (680-681) was confirmed by Pope Agatho, who condemned Monothelitism and solemnly defined that:

We declare that in him are two natural volitions or wills and two natural actions without division, without changes, without separation, without confusion... And the two natural wills are not contrary the one to the other, but his human will follows and that not as resisting and reluctant, but rather as subject to his divine and omnipotent will...The natural will of his flesh is called and is the proper will of God the Word...His human will was not suppressed, but was rather preserved.⁵⁴

Therefore, “preserving entirely what is neither fused nor divided, we proclaim the entire matter in this concise utterance: Believing that one of the Holy Trinity, who after the Incarnation is our

⁵³ Ocáriz, Seo, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 99.

⁵⁴ Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum Latin*- English edited by Peter Hunermann, 43rd edition, 553-559: Session 18, September 16, 1981: The definition on the two wills and operation in Christ, p. 193.

Lord Jesus Christ, is our true God, we say that his two natures shine forth in his one hypostasis. And the difference of natures in that same and unique hypostasis is recognized by the fact that each of the two natures and wills perform what is proper to it in communion with the other. Thus, we glory in proclaiming two natural wills and actions concurring together for the salvation of the human race.”⁵⁵

Thomas’s knowledge of earlier engagements with the topic of Christ’s two wills clarifies the specific shape of his own teaching. His historical research uncovered patristic debates on this subject, most notably the acts of Constantinople III.⁵⁶ Among the acts of Constantinople III, Thomas found quotations from Augustine’s *Contra Maximinum episcopum Arianorum*, Ambrose’s *De fide and super Lucam*, Pseudo- Athanasius’s *De incarnatione et Contra Arianos*, and Leo’s *Tomus ad Flavianum*. Thomas’s knowledge and use of these sources (in ST.III, q. 9, 13, 18 and 19) comes from Pope Agatho’s *Epistle I, Ad Augustos Imperatores*.⁵⁷ Recovery of these sources produced results for Thomas’s teaching parallel to his recovery of the acts of the councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II. In his affirmations of these sources, Thomas Aquinas affirms the two wills of Jesus Christ. *Summa theologiae* III, q. 18, a. 1 begins the discussion of Christ’s wills by establishing the presence of two wills in Christ.⁵⁸ Corey L. Barnes concurs in the *Summa*,

Thomas argues first in response to Apollinaris, who did not hold an intellectual soul in Christ, but maintained that the Word was in place of the soul, or even in place of the intellect. From this follows that in Christ there was no human will; and thus there was only one will in Him. Second, Eutyches and all who held one

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 194.

⁵⁶ Corey L. Barnes, “*Christ’s Two Wills in Scholastic Thought: The Christology of Aquinas and Its Historical Contexts*,” (Toronto: Pontifical Institute Of Mediaeval Studies, 2012): 113- 179, p. 114.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 117.

composite nature in Christ were forced to place one will in Him. Third, he refers to Nestorius who maintained that the union of God and man was one of affection and will, and held only one will in Christ. Finally, he dismisses the ideas of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, Cyrus of Alexandria, and Sergius of Constantinople and some of their followers, who held that there is one will in Christ, although they held that in Christ there are two natures united in a hypostasis.⁵⁹

These heresies, according to Thomas, are fundamental errors because they think that the human nature in Christ was never moved by its own, proper motion, but only according as it was moved by the divinity.⁶⁰ The heresies of Apollinarius and Nestorius, though different, misconceive the hypostatic union in ways that compromise Christ's possession of both the divine will and a human will.⁶¹

By establishing the presence of two wills in Christ, Aquinas affirms that the act of Constantinople III did more than merely confirm the accepted position; it introduced a misunderstanding of Christ's will that was not reducible to other Christological heresies.⁶² He said,

And hence in the sixth Council held at Constantinople, it was decreed that it must be said that there are two wills in Christ, in the following passage: "In accordance with what the Prophets of old taught us concerning Christ, and as He taught us Himself, and the Symbol of the Holy Fathers has handed down to us, we confess two natural wills in Him and two natural operations."⁶³

It is certain that for Aquinas, "through the assumption of human nature the son of God underwent no diminution in those things which pertain to divine nature. As the divine nature includes a will, it is necessary to say that in Christ there are two wills, namely one divine and the

⁵⁹ Ibid., .117.

⁶⁰ Barnes, *Christ's Two Wills in Scholastic Thought*, p. 118.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 119.

⁶² Ibid., p. 120.

⁶³ Summa theologiae, STh III. q. 18, a. 1.

other human.”⁶⁴ Aquinas holds that the Word assumed an integral human nature and therefore possessed a human will in addition to the divine will.

The themes of treating two wills in Christ was expressed in St III, q. 18, a. 1 to provide keys for Aquinas’s replies to the objections in each work. The objections and replies offer clues to the development of Thomas thought on this issue.⁶⁵ The first objection that he raises is: “It would seem that in Christ there are not two wills, one Divine, the other human. For the will is the first mover and first commander in whoever wills. But in Christ the first mover and commander was the Divine will, since in Christ everything human was moved by the Divine will.”⁶⁶ Aquinas replies that,

Whatever was in the human nature of Christ was moved at the bidding of the Divine will; yet it does not follow that in Christ there was no movement of the will proper to human nature, for the good wills of other saints are moved by God’s will, "Who worketh" in them "both to will and to accomplish."⁶⁷

Aquinas’ claim that “for although the will cannot be inwardly moved by any creature, yet it can be moved inwardly by God.”⁶⁸ Through these points, he comes to conclude that “Christ by His human will followed the Divine will.”⁶⁹ The second objection argues for the absence of a human will due to the human will’s role as an instrument.⁷⁰ It is part of Aquinas’s discussion about Christ’s human will as an instrument which is not moved by its own will but by the will of its mover. So if the human nature of Christ was the instrument of His Godhead, then

⁶⁴ Barnes, *“Christ’s Two Wills in Scholastic Thought,”* p. 123 (Cf, ST, III, q. 18, a. 1).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁶⁶ *Summa theologiae*, STh III, q. 18, a. 1, obj. 1.

⁶⁷ *Summa theologiae*, STh III, q. 18, a. 1, ad. 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

the human nature of Christ was not moved by its own will, but by the Divine will.⁷¹ Aquinas responds to this objection by saying that “It is proper to an instrument to be moved by the principal agent, yet diversely, according to the property of its nature. And hence it was in this manner that the human nature of Christ was the instrument of the Godhead, and was moved by its own will.”⁷² The third objection, part of Aquinas’s argument as a misconception of a correct principle, is that alone is multiplied in Christ which belongs to the nature. This should not, the objection maintains, include a will, because natural things are from necessity, while the will involves what is not necessary.⁷³ Aquinas responds by saying that “the power of the will is natural, and necessarily follows upon the nature; but the movement or act of this power—which is also called will—is sometimes natural and necessary.”⁷⁴ Hence, in addition to the Divine will, it is necessary to place in Christ a human will, not merely as a natural power or a natural movement, but even as a rational movement.⁷⁵

In summary, following Thomas’s treatment, the human will of Christ is used as instrument for the divine will, but it’s an active instrument. He used his human will to merit our salvation. In Christ, the human will was entirely subject to the divine will through because the human will being should be ruled by reason. This is how we become saints when our human will is completely ruled by the divine will. Following Thomas’s design, logically and effectively buildings upon itself, referring back to its treatment of the hypostatic union in *Summa*

⁷¹ *Summa theologiae*, STh III, q. 18, a. 1, obj. 2.

⁷² *Summa Theologiae*, STh III, q. 18, a. 1, ad. 2.

⁷³ Barnes, “*Christ’s Two Wills in Scholastic Thought*,” p. 125. (Cf, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 18, a. 1, Obj. 3).

⁷⁴ *Summa theologiae*, STh III, q. 18, a. 1, ad. 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

theologiae III, q. 2. The necessary premises are already well established, and so affirmation of Christ's two wills requires only a pro forma argument, as it flows directly from a proper understanding of the hypostatic union.⁷⁶

Chapter two

The Hypostatic Union in Jesus Christ's Mode of Union: Union, Nature Assumed, Person Assuming.

Christ Jesus is God and he is Man; he is one subject, one person, existing in two natures, divine and human. He who is God is Man. The oneness in Jesus has always been a presupposition in the Church's faith regarding the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ. The essence of the mystery of the Incarnation is the hypostatic union, which the Council of Chalcedon defined as the union of the two real natures, human and divine, in the one person of the Logos, of the Father:

Following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood;... born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of nature's being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Barnes, "*Christ's Two Wills in Scholastic Thought*," p. 123.

⁷⁷ Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum Latin- English* edited by Peter Hunermann, 43rd edition, Council of Chalcedon's Creed (451) Definition of Faith (DS 300).

With the Council of Chalcedon, the distinction between person and nature became firmly established; also, the hypostatic union was recognized as something real, that is, belonging to the objective order of being.⁷⁸ The Chalcedonian dogma solemnly confirms that Christ is the Son of God, true God who truly became man. One and the same Christ, our Lord and Savior, is indeed God and Man. The religious significance of this doctrine is immense, inasmuch as the entirety of our faith in salvation rests on the conviction that Christ is both God and Man. Salvation is likewise impossible if Christ is only God or only Man.⁷⁹ Clearly, the close union that exists in Christ should not be sought in the idea of nature; it must come from something different, since the two natures remain unchanged after union.⁸⁰

St. Thomas's theology of the union of Christ's two natures is the central building block of his Christology, a theological achievement of paramount importance.⁸¹ St. Thomas's approach to Christology presupposes that the Chalcedonian teaching is correct. The Council of Chalcedon insisted on both the unity of Christ's person and the integrity of his two natures, so it is extremely helpful to understand Thomas's theory of the hypostatic union. Saint Thomas Aquinas's treatment of the doctrine of the Incarnation is metaphysical, and as such one can talk about the metaphysics of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is explained by Aquinas through the concept of union in one supposit, maintaining that the Incarnation took place in one supposit or hypostasis. Aquinas's of the word '*hypostasis*' is metaphysical, but for clarity sake, he goes on

⁷⁸ Ocáriz, Seo, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 109.

⁷⁹ Serge S. VerKhovsky, "Some Theological Reflection on Chalcedon," (St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Full text coverage: vol. 2 no 1 Wint 1958, p 2-12), ISSN: 0360-648, ATLA0000919654.

⁸⁰ Ocáriz, Seo, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 110.

⁸¹ Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, p. 103.

to explain what the term hypostasis or supposit means and how the Incarnation took place in one hypostasis:

Hypostasis signifies a particular substance, particular not in just any fashion, but as rounded off and complete. A substantial reality, e.g. a hand or a foot that enters into union with something more complete is not called hypostasis. Similarly, the human nature of Christ is not called a hypostasis or supposit. It is, to be sure, a particular substance, but it comes into something more complete, namely with whole Christ as God and man: that complete reality to which it is joined is called the hypostasis or supposit.⁸²

In a further explanation of the mystery of the Incarnation and also the manner in which the Incarnation took place, Aquinas taught that the Incarnation can only be understood as existing in 'a person'. So, in order to explain that the two natures of Christ are united in the person (in hypostasis), not the nature, Saint Thomas Aquinas logically analyzes how the Incarnation took place in one person (Christ), not in the nature. He states:

Consequently, all that is present in any person, whether belonging to his nature nor not, is united to him in person. If, then, the human nature is not united to the Word (Logos) in person, it would not be united at all. To hold that would be to abolish belief in the Incarnation and to undermine the entire Christian faith. Since therefore, the Word has a human nature united to himself, (...) It follows that this union was effected in the person of the Word (...) And because human nature is united to the Word, so that the Word subsists in it, and not so the His nature receives there from any addition or change, it follows that the union of human nature to the Word of God took place in the person, and not in the nature.⁸³

It is clear why Saint Thomas wants to say that the hypostatic union is a union in person that is not a union in nature, but a difficulty arises from the fact that one of the united items is a human nature.

⁸² Summa Theologiae, STh III, q. 2, a. 3, ad. 2.

⁸³ Summa Theologiae, STh III, q. 2, a. 2.

St Thomas does not raise the problem in these terms, but we can understand how he would solve it.⁸⁴ Aquinas asks whether the union of the incarnate Word took place in nature?

To make this clear he states what is meant by nature,

The word "nature" comes from nativity. Hence this word was used first of all to signify the begetting of living beings, which is called "birth". Afterwards this word "nature" was taken to signify the principle of this begetting; and because in living things the principle of generation is an intrinsic principle, this word "nature" was further employed to signify any intrinsic principle of motion: thus the Philosopher says that nature is the principle of motion in that in which it is essentially and not accidentally. Now this principle is either form or matter. Hence sometimes form is called nature, and sometimes matter. Because of the end of natural generation in that which is generated, is the essence of the species, which the definition signifies, this essence of the species is called the "nature".⁸⁵

With Aquinas, for the purpose of this analysis, all that matters is that (a) the things that enter into the union are complete in themselves, i.e., something could exist having this nature alone, and (b) the process of being united causes the united things to be transformed. If this is what is meant by "union in nature," says Aquinas, then the hypostatic union cannot be a union in nature.⁸⁶ By regarding types of union in nature, Richard Cross says, Aquinas considers three types of them:

(1) some artificial nature which is constituted by layout of parts, where each part retains its own nature and numerical identity, this type of union, for Aquinas, is only accidental: and Church doctrine excludes an accidental union in Christ. Moreover, this type of union does not result in a genuine unity at all. The resulting form is artificial, not natural: and thus it could not count as one nature in any case; (2) a mixture of two or more elements resulting in some third type of substance. For Aquinas, this type of union is impossible since divine nature is totally immutable, and thus could not mix with a human nature to produce some

⁸⁴ Michael Gorman, *Christ as composite According to Aquinas*, Traditio, Vol. 55, p. 143-157, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 144.

⁸⁵ Summa theologiae, STh III, q. 2, a. 1.

⁸⁶ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p.48

composite type of thing; (3) a union of two incomplete things which together constitute a whole of some particular type.⁸⁷

The overall purpose of Aquinas' discussion of union in nature is twofold. Negatively, it opposes Monophysite theories, i.e., theories that say that there is only one nature in Christ. Positively, it affirms that the two natures, humanity and divinity, are really there, untransformed and in their full perfections.⁸⁸ With the purpose of the first distinction between "nature" and "suppositum" (hypostasis, person) which Aquinas proposes is to show that Christ's human nature must be united to his divine nature in his suppositum.⁸⁹

One of the ways Aquinas speaks of Christ being one person with two natures is by deploying the idea of "union in person."⁹⁰ He asks whether the union of the Word incarnate took place in the suppositum or hypostasis? It is clear why Thomas wants to say that the hypostatic union is a union in person that is not a union in nature.⁹¹ Aquinas uses the hypostasis and person interchangeably. They signify what Aquinas has in mind when he uses the word suppositum in the sense of 'subject' or 'individual'. The difference between them is that 'person', for Aquinas, adds to hypostasis the notion of being rational.⁹² By knowing that the words he uses are not the same as knowing the thoughts he has.⁹³

⁸⁷ Richard Cross, *"Aquinas on nature, hypostatic, and the metaphysics of the Incarnation"*, *Thomist: a Speculative Quarterly Review*; (Apr 1, 1996): 60, 2; ProQuest pp. 171-202, p. 178.

⁸⁸ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p.49

⁸⁹ Cross, *"Aquinas on nature, hypostatic, and the metaphysics of the Incarnation"*, p. 179.

⁹⁰ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p.46.

⁹¹ *Summa theologiae*, STh III, q. 2, a. 2.

⁹² George, *the Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ in the Writing of Thomas Aquinas: An Enquiry*, p. 133.

⁹³ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p. 14.

Considering the concept of the 'person' with the question of what Aquinas means when he says that Christ is one person, what does he mean when he says that Christ has both a divine and a human nature? To answer these questions about his Christology, we must first have an understanding of what he means by 'person.' Aquinas in fact, often uses Boethius' famous definition of person as an "individual substance of a rational nature." At this point, Aquinas says that: "person adds a determinate nature to 'hypostasis.' For it is nothing other than a hypostasis of a rational nature."⁹⁴ St Thomas' definition of a divine person (I, q. 29) is the great breakthrough of his Trinitarian theology. He defines a Divine Person as a relation as subsisting. The word "person" is here used in an analogous way, and it is an individual substance of a rational nature. Saint Thomas Aquinas modified the Aristotelian category of relation and Boethius's definition of person in order to come to this new definition: 'person' as "a complete substance subsisting of itself and separate from all else."⁹⁵ Human nature in Christ, for Aquinas, means that Christ had a real body of the same nature as ours and a true rational soul. He taught that Christ came through the Virgin's womb in such a way that He really took flesh from the Virgin Mary; that Christ felt hunger, He ate, suffered and had other experiences common to the nature of human flesh. To make this teaching clear, he considers how the union of the incarnate Word is of the person, not of nature. Still, because he distinguishes between a possessive subject and an effective one, he can sort out the different functions of both nature and person in the mystery of the Incarnation. As a personal unity, Christ enjoys only one effective subject, the eternal Logos. But besides the effective principle of unity which Christ

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

⁹⁵ *Summa Theologiae*, STh III, q. 16, a. 12, ad. 2.

receives through his uncreated personhood, he also enjoys two possessive subjects, since each nature does what remains proper to it.⁹⁶ Three points in this text require further commentary,

First, since the person of the Word pre-exists, Christ's created human nature does not constitute his person but rather joins it. Second, this same infinite person also possesses the divine nature, 'one in being with the Father.' Third, the human nature, one hypostatically united to the person of the Word, remains an individual nature, enjoying all of the operations proper to human nature, though not in itself personalized in the same way, since the second person of the blessed Trinity alone assumed our human nature.⁹⁷

We see this clearly in Aquinas's Trinitarian doctrine when he tries to distinguish the persons in the Holy Trinity.

Aquinas emphasizes the most important view that the Person signifies relationship as subsisting. "Person" when used of God signifies nature and relation at the same time, either by signifying the nature directly and relation by implication, or by signifying relation directly and nature by implication, since when person is defined, nature is mentioned by implication. Aquinas thinks that this comes closest to the truth of the matter. He affirms that "person" in God, a divine person, means relation as something subsisting. Distinction in God arises only through the relation of origin; but relation in God is not something accidental, but it is the divine nature itself; it is something subsisting just as the divine nature does. Hence, divine person signifies relation as something subsisting as substance which is a hypostasis subsisting in the divine nature, though what is subsisting is nothing other than the divine nature. In this sense, "person" signifies relation directly and nature by implication; yet relation is signified, not as relation, but as hypostasis. Likewise, "person" signifies nature directly and relation indirectly

⁹⁶ Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Godly Image- Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas*, (Petersham, MA : St. Bede's Publications, 1990), p. 134.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

inasmuch as nature is identical with hypostasis; the word “hypostasis” in God means what is distinct by reason of a relation.⁹⁸ Aquinas says that in God, there are no accidents, only Existence itself. So, relation is not an accident in God, rather it is identical to the divine substance itself. If this is the case, relations subsists in virtue of the divine essence to which it is identical, and it distinguishes the person in virtue of the relationship toward the other, which constitutes the ratio. Romanus Cessario, O.P. says, “indeed, Aquinas finds in the trinitarian theology a source for establishing the person of the Word as the one who most fittingly becomes the Incarnation.”⁹⁹

Aquinas uses the notion of union in person in order to assert that humanity and divinity in Christ are united in person and excludes Nestorian - style theories, i.e., theories according to which Christ is more than one person. Also, by using the notion of union in person to hold that the Word is one person while Jesus is another is to deny that two natures are united in one person.¹⁰⁰ We come to conclude something of importance that Aquinas assigns to this article of faith in his concluding remarks in q. 2, a. 2:

Consequently, whatever adheres to a person is united to it in person, whether it belongs to its nature or not. Hence, if the human nature is not united to God the Word in person, it is nowise united to Him; and thus belief in the Incarnation is altogether done away with, and Christian faith wholly overturned. Therefore, inasmuch as the Word has a human nature united to Him, which does not belong to His Divine Nature, it follows that the union took place in the Person of the Word, and not in the nature¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Summa Theologiae, STh Ia, q. 29, a. 4.

⁹⁹ Cessario, “*The Godly Image- Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas*,” p. 135.

¹⁰⁰ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p.46.

¹⁰¹ Summa Theologiae, STh III, q. 2, a. 2.

In Christ we have one human subject who is also a divine subject. Divinity and humanity are united in one being. On this basis, Aquinas affirms that what began to be with the Incarnation is the union of what is united in one subject. That occurred when the changeless Son of God took on himself a changeable human nature conceived by the virgin Mary.¹⁰² The Incarnation happened; he became something that he was not before. God does not change as a result of becoming man, but rather the assumed human nature changed. There is an objection to Aquinas's way of proceeding that should be considered, an objection that he raises himself in ST III, q. 2, a. 2. It is part of Aquinas' understanding of God that for any divine person, person and nature are identical.¹⁰³ Now the Person of God is not distinct from His nature. If, therefore, the union did not take place in the nature, it follows that it did not take place in the person.¹⁰⁴ Aquinas responds by saying that although in God, Nature and Person are not really distinct, they have distinct meanings, as was said above, inasmuch as person signifies after the manner of something subsisting. And because human nature is united to the Word, so that the Word subsists in it, and not so that His Nature receives there from any addition or change, it follows that the union of human nature to the Word of God took place in the person, and not in the nature.¹⁰⁵ This means that the Incarnation was not a question of one nature replacing the other. The mystery of the Incarnation did not involve any sort of change in the state of God's

¹⁰² George, *"the Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ in the Writings of Thomas Aquinas: An Enquiry,"* p. 134.

¹⁰³ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁴ Summa theologiae, STh III, q. 2, a. 2, obj. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Summa theologiae, STh III, q. 2, a. 2, ad. 1.

eternal existence. Instead it took place by His uniting Himself in a new fashion, a creature, or, more precisely, by a creature becoming united to Him.¹⁰⁶

In giving an account of the Incarnation, Thomas Aquinas states that Christ is a composite person:

The Person or hypostasis of Christ may be viewed in two ways. First as it is in itself, and thus it is altogether simple, even as the Nature of the Word. Secondly, in the aspect of person or hypostasis to which it belongs to subsist in a nature; and thus the Person of Christ subsists in two natures. Hence though there is one subsisting being in Him, yet there are different aspects of subsistence, and hence He is said to be a composite person, insomuch as one being subsists in two.¹⁰⁷

So Christ is, for Aquinas, the hypostatic union results in composite person. Aquinas further develops his theory and in a way that makes it more adequate. That Aquinas holds Christ to be composite is worth noting not only for its own sake, however, but also because it is a crucial element of another way in which Thomas goes beyond the basic theory.¹⁰⁸ First, we look at Thomas' treatment in the *Summa theologiae's* of Prima pars, in STh. Ia, q. 3: is there any way in which God is composite, or is he altogether simple, and STh. Ia, q. 9: "The Immutability" shows that there are many ways of showing that God is altogether simple. First, God is not composed of extended parts, since he is not a body. (Ia. 3, 1); nor of form and matter (Ia. 3, 2); nor does he differ from his own nature (Ia. 3, 3); nor is his essence from his existence (Ia. 3, 4); nor can he be distinguished by genus and difference (i.e., God falls into no class of entities) (Ia. 3, 5); nor by substance and accidents (Ia. 3, 6). Second, every composite is subsequent to and dependent on its components, while God is the first of all beings (Ia. 2, 3). Again, composition requires a cause to join the components, while God is not caused but the first cause (Ia. 2, 3). Furthermore,

¹⁰⁶ *Summa Theologiae*, STh III, q. 1, a. 3, ad. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Gorman, "*Christ as Composite According to Aquinas*," p.145. (Cf, ST. III. q. 2, a. 4).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.146.

composition implies the actualization of potentialities either in the components or insofar as they constitute a new whole, which cannot occur in God (Ia. 3, 7). Finally, from the relationship of parts to wholes: Nothing composite can be predicated of its own component parts which is true both of heterogeneous composites (a whole of dissimilar parts: can't predicate "man" of "foot") and of homogeneous composites (a whole of similar parts: sometimes yes, sometimes no).

In all composites there is some element not sharing a common predicate with the whole. In a form ("whiteness") there is nothing other than itself; but in something that has a form ("a white dish") other elements are present (shape, clay, gloss, etc.). Now God is form itself, indeed existence itself, and can in no way be composite (Ia. 3, 7). While it is true that things deriving from God resemble him as effects resemble the primary cause, their composite character does not mirror him, for it is in the nature of an effect to be composite in some way since even at its simplest level it is not its own existence (Ia. 3, 7). With the question (Ia.3, 8): does God enter into composition with other things? Aquinas holds three errors have been made concerning this matter: (1) God as world-soul or soul of the highest heaven. (2) God as formal principle of things. (3) God as prime matter. So, he gives three arguments against the view that God enters into composition with things: (1) Since God is the first cause of all things (Ia. 2, 3), he cannot be identified with his effects. An efficient cause can be specifically identical with its effect but not numerically identical with it (e.g., a man begets another man). An efficient cause can be neither specifically nor numerically identical with prime matter: the efficient cause is actual; matter is potential. (2) Since God is a cause, he is a primary and immediate source of activity. A composite rather than its components is the primary and

immediate source of activity (e.g. a hand does not act, but a man acts by means of it). (3) God is the primary being, without qualification. No component can be absolutely primary (not matter, since as potency it is absolutely subsequent to actuality; nor form which is only partial with respect to what is essentially that form). Hence God enters into composition with nothing else.¹⁰⁹

In the immutability of God, which Aquinas treats in ST. I, q. 9, he holds first that the argument up to this point shows God to be altogether unchangeable. It has been shown that there must be some first existence called God, purely actual and without any potentiality. Actuality, simply speaking, precedes potentiality. Only something potential can change. Hence God cannot change in any way. Second, it has been shown that God is not composite, but altogether simple. But things in change are always composite, because anything in change partly persists and partly passes. Hence as non-composite God cannot change. Third, it has been shown at various points that God, being limitless and embracing within himself the whole fullness of perfection of all existence, cannot acquire anything, nor can he move out towards something previously not attained. But anything which changes acquires something through the change which he previously had not attained. Hence, God cannot change. (Ia. 9, 2): Only God is altogether unchangeable; creatures can all change in one way or another.¹¹⁰

By definition, God is pure act, which is incapable of change. "And the Word became flesh" (John 1:14) seems to indicate that God changed when the Incarnation happened; he became something that he was not before. God does not change as a result of becoming man,

¹⁰⁹ Summa Theologiae, STh Ia, q. 3, a. 8.

¹¹⁰ Summa Theologiae, STh Ia, q. 9, a. 2.

but the assumed human nature changed. The Word experienced no added perfection through the Incarnation. God does not need to be united to human nature in order to be perfected. The immutability and the simplicity of God, however, raises some problems for the Incarnation. First, the Incarnation seems to require that the Word be as it is in virtue of something else, that it has its being - as - human from its assumed humanity, but the impassibility seems to make this impossible¹¹¹. Second, the Incarnation seems to require change from a non-incarnate and non-human state to an incarnate and human state, but immutability seems to make this impossible.¹¹²

Aquinas handles these difficulties by showing the general relation between God and creation, and then how he understands the Incarnation.¹¹³ First, we look at the procession of the Godhead in his treatment of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity in the *Summa theologiae* in the *First Pars*. In the question of the procession in the Godhead, question 27, Aquinas suggests that:

We must understand procession as an intellectual action that occurs within the Godhead. When we understand, by the very intellectual act of understanding, there proceeds something within us, which is a conception of the object understood, a conception issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from our knowledge of the object. This conception is signified by the spoken word; and it is called the word of the heart signified by the word of the voice. Procession in God, therefore, is not to be understood as in bodies (according to local movement or by way of a cause proceeding forth to its exterior effect, as, for instance, like heat from the agent to the thing made hot.) Rather it is to be understood by way of an intelligible emanation.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Gorman, "Christ as Composite According to Thomas," p. 147.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 147

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 147

¹¹⁴ Summa Theologiae, STh Ia, q. 27, a. 1.

Thus, procession in God will not be like local motion or like the cause proceeding to an external effect, but like the immanent procession of the internal word in the activity of understanding. As Hans Schwarz reflects on Aquinas' teaching on the Trinity, he says that "when Aquinas discusses the Trinity, he shows that Scripture talks about God as to signify procession, not in terms of bodily procession but of an intellectual one."¹¹⁵ Hence, in this way it is possible to see how there can be procession in God. Aquinas states that "procession" expresses something inherent in God Himself in a manner similar to the intelligible word that proceeds from the speaker yet remains in him. This inward relation of procession means that what proceeds in God is God as well, is the same substance. This literally applies to God's generation of his Word, or the Father's begetting of the Son.¹¹⁶ In God, the Father 'understands Himself' by a single eternal act and so generates an eternal Word - as a conception proceeding from his act of understanding - that expresses the Father.¹¹⁷ Aquinas suggests two senses of the term "generation" to understand the procession of the Word within God:

First, taken broadly, generation is common to all perishable things since it refers to the change from not existing to existing. Second, properly speaking, generation refers to living things and means that a living thing originates from a principle which is alive and conjoined to it – a process properly termed "birth". The proper concept of generation will only apply where the thing generated possesses a likeness to the originator, such as that which is specifically of the same nature as that from which it is generated. Hence, the procession of the Word in God is called "generation" and the Word itself is called "Son."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Hans Schwarz, *The Trinity- the Central Mystery of Christianity*, (Fortress Press Minneapolis, 2017), p. 83.

¹¹⁶ Najib George Awad, "*Persons in Relation- An Essay on the Trinity and Ontology*," (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), p. 177.

¹¹⁷ Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, p. 15.

¹¹⁸ *Summa Theologiae*, STh Ia, q. 27, a. 2.

At the relation in the Godhead, Aquinas resorts to the concept of “relation” for the Trinity in order to place emphasis on the unity and oneness by means of identifying the substance and existence of the “persons” in the Trinity. Aquinas’ definition of relation is as follows: “Relation itself must be founded in the origin of the person, that is, in an action giving rise to a procession.” Real relations are founded in the activity between the agent and the end; they have a concrete existence in the divine nature.¹¹⁹ This inward procession and its identity with God’s being indicate what Thomas says, that relations exist really in God.¹²⁰ When something proceeds from a principle of the same nature, both the one proceeding and the source of procession communicate in the same order, and they have real relations with each other. This we see in the procession of the Son from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, and so we say that these relations really exist in God.¹²¹ But relation in its own proper meaning signifies only what refers to another.¹²² Since the processions in God are within the same nature, the relations they entail are real and these relation’s reality lies in that they all proceed from and move toward the same principal substance.¹²³ Moreover, the concept of relation enables us to speak of both the divine essence in its simplicity as well as the persons in their uniqueness.¹²⁴ For Aquinas, everything which is not the divine essence is a creature. But relation really belongs to God.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Katy Leamy, *The Holy Trinity- Hans Urs Von Balthasar and His Sources* Eugene, (Oregon : Pickwick Publications, 2015), p. 58.

¹²⁰ Awad, *Persons in Relation- An Essay on the Trinity and Ontology*, p. 178.

¹²¹ *Summa Theologiae*, STh Ia, q. 28, a. 1.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Awad, *Persons in Relation- An Essay on the Trinity and Ontology*, p. 178.

¹²⁴ Leamy, *The Holy Trinity- Hans Urs Von Balthasar and His Sources*, p. 58- 59.

¹²⁵ See *Summa Theologiae*, STh Ia, q. 28, a. 2.

In order to grasp the point at issue here, Aquinas suggests that it is necessary to consider the matter from the point of view of the created and uncreated orders: in created things relations can be considered as accompaniments, as it were, signifying references superimposed. Still, considered in the category of accident, a relation is inherent in the subject in which it has accidental existence. On the other hand, in the uncreated order, whatever has an accidental existence in creatures has substantial existence when applied to God, for nothing in God is an accident since whatever is in God is his nature. While relation in created things exists as an accident in a subject, in God a real existing relation has the existence of the divine nature and is completely identical with it. When we think of a relation as a 'being to something' we indicate a bearing not on the nature but on an opposite term. Hence, a real relation in God is identical with his nature and differs only in our mind's understanding inasmuch as relation implies a reference to a correlative term which is not implied by the term "nature".

In God, relation and nature are existentially not two things but one and the same.¹²⁶ For Aquinas, all relations between the creature and God are real in the creature, but for God they represent only a relation in reason. Thus the human nature of Jesus has real relationship of belonging with respect to the Word, whereas in the Word there is a relationship of reason towards his humanity.¹²⁷ But how does it work in the case of the Incarnation? Thomas holds that the hypostatic union is a mixed relation and that the real relation establishing the union resides in the assumed humanity (a creature).¹²⁸ The union of humanity and divinity in Christ does not require Christ's divinity to bear a relation to the humanity, and divine impassibility is

¹²⁶ A. J. DiNoia, O.P., *"A Guide to Reading Aquinas on the Trinitarianism"*, p. 111.

¹²⁷ Ocáriz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, pp. 79.

¹²⁸ Michael Gorman, *"Christ as Composite According to Thomas,"* p. 148.

thus preserved. Since all the metaphysical equipment of the relation is on the side of the human nature, the divine Word in itself is not metaphysically affected by the fact of the Incarnation.¹²⁹

In the hypostatic union, the human nature receives, from the relation, the property of being related to the Word, while the Word itself receives nothing from anything; the first of these facts is sufficient for there being a union between them, and the second is sufficient for this union's not violating divine impassibility.¹³⁰ When the Incarnation takes place, change occurs on the side of the assumed nature, not on the side of the Word. There truly is, then, a change in relation between the Word and its humanity, but this is in such a way that the Word's immutability is not compromised. In the Incarnation, the real relation of the human nature to the Word is such as to constitute just one person, while the real relation of the creature to God in the normal case is not such as to constitute just one person.¹³¹ In his treatment of the Incarnation, Aquinas asks the question: whether the union between the Word and the assumed humanity is something created? He answers:

the union of which we are speaking is a relation which we consider between the Divine and the human nature, inasmuch as they come together in one Person of the Son of God. Every relation which we consider between God and the creature is really in the creature, by whose change the relation is brought into being; whereas it is not really in God, but only in our way of thinking, since it does not arise from any change in God. And hence we must say that the union of which we are speaking is not really in God, except only in our way of thinking; but in the human nature, which is a creature, it is really. Therefore we must say it is something created.¹³²

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 148.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.148.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 149.

¹³² Summa theologiae, ST. III, q. 2. a. 7. (Cf, Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p. 66).

Aquinas's idea is that the union, a relation accident, is a creature, because it exists not in the divine person but instead in humanity. When the union between the Word and humanity comes to be, all the mutating happens on the human side, and none of it on the divine side.¹³³

Aquinas insists that the Word, being the logical term of a mixed relation, does not change. Rather, Christ's human nature has a real relation to act between the Word and humanity whereby the union between the two occurs.¹³⁴ The Word, though "its own *esse personale*, which is its very act of being, relates humanity to itself. Still, in this act of relating, which is simply that of a logical term's relating a real term of itself, the Word undergoes no change. One might say, perhaps, that the Word does change - not absolutely, but only relatively, that is, relative to Christ's humanity, for now there is a new relation on the part of Christ's humanity to the pre-existing *esse personale* of the Word. That is to say, it is Christ's humanity that changes absolutely, in the same way in which an act of creation results in an absolute change of the creature from nonexistence to existence."¹³⁵ We can see this in an objection in ST.III, q. 16, a. 6 that Aquinas raises himself. This is the part in which Aquinas understands "God is man." Now if to be made man is to be changed. But God cannot be the subject of change, according to Malachi 3:6: "I am the Lord, and I change not." Hence this is false: "God was made man." Aquinas responds by saying that "to be man belongs to God by reason of the union, which is a relation. And hence to be man is newly predicated of God without any change in Him, by a change in the human nature, which is assumed to a

¹³³ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p. 66.

¹³⁴ Victor Salas, JR., "Thomas Aquinas on Christ's *Esse*: A Metaphysics of the Incarnation," the Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review, Vol. 70, Number 4, pp. 577-603, (October 2006), p. 598.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

Divine Person. And hence, when it is said, "God was made man," we understand no change on the part of God, but only on the part of the human nature."¹³⁶

Being, Person and Nature of Jesus Christ

Saint Thomas Aquinas' treatment of the doctrine of the Incarnation is metaphysical, and as such one can talk about the metaphysics of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is explained by Aquinas through the concept of union in one supposit, maintaining that the Incarnation took place in one supposit or hypostasis. The Church has affirmed that in Jesus there is one single human nature but not a human person. This immediately gives rise to the question: How is it that Jesus had a complete human nature (true man) but was not a human person? Or why being a true man doesn't require a human person?¹³⁷ The question has long engaged theologians seeking a coherent explanation of the mystery of the Incarnation.¹³⁸ Many different explanations have been put forward, with various philosophical and theological positions. In Scotus' view, the "theological dogma of the mystery of the Incarnate Word requires the belief that Christ is both God and man, possessed of a singular divine and a singular human nature. It also entails the further belief that the personhood of Christ is divine only. He is not a human person because the singular human nature of Christ does not lack anything positive that would be required for it to be a person, for the human nature assumed by Christ was a singular, not a common one. Since it exists in communion with the Word, it lacks the status of incommunicability, and hence cannot be a person."¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Summa theologiae, STh III, q. 16, a. 6, ad. 2.

¹³⁷ See, Ocáriz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 111.

¹³⁸ James B. Reichmann, *Aquinas, Scotus, and the Christological Mystery: Why Christ is Not a Human Person*, Thomist, (2007 Jul), Vol.71(3): pp.451-474, p. 454.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 454.

The Church, however, should follow the basic points in the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas, because he is the author who is the most clearly in line with the ordinary notions of person and nature used by the Church to define dogmatic truth concerning the mystery of Christ.¹⁴⁰ For Aquinas, every created thing is a metaphysical composition of essence (what it is) and existence (the act of being). Human nature requires body and soul, but it still needs an act of existence (esse) to exist. A person (hypostasis) is a complete substance subsisting of itself: an active subject. A person is a subsistence of a complete nature. Normally, every complete human nature is also a human person because it has a proportional act of being (esse) which makes it exist. But in the case of the Incarnation, the human nature of Jesus is perfect, but it does not constitute a human person because it does not exist by virtue of a proper and proportionate act of being of its own, but by virtue of the divine being of the Word.¹⁴¹ The Word gives existence to the human nature of Jesus; that the human nature that Christ assumed did not have its own esse.¹⁴² The Divine nature gives the act of being (esse) to the human nature, so that human nature belongs to the divine person. The human nature did not have or need its own existence/subsistence because he was already the possessor of existence. The human nature of Christ does not need to be a human person because it doesn't have its own act of being. "The human nature of Christ is complete and perfect in itself and yet it is not a human person; because the subsistence which constitutes it as a person is really distinct from the nature. In Jesus, it is the Word who causes the human nature to subsist in Himself".¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Ocariz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 111.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.114.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 115.

For Aquinas, “the singular human nature of Christ falls short of meeting the requirements of human personhood because it lacks that reality quintessential to a human person, that is, an *esse* limited by the very nature it activates. What is lacking, therefore, pertains neither to the order of essence nor accident, but to the highest order within existing things, namely, *esse*, the actuality of actualities.”¹⁴⁴ Also, for Aquinas, “the human nature of Christ lacks nothing at level of nature or accidental perfection, including individuation, that would prevent it from being a human person. Rather, what is lacking is its own human existential act, for the nature, though actual and singular, is not actualized by *esse* that is uniquely its own by reason of its being limited, and hence determined, by the nature it actualizes. Hence, Christ is not a human person, because the ultimate actualizing principle of His human nature is not unqualifiedly human but is, rather, unqualifiedly divine.”¹⁴⁵ By assuming an individual human nature into hypostatic union, the person of the Word became a person of human nature. What there is not in Christ is a simply or purely human person, Thomas affirms that there is no person part in addition to the person of the Word. By virtue of the Word’s assumption of an individual human nature into hypostatic union, the *esse* of the person of the Word became the *esse* of a human being.¹⁴⁶

When speaking of the Person of Christ, we cannot avoid referring to Trinitarian theology.¹⁴⁷ In the early Church, there were Christological heresies related to the errors in

¹⁴⁴ Reichmann, “*Aquinas, Scotus, and the Christological Mystery: Why Christ is Not a Human Person*,” p. 473.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 473.

¹⁴⁶ Barnes, *Thomas Aquinas’s Chalcedonian Christology and its Influence on Later Scholastics*, p. 216- 217.

¹⁴⁷ Ocariz, Seco, and Riestra, *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 117.

Trinitarian theology. These errors included Monarchianism, a Christological heresy preceding Nicea which rejected the distinction of persons in the Trinity. It also claimed that the Son and Holy Spirit are only expressions of the one God. Another error was Subordinationism, which held that the Son and the Holy Spirit are subordinate in nature to God the Father. It is an effort to explain the divinity of Christ without offending Monothelism. This is a Trinitarian error that results in a Christological error. It contradicts the faith of the Church and led to the heresy of Arianism. Arianism is a Trinitarian error that held that the Word is a creature, which results in a Christological error that Christ is not divine. This position holds that the Son was created out of nothing, outside of time. He was the first and most exalted of creatures. That the Father begot the Son implies that he was made. The Son is not self-existent, but owes his existence to the Father's will, not the Father's nature. The Son is not co-eternal with the Father. As a creature, he must have had a beginning. The Father created this Son outside of time, prior to creation. "There was a time when the Son was not". Also, the Son is not consubstantial with the Father (he doesn't have the same substance/being/nature with the Father). The Son is not a natural Son of God, but is God's adopted Son. If the Son is a creature, then he is imperfect and subject to change and even capable of sinning. The created Word took the place of the human soul in Christ. Hunger, thirst, suffering, and death are attributed to the Word because the Word is a creature. God foresaw that Christ would remain virtuous, so God bestowed on him the grace of impeccability (sinlessness). The Son is called God in name only, by participation in grace. These Christological heresies, preceding Nicea had been condemned by the Councils of the early Church. The divine Person of Jesus is identical with the divine nature and divine being, but he is really distinct from the person of the Father and the person of the Holy Spirit... In Christ the

Person is the subsistent relationship with the Father. Therefore, Jesus' human nature, because it does not subsist in itself but exists through and in the Being of the Son, has no relationship of its own with the Father, rather, the whole Christ (God and man) is the natural Son of the Father.¹⁴⁸

After considering Saint Thomas Aquinas' concept of the hypostatic union, the errors and heresies concerning Christ's divine and human nature and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church through various councils, we will now offer a summary of the hypostatic union: The two natures of Christ (human and divine) are united in the hypostasis (the person of the Word). The human nature gets its act of being from the divine hypostasis of the Word. It gets an immediate, direct infusion of uncreated act of being. This is why Christ's human nature is not a human person...it doesn't have its own independent existence...its own subsistence. The human nature doesn't have its own independent existence apart from the Word. There is no need for a human person nor any room for a human person because there's already a person that takes to Himself a human nature. This does not mean that the Divine Being enters into a composition of human nature. The two separate natures are united without confusion. The subsistence of the human nature is the subsistence of the Word. The subsistence is distinct from the human nature because it's a pre-existent subsistence. (This is why there is no change in God through the Incarnation). The union of the human and divine nature in Christ is an ontological union.

Chapter three

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 117

The Purpose of the Incarnation and Its Eschatological Significance: Christ's Restoration of Man's Imago Dei Is the Fulfillment of Man's Ultimate End.

What is the human being? This question is posed to every generation and to each individual human being, for in contrast to the animal, our life is not simply laid out for us in advance. What it means for us to be a human being is for each one of us a task and an appeal to our freedom.¹⁴⁹ The question about human being requires a fresh search into our human-beingness. We then decide who or what we want to be as humans. The bible account of creation means give some orientation in the mysterious region of human-beingness. It is meant to help us appreciate the human person as God's project and to help us formulate the new and creative response to all that God expects from each one of us. To answer the question of what is the human being in the imago Dei, Saint Thomas Aquinas's most systematic discussion of the issue occurs in question 93, in the first part of the *Summa Theologiae*, entitled: "*the End or Term of Production of Man*". The key text from the Scripture is Genesis 1: 26-28, where it is said, "God created humankind in his own image." Saint Aquinas follows Saint Augustine, in holding that there is an imperfect likeness of God in human being. Since the First-Born of creatures is the perfect Image of God, reflecting perfectly that of which He is the Image, and so He is said to be the "Image," and never "to the image." But man is said to be both "image" by reason of the likeness; and "to the image" by reason of the imperfect likeness. And since the perfect likeness to God cannot be except in an identical nature, the image of God exists in

¹⁴⁹ Pope Benedict XVI- Joseph Ratzinger, *In the beginning, A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, translated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P., (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990), p. 42.

His first-born Son; as the image of the king is in his son, who is of the same nature as himself: whereas it exists in man as in an alien nature, as the image of the king is in a silver coin.¹⁵⁰

It is important to note that being of man, who is made in the image and likeness of God and all his activity, always points toward his destiny. This is what Aquinas means when he says, in man's principles, "being, and their activities, always have goals."¹⁵¹ Putting this ways, man is originates from God and will move toward God. Aquinas begins his treatment of the rational creature's returning to God by looking at the ultimate human end: "the act of happiness." We shall first consider the ultimate end of human life; and those things by means of which man is able to advance toward this end, or to stray from it: for the end is the rule of whatever is ordained to the end. Since the ultimate end of man and other rational creatures attain to their last end by knowing and loving God as truth and goodness that human attains their ultimate end (God Himself).¹⁵² God created human to be like Him by sharing in His acts of knowing and loving His Divine. Being the "image of God" means that men and women not only 'exist', but are capable of a relationship with God. On the one hand, then, man is connected to his world ('out of the clay of the ground'), and on the other hand he is open ('image of God') to relating with God.¹⁵³ Being the image of God is the basis for a relationship of intimacy with God. It is important to point out that being the image of God does not only refer to the human soul, but also to the human body.¹⁵⁴ The Catechism of the Catholic Church states,

¹⁵⁰ Summa theologiae, STh, Ia, q. 93, a. 1, ad. 2.

¹⁵¹ John Rziha, *Perfecting human actions : St. Thomas Aquinas on human participation in eternal law*, (Washington, D.C. : Catholic University of America Press, 2009), p. 93.

¹⁵² Summa theologiae, STh I-II, q. 1, a. 8.

¹⁵³ Paul Haffner, *Mystery of Creation*, (Leominster : Gracewing, 2010) p. 116.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 116.

“Created in God's image and called to know and love him, the person who seeks God discovers certain ways of coming to know him. These are also called proofs for the existence of God, not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences, but rather in the sense of "converging and convincing arguments", which allow us to attain certainty about the truth. These "ways" of approaching God from creation have a twofold point of departure: the physical world, and the human person.¹⁵⁵

In the human being God enters into his creation; the human being is directly related to God.

Humans have a natural in, but on earth humans are happy by knowing and loving God through the natural means and, especially, through the supernatural means of faith and charity.¹⁵⁶ Also, because all things participate in God's truth and goodness, happiness includes knowing and loving created things, to the extent that they participate in God's esse. As Aquinas points out, this knowledge and love of things causes human actions since the intellect is inclined to contemplate the good it attains and the will seek to rest in that which is love.¹⁵⁷

If we understand the starting point of moral theology to be the human person as created, the created human nature, who individually is man; man as created has to discover the way to his end. Man is in a state of potency which always remains with him. This potency has to be brought to perfection; 'end' is more than 'goal' or 'objective' (something we possess) but is 'telos,' a perfection conducive to a certain nature. This perfection of potency has the character of transformation. We need a teleological moral theology, oriented toward an end without which the human person is not complete. Introduction to Moral Theology by Romanus Cessario. O.P., in chapter 5 mentions,

The Church announces not only a transformation of persons but the formation of a communion of persons. The theological virtues dispose Christians to live in a

¹⁵⁵ The Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 31

¹⁵⁶ Rziha, *Perfecting Human Action: St. Thomas Aquinas on Human participation in eternal law*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.96

relationship with the Trinity. Prayer disposes us to them but nothing we can do in fact acquires them. The gifts of the Holy Spirit round out the exercise of the moral and theological virtues. The magnitude of heavenly bliss explains the need for additional divine aids to reach it.¹⁵⁸

We have a supernatural end (beatitude) that cannot be known by our natural reason.

We have two ends but contemplation of God is the highest good. Perfection is both the perfection of human nature and the added good of beatitude which is not due to man. Man is set upon a series of ends so as to serve a highest end, both in nature and grace, which acts as an organizing principle of your actions. 'Beatitude' is a theological term for happiness. Man is set between God (beginning- Alpha) and God (end- Omega). God has given man stewardship over the moral life but not dominion over human life. *Veritatis Splendor* holds that any man who is seeking good, ultimately must turn towards God, the fullness of goodness. This goodness that attracts man has its source in God, and is God himself. Only God alone is worthy of being loved "with all one's heart, and with all one's soul, and with all one's mind" (Matthew 22:34-40). God is the source of man's happiness.¹⁵⁹ In order to attain this happy life, we have only to look to God who supplies what we need to know about the happy life. Christian believers receive sure knowledge about their destiny and how to reach to it from revealed truth. In this way, God's plan poses no threat to man's genuine freedom. Rather, the acceptance of God's plan is the only way to affirm perfect human freedom. Moreover, man has as the ultimate

¹⁵⁸ Romanus Cessario, O.P., *Introduction to Moral Theology*, (The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2001), p. 193-227.

¹⁵⁹ Vatican II, *Veritatis Splendor*, Pope Saint John Paul II, (6 August 1993), n.9, at: w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/.../hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html.

purpose of his life "for the praise of God's glory" (Ephesians 1: 12). Therefore, man must strive to make each of his actions reflect the splendor of that glory.¹⁶⁰

The moral life presents itself as the response due to the many gratuitous initiatives taken by God out of love for man.¹⁶¹ God, as objective beatitude, remains the End-Telos which regulates all moral activity; it also stands as the origin and as the beginning of every human action which, when freely ruled by grace, leads to the beatific fellowship of heaven.

Consequently, a human act is capable or not of being ordered to God and thus bring about the perfection of the person. An act is good if its object is in conformity with the good of the person according to the goods morally relevant for him. Thus, one can consider double teleology: An inner teleology of acting where an act is directed to promoting the true good of that particular person. The outer teleology where an act is capable of being ordered to its ultimate end, God. An act, therefore, attains its ultimate and decisive perfection when the will actually does order it to God through charity. As Saint Alphonsus Maria De Liguori said, "It is not enough to do good works; they need to be done well. For our works to be good and perfect, they must be done for the sole purpose of pleasing God".¹⁶²

The Effects of the Fall and Considering of How the Image of God in Man Alienated from God.

It is true that, since the fall, we find ourselves alienated from God. The root of sins extend back into the origin nothingness of the creature. Sin exists as the horrible tragedy of everything that is good in the creature. It corrupts the goodness of the movement of the agent, perverts his reason, deforms his natural desire for beatitude, and worst of all stands in

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., n. 10.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., n. 10.

¹⁶² Ibid, n. 78.

complete rebellion against the personal source of all that is of value to the sinner. As Deman says, it is said that sin offends God as our supreme good, and our ultimate end, as our benefactor, as the witness of our acts, as sovereign master, as our judge.¹⁶³

The mystery and malice of sin is nowhere more apparent than in the first sin of Adam. Out of His love for His creature, God had not hesitated to create him in a state of gratuitous justice, and enrich his nature with special benefits and aids that his way toward his ultimate end might be easy and attainable at minimum risk. These benefits were conferred on Adam by the love of God who wished to make his journey toward beatitude as easy as possible.¹⁶⁴ This grace made Adam deiform and constituted in the strict supernatural order, which was later to be fully perfected in the beatitude of the immediate vision of God. Yet despite his free elevation to a participation in the divine nature and so much an intimate union of justice and sanctity with God that he was the very temple of his creator.¹⁶⁵

The fall of our first parents is vividly described in the third chapter of the book Genesis. The serpent, here a biblical symbol for the devil, tempted the woman to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with the following persuasive words: 'No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil' (Gn 3:4-5) Eve then took some of the fruit of the tree and ate it. "She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. The eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked' (Gn 3: 6-7).¹⁶⁶ After the Fall, Adam fell

¹⁶³ Edmund J. Fitzpatrick, *The Sin of Adam in the Writing of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, (Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary Mundelein, Illinois, U.S.A, 1950), p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Haffner, *Mystery of Creation*, p. 176.

unworthy of being in the presence of God: 'I was afraid because I was naked and so I hid' (Gn 3:10).

The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden also symbolizes their interior separation from God.¹⁶⁷ The realization of their nakedness is a reminder of awakening within Adam and Eve of concupiscence after the Fall.¹⁶⁸ Original naked states of consciousness of man and woman in original innocence (Gn 2: 25) compared to that of (Gn 3:7) after the fall in which they realize they are naked. This realization is not a passing from "not knowing" to "knowing" but a change which emerges after eating from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gn: 3-11). Original nakedness signifies the original good of divine vision, through which man and woman see each other more fully and clearly. The shame that results carries with it a specific limitation of vision through the eyes in which this personal intimacy is "threatened" by such vision. The shame they felt before each other indicates a fear which is part of the essence of shame. In contrast to original nakedness, this fear of nakedness seems to express the awareness of being defenseless and insecure, the body is not subject to the spirit. Man of the body, but more precisely due to and by motivated by concupiscence. Saint Peter Lombard in his work of "The Sentences"- book 2, suggests, the original sin is called the incentive sin, namely concupiscence or the attraction to pleasure, which is called the law of the members, or the weakness of nature, or the tyrant who is in our members, or law of flesh- Hence Augustine in the book '*On the Baptism of Children*': "Concupiscence is in us, which must not be allowed to

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

reign, there are also its desires, which are actual concupiscence: there are the weapons of the devil and come from weakness of nature.¹⁶⁹

Adam in an act of extreme pride turned his back upon God, deliberately choosing to disobey his Lord, to set himself up as his own final of conduct and rebel against Him from Whom he knew he had freely received all and in whom alone he knew he could find happiness. Pope Benedict XVI says in his *'In the Beginning- A Catholic Understanding of the Story Creation and Fall'*, temptation does not begin with denial of God but rather a doubt in His covenant, about the community of faith, prayer, the commandments- all of which are the context for living God's covenant. By doubt the covenant of God, man makes the decision not accept the limitations of their existence; it is then that they decide not to be bound by the limitations imposed by good and evil.¹⁷⁰

The very heart of sin lies the human being's denial of their creatureliness, inasmuch as they refuse to accept the standards and the limitations that are implicit in it. They do not want to be creatures, do not want to be subject to a standard, and do not want to be dependent. They consider their dependence on God's creative love to be an imposition from without. But that is what slavery is. and from slavery one must free oneself. Human beings themselves want to be God. Sin is a rejection of relationality because it wants to make the human being a god. Sin is loss of relationship, disturbance of relationship, and therefore it is not restricted to the individual. When the network of human relationships is damaged from the very beginning,

¹⁶⁹ Peter Lombard, *the Sentences- book 2 on Creation*, translated by Giulio Silano, (Pim press, 2008), p.149.

¹⁷⁰ Ratzinger, *In the Beginning- A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, p. 66.

then every human being enters into a world that is marked by relational damage.¹⁷¹ This sin of Adam was the cause of his children's loss of the supernatural privileges and gift of original justice.¹⁷² Hence, as a result of the Fall, Adam and Eve lost the following gifts: Sanctifying grace, freedom from concupiscence, bodily immortality, freedom from suffering, the infused knowledge of certain natural and supernatural truth.¹⁷³

When Adam transgressed the commandment two things were lost: First, he lost the pure possession of his nature, so lovely, created according to the image and likeness of God. Second, he lost the very image itself.¹⁷⁴ The fallen person still bears the image of God, but an image severely marred. The human person has become a "mixed bag" of good and ill. As a result of the Fall, human beings have become unable to relate to God or other persons in a way that adequately meets vertical or horizontal needs.¹⁷⁵ As Pope Benedict XVI says, by doubt of God's covenant and not accepting the limitations as a creature, the sin of man is to destroy his relationship with God. Since the relationship with creation has been damaged, only the Creator himself can be our savior. We can be saved only when He from whom we have cut ourselves off takes the initiative with us and stretches out his hand to us. Only Being loved is Being saved, and only God's love can purify damaged human love and radically reestablish the network of relationship that have suffered from alienation.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁷² Fitzpatrick, *The Sin of Adam in the Writing of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, p.3.

¹⁷³ Haffner, *Mystery of Creation*, p. 180.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 183.

¹⁷⁵ Jeanne L. Jensma, *Kohut's Tragic Man and the Imago Dei: Human Relational Needs in Creation, the Fall, and Redemption*, *A Journal of Psychology and Theology* (1993) by Rosemead School of Psychology, Vol. 21, No. 4, 288-296, Biola University, 0091-6471/410-730), p. 289.

¹⁷⁶ Ratzinger, *In the Beginning- A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, p. 74.

As we talk about the moral theology, the human person as created to discover the way to his end. Even though man had sinned against God, God continued to love man. He wanted Adam and Eve and all their descendants to live in his friendship. After the Fall, God promised to send us a Redeemer, someone who would be able to reconcile us to God and restore to our soul the life of grace. God told the devil that this Redeemer would come from a woman, and: "I will put enmity (mutual hatred) between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel."¹⁷⁷ (Gen 3: 15). Christ came to make a new world. He came into the world to regenerate it in Himself, to make a new beginning, to be a new creation of God, to gather together in one, and recapitulate all things in Himself.¹⁷⁸ As we stated above, being an intelligent creature, man enjoys being as a human being and also enjoys being in the Kingdom of God, which is man's destination. The journey toward this goal is fulfilled through the Incarnation Word (Logos), the Perfect Image. N. W. Porteous observes, "Nothing could make clearer the tremendous impact of the revelation of God in Christ than the fact that it has almost completely obliterated the thought of man as being in the image of God and replaced it with the thought of Christ as being the Image of God."¹⁷⁹ The biblical narrative of the *imago Dei* that climaxes with the glorified new humanity sharing in the divine image contains another component as well. The new humanity already shares in the divine image through being "in Christ."¹⁸⁰ Saint Irenaeus perceived the biblical truth that it is first and foremost God the Son who is the perfect image and likeness of God the

¹⁷⁷ Basic Catholic Doctrine: Book2 Receiving Salvation, 1994- Conference of American Bishops.

¹⁷⁸ Haffner, *Mystery of Creation*, p. 180.

¹⁷⁹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Jesus As The Imago Dei Image-Of-God Christology And The Non-Linear Linearity Of Theology*, JETS 47/4 (December 2004) 617-28, p. 618.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

Father, and for us to be created in the image and likeness of God is be created in the image and likeness of the Son. The begetting of the eternal Son by the Father is the prototype and the archetype for the Father creating us through and in the likeness of his Son.¹⁸¹ The begetting of the eternal Son by the Father is the prototype and the archetype for the Father creating us through and in the likeness of his Son. So, if human being are created in the image of the Son through the creative activity of the same Son, then it is the Son to whom the Father will entrust the work of ensuring that human being attain the fullness and completion of that image and likeness."¹⁸² As the Son is the eternal incorruptible image of the Father, so those who are created in the Son's image must also assume divine incorruptibility."¹⁸³

St. Paul in his letter to Colossians 1:15-20 describes the work of Christ has important implications for the motif of creation and redemption.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross [through him], whether those on earth or those in heaven.¹⁸⁴ (Colossians 1:15-20)

Overall, vv. 15–20 forms the core of the primary theological message of the letter to the Colossians. The Colossians need to focus on the headship of Christ over Creation and the Church, that is, on Christ the Creator and ruler over all authorities, and on Christ the reconciler,

¹⁸¹ Thomas G. Weinandy, *Saint Irenaeus and the Imago Dei- the Importance of Being Human, Logos*: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture, (2003), Vol.6 (4), pp.15-34, p.19.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁸⁴ Donald, John J. Collins and Mary Ann Getty, *The Catholic Study Bible*, (New York: Oxford University press, 2006), Colossians 1:15-20.

incarnate, crucified and raised, and so recreating the world. Salvation for all is found in having this knowledge, and submitting to him, producing the obedience spoken throughout the letter. It can be clearly seen that just in the opening chapter of Colossians, Jesus alone is God and all of God's fullness dwells in Him. He is the Redeemer, He is sovereign, He is the creator, He is the sustainer of all things, He is the head of all things, He is the fullness of Deity, He is the peacemaker between God and man, and He is all in all. He is the procession of the Word occurring by the way of intellectual operation, He proceeds according to likeness-by the way of nature of Godhead. The key concepts in which Paul's Christology are formulated in this hymn are significant in various ways in the relationship between creation and redemption. Since Jesus may be described as "in the form of God", He is the Image of God, thus fulfilling man's destiny and making manifest in this world the glory of God. It is further important that the divine splendour was made manifest only in the deepest identification with man, for only by "taking the form of a servant" was Jesus "in the form of God". These two forms of Jesus' activity stand in sharp contrast to the grasping and self-assertiveness of the first Adam, who represents mankind as a whole. Thus Jesus became the one through whom God's redemptive purpose is accomplished within creation.¹⁸⁵

We now turn back to Saint Thomas and his doctrine of the redemption that is based on the relationship which the Incarnation establishes between Christ and men. For Aquinas, the love of God for human beings is unconditional and the Incarnation is essentially redemptive. Certainly, as Augustine had said, God could have saved us in a different way, since all things are

¹⁸⁵ John G. Gibbs, *The Relationship Between Creation and Redemption According to Phil II 5: 11: A journal of Catholic understand and culture, Novum Testamentum*, (1970), Vol.12(3), pp.270-283, p. 282.

subject to him; but no other way was more fitting for the healing of our wretchedness.¹⁸⁶ The only consideration of the Incarnation as necessary is based on the *hypothesis* that God chose to redeem man in the most perfect way. On the one hand, the Incarnation was a most efficacious help for man to attain beatitude because it helped to close the gap that existed between humanity and divinity. It aided man to know certain truths about God in a way that was intelligible for man's mode of knowing reality.¹⁸⁷ On the other hand, the Incarnation of the Word is ordered to full participation in the divinity which is the true happiness of man; St. Thomas (in III, q.1, a.2) cites a sermon attributed to St. Augustine: "God became man in order that man might become God."¹⁸⁸

St Thomas Aquinas considered humanity's sin as a violation of God's justice; therefore, punishment and chastisement must be done as a repayment. Aquinas therefore said that since everywhere in the sacred Scriptures the sin of the first man is assigned as the reason for the Incarnation, it is more in accordance with this to say that the work of the Incarnation was ordained by God as a remedy for sin; so that, had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been.¹⁸⁹ The harmonious relationship between God and humankind had been disrupted by sin, because sin has a certain character of infinity about it because of the infinity of the divine majesty. In order for human satisfaction to be on a level equivalent to sin, there has to

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 188 (Cf, St. Augustine, *De Trinit.*, XIII, 10, 13; PL, 42, 1024, to which St. Thomas refers in III, q. 24, a. 4.)

¹⁸⁷ Romanus Cessario, O.P, "*Christian Satisfaction in Aquinas*" (University press of America, Inc, 1982), p. 116-117.

¹⁸⁸ Louis Richard, *The mystery of Redemption*, trans from French by Joseph Horn, (Helicon Press, Inc, 1966), p.188. (Cf, Augustine: sermon C XXVIII).

¹⁸⁹ Summa theologiae, STh III, q. 1, a.1.

be an act of satisfaction of infinite efficacy.¹⁹⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas states as the reason for the fittingness of the Incarnation in view of the redemption:

Man cannot be sufficient for sin, both because the whole of human nature has been corrupted by sin, whereas the goodness of any person or persons could not be made up adequately for the harm done to the whole of the nature; and also because a sin committed against God has a kind of infinity from the infinity of the Divine majesty, because the greater the person we offend, the more grievous the offense. Hence for condign satisfaction it was necessary that the act of the one satisfying should have an infinite efficiency, as being of God and man.¹⁹¹

There was no way for the human race to correct the destroyed relationship. God had to take the initiative. The term that describes how human beings can be reconciled to God is atonement. Atonement refers to the forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The end effect of atonement is the reconciliation between God and his creation.

The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church states in *Gaudium et Spes* that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the new Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown.¹⁹² God's Power is made more manifest through the Incarnation. God took from our corrupt and defeated nature in order to defeat its conqueror.¹⁹³ His Passion causes salvation as a fully adequate satisfaction for man's injustice. Any action of

¹⁹⁰ Richard, *The mystery of Redemption*, p. 189.

¹⁹¹ Summa theologiae, STh III, q. 1, a. 1, ad. 2.

¹⁹² Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, Pope Paul VI (December 7, 1965), n. 22, at: [www.vatican.va › vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en](http://www.vatican.va/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en).

¹⁹³ Summa Theologiae, STh III, q. 4, a. 6.

Jesus could have been sufficient to redeem us since these actions have infinite value (Theandric action). Yet the Father willed that redemption would come about through the redemption of his son. Because his Passion was accepted with perfect love, it was more pleasing to the Father more than the sins of men were displeasing. In agreement with Aquinas, Scotus insisted that the Incarnation would have happened even if there were no fall. This would have been done to "crown" creation.

The Incarnation is the apex of creation and the fullest revelation of God's love for man. Nothing in creation possesses the capacity of itself to be assumed by God, so the assumption of human nature in the Incarnation is completely gratuitous and unmerited. What we have by nature is obediently potency: the ability to be assumed if God chooses to do it (it's passive to us). The assumption of human nature is appropriate for man in light of our need for salvation. It was the best way God could have saved man. As Saint Augustine said, God could have chosen to save mankind by someone not of the race of Adam, but he judged it more appropriate to conquer the enemy of the human race by a member of the conquered race. Since God chose to require satisfaction, the Incarnation becomes necessary in this sense that only God can pay our infinite debt. Such is the mystery of man, and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death become meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us. Christ has risen, destroying death by His death; He has lavished life upon us so that, as sons in the Son, we can cry out in the Spirit; Abba, Father.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ *Gaudium et Spes.*, n.22

In sum, an image originates from what it imagines and resembles the original in a way characteristic of its species. God created man in His image, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness' (Genesis 1:26). This image of God in man, of course, remains infinitely distant from the original, God. The image of God in man is an instrumental sign, a sign which points beyond itself towards God, and also a formal sign, reveals something about the original. Since the Trinitarian God is the agent of creation, then all creation bears in some way the image of God according to the nature of each creation. The image of God in man signifies both the divine nature of God and the divine Persons. The processions of the Word of God and Holy Spirit proceed by way of God's self-knowing and self-loving. In a similar fashion, the image of God in the human nature can be described in two ways: in our acts of self-knowledge and self-love and our acts of knowing and loving God. The *imago Dei* in man is after the pattern of the Logos (Word, Son) who is the exemplar and extrinsic cause (formal but not intrinsic cause). The *imago Dei* is found primarily in man's immaterial powers, i.e. the intellect and will. Bearing the divine image and likeness make man intimately related to God. Additionally, the power of intellect also motivates the human person to love God and other fellow human beings. Being an intelligent creature, man enjoys being as a human being and also enjoys being in the Kingdom of God, which is man's destination. The journey toward this goal is fulfilled through the Incarnation Word, the Perfect Image. The image of God, in man, is partially shared with this Perfect Image, the First-born, without whom man cannot possibly attain his destination. That Perfect Image is the Christ who redeems man from weakness (sins) his perfect likeness, so as to complete the journey toward human being's goal- Beatific Vision.

Conclusion

We have considered the basic points that Aquinas makes in his account of the Incarnation: that Christ is divine with all that that involves; that he is human, with all that that involves; that his human nature is united in person but not in nature; that neither is properly thought of as a part.¹⁹⁵ He cites the formula of the Council of Chalcedon: The Son of God appeared in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures not having been taken away by the union, St Thomas Aquinas reaffirms that the union could not have taken place in the nature of Christ, because this would make the union accidental rather than essential, and dissolves the absolute unity into relative unity. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son and Word of God. Therefore the union took place in the Person. The Word subsists in the human nature, receiving no addition or change. In our Lord Jesus Christ we acknowledge two natures and one hypostasis. The subsistence of the human nature is the subsistence of the Word. The subsistence is distinct from the human nature because it's a pre-existent subsistence. In Christ, the union of the divine and human nature is Hypostatic, that is, united in the Person of the Word. The acting subject of apostolic testimony is the One Lord Jesus Christ who is Begotten of the Father. Though the two natures remain unconfused in the union (Chalcedon), they belong to one and the same Lord. Christ as a Divine Person who has one substance and one act of existence (*esse*). And only as true God and true man in the unity of his Person is Christ the mediator of salvation.

The only consideration of the Incarnation as necessary is based on the hypothesis that God chose to redeem man in the most perfect way. On the one hand, the Incarnation was a

¹⁹⁵ Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, p. 52

most efficacious help for man to attain beatitude because it helped to close the gap that existed between humanity and divinity. It aided man to know certain truths about God in a way that was intelligible for man's mode of knowing reality. On the other hand, the Incarnation of the Word is ordered to full participation in the divinity which is the true happiness of man; St. Thomas (in III, q.1, a.2) cites a sermon attributed to St. Augustine: 'God became man in order that man might become God.'

The mystery of the Incarnation is a way of expressing God's gratuitous love for humanity. It is the great event that brings salvation to people. It is one of the unique events of God's saving work. On the other hand, the Incarnation is a humble journey in which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity abandons the glory of God, becomes mortal, enters and encapsulates human nature to live like mortals, except for sin. St. John the Evangelist faithfully portrayed God's love for humanity. He describes it as follows: 'In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent the only begotten Son into the world so that we might have life through him" (1 Jn 4, 9). Indeed, the Incarnation is the greatest manifestation of the love God has bestowed upon humanity. Since, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

In addition, in this greatest love expressed in the mystery of the Incarnation, the human being participates in the same human nature with Jesus. Therefore, the Incarnation is also the embodiment of the God of Love, because Christ is the gift of God to mankind - through Him - salvation is bestowed both individually and for all humanity. The greatest love that God has for man is to know God as Love through the Incarnation of the Word. It is by the Word of God made man that man can approach God to the greatest extent. Therefore, in Christ or in the

Incarnate Word, God reveals His gratuitous love to the fullest. That is, God's will and the way of salvation are completely free, especially that He is absolutely free in choosing the way to do it. To this point, St. Thomas affirms that the Incarnation of the Word is God's love for men, demonstrated to man in no way more effective than this: He willed to be united to man in person, for it is proper for the lover to be united to the beloved so far as possible. Therefore, it was necessary for man tending to perfect beatitude that God become man."¹⁹⁶

The image of the human being has been tarnished by sin. In other words, the dignity of the human person has lost his great dignity when Adam sinned. As *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican points out: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear."¹⁹⁷ The Word of God came into the world to restore the image of man. The dignity of the person or the mystery of man "is truly revealed only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word".¹⁹⁸ Man can only fulfill his life's destiny and reach the fullness in Christ: "For by His Incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin."¹⁹⁹ The image of God, in man, is partially shared with this Perfect Image, the First-born, without whom man

¹⁹⁶ *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, ch. 54.

¹⁹⁷ *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

cannot possibly attain his destination. That Perfect Image is the Christ who redeems man from weakness (sins), his perfect likeness, so as to complete the journey toward human being's goal - the Beatific Vision. "It was, then, most suitable for God to assume human nature to stir up man's hope for beatitude. Hence, after the Incarnation of Christ, men began the more to aspire after heavenly beatitude; as He Himself says: "I have come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).²⁰⁰ Therefore, the Incarnate Word made man lift himself into sharing in the divine nature of God and allowing them to live in an intimate relationship with God Father through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Bibliography

Ocáriz, Fernando, Lucas F. Mateo Seco và José Antonio Riestra. *The Mystery of Jesus Christ: A Christology and Soteriology Textbook*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994.

Kasper, Walter. *Jesus the Christ*. Translated by V. Green. Pbk ed. London ; New York : T & T Clark International, 1977.

Reichmann, James B. "Aquinas, Scotus, and the Christological Mystery: *Why Christ is Not a Human Person*." *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, Volume 71, Number 3, July 2007, pp. 451-474. The Catholic University of America Press, 2007.

Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI). *Introduction to Christianity*, trans by J.R. Foster and Michael J. Miller with a new Preface. Ignatius Press, 2004.

²⁰⁰ *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, ch. 54.

Keating, Daniel A. *“Exegesis And Christology in Thomas Aquinas.”* Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas: Hermeneutical Tools, Theological Questions and New Perspectives. Edited by Piotr Roszak and Jürgen Vijgen. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2015.

White, Thomas Joseph, OP. *The Incarnation of the Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology.* Washington, D.C. : Catholic University of America Press, 2015.

Gorman, Michael. *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Vatican Council II. *“Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Dei Verbum.”* Pope Paul VI. Accessed November 18, 1965. [www.vatican.va › documents › vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en](http://www.vatican.va/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en).

George, Samuel. *“the Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ in the Writing of Thomas Aquinas: An Enquiry.”* A doctoral Student in the department of Christian Theology at United Theological College, Bangalore. Theological Forum Bangalore Theological Forum, XL, n. 1(June 2008). ISSN: 0253-9365.

Wawrykow, Joseph P. *“Christology of Thomas Aquinas in its Scholastic Context.”* Book chapter 15. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Bawulski, Shawn and Stephen R. Holmes. *“Christian Theology: Classics.”* Taylor and Francis Group, 2014.

Narcisse, Gilbert, O.P. *“Christ According to Saint Thomas.”* Nova et Vetera, English Edition of International Theological Journal. Vol. 8, No.4 (2010): 813-826.

Legge, Dominic, O.P. *The Trinitarian of Christology of St Thomas Aquinas.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Ryan, Robin CP. *“God and the Mystery of Human Suffering: A Theological Conversation Across the Ages.”* Paulist Press New York/Mahwah, NJ, 2013.

Denzinger Heinrich, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum Latin-* English edited by Peter Hunermann, 43rd edition. Ignatius Press San Francisco, 2012.

Barnes, Corey L., *“Thomas Aquinas’s Chalcedonian Christology and its Influence on Later Scholastics.”* The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review, Volume 78, Number 2, (April 2014): 189-217.

Tapia, Ralph J. *The Theology of Christ: Commentary Reading in Christology.* New York: Bruce, 1971.

Zamoyta Vincent, Ph.D. *“Theology of Christ: Sources.”* The Bruce publishing Company/Milwaukee, 1967.

Barnes, Corey L. *Christ’s Two Wills in Scholastic Thought: The Christology of Aquinas and Its Historical Contexts.* Toronto: Pontifical Institute Of Mediaeval Studies, 2012.

Gorman, Michael, *“Christ as composite According to Aquinas.”* Traditio, Vol. 55, p. 143-157. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Cross, Richard. *Aquinas on nature, hypostatic, and the metaphysics of the incarnation.* Thomist: a Speculative Quarterly Review. Apr 1, 1996: 60, 2. ProQuest pp. 171-202.

Cross, Richard, *“Aquinas on nature, hypostatic, and the metaphysics of the incarnation.”* Thomist, 1996 Apr, Vol.60(2): 171-202.

Cessario, Romanus, O.P. *“The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas.* Petersham, MA : St. Bede's Publications, 1990.

Schwarz, Hans, *The Trinity- the Central Mystery of Christianity*. Fortress Press Minneapolis, 2017.

Awad, Najib George, *Persons in Relation- An Essay on the Trinity and Ontology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.

Leamy, Katy, *The Holy Trinity- Hans Urs Von Balthasar and His Sources* Eugene. Oregon : Pickwick Publications, 2015.

Salas, Victor, JR. "Thomas Aquinas on Christ's Esse: A Metaphysics of the Incarnation." *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, Vol. 70. Number 4, pp.577-603. October 2006.

Reichmann, James B. *Aquinas, Scotus, and the Christological Mystery: Why Christ is Not a Human Person*. *The Thomist*, (2007 Jul), Vol.71(3), pp.451-474.

Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *In the beginning, A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, translated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990.

Rziha, John, *Perfecting human actions : St. Thomas Aquinas on human participation in eternal law*. Washington, D.C. : Catholic University of America Press, 2009.

Haffner, Paul, *Mystery of Creation*. Leominster : Gracewing, 2010.

Cessario, Romanus, O.P. *Introduction to Moral Theology*. The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2001.

Fitzpatrick, Edmund J., *The Sin of Adam in the Writing of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary Mundelein, Illinois, U.S.A, 1950.

Lombard, Peter, *the Sentences- book 2: on Creation*, translated by Giulio Silano. Pim press, 2008.

Jensma, Jeanne L., "Kohut's Tragic Man and the Imago Dei: Human Relational Needs in Creation, the Fall, and Redemption." *A Journal of Psychology and Theology* (1993) by Rosemead School of Psychology. Vol. 21, No. 4, 288-296. Biola University, 0091-6471/410-730.

Grenz, Stanley J. "Jesus As The Imago Dei Image-Of-God Christology And The Non-Linear Linearity Of Theology." *JETS* 47/4. (December 2004): 617-28.

Weinandy, Thomas G., "Saint Irenaeus and the Imago Dei- the Importance of Being Human, Logos." *A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, (2003): pp. 15-34, Vol.6 (4).

Gibbs, John G., "The Relationship Between Creation and Redemption According to Phil II 5: 11:" *A journal of Catholic understand and culture, Novum Testamentum*, (1970): pp.270-283 Vol.12(3).

Cessario, Romanus, O.P. *Christian Satisfaction in Aquinas*. University press of America, Inc, 1982.

Richard, Louis. *The mystery of Redemption*. Trans from French by Joseph Horn. Helicon Press, Inc, 1966.

Vatican II. "Gaudium et Spes." Pope Paul VI. (December 7, 1965). At: www.vatican.va › vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.

The Summa Theologiæ of St. Thomas Aquinas. Second and Revised Edition, 1920. Literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Online Edition Copyright © 2017 by Kevin Knight. At: www.newadvent.org › summa

John, Donald, J. Collins and Mary Ann Getty. *The Catholic Study Bible*. New York: OxfordUniversity press, 2006.