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UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

*Conditione tantum seu statu: The Divine Indwelling as a Foretaste of Heavenly Beatitude*

A THESIS

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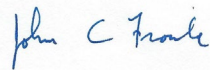
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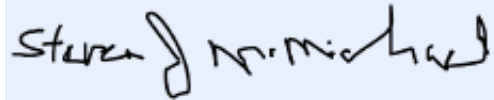
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This thesis by Nicholas P. Smith fulfills the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts degree in Theology approved by John Froula, Ph.D. as Thesis Advisor, and by Fr. Steven McMichael and by Christian D. Washburn, Ph.D. as Readers.



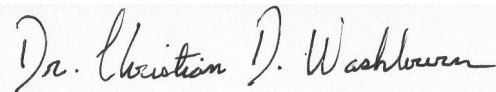
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Rev. Nicholas P. Smith  
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*Solemnity of the Assumption  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

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## Introduction

Through his 1897 encyclical on the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup>, Pope Leo XIII sought to draw the Church's attention to the nature and work of perhaps the most mysterious person of the Blessed Trinity. Promised to the apostles and to the world during the Last Supper discourses, the Holy Spirit occupies a place in the Church and in the Christian life that is essential and irreplaceable, and yet His power and work often go unnoticed because they are unseen. The Holy Spirit never speaks on His own; He is sent from God not to speak of Himself, but to reveal God and especially to reveal Christ to the world.<sup>2</sup> He does this in a visible way through the Church, which was born of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He adorns the Church with manifold gifts and graces that enable her to continue the work of Christ's redemption in space and time.

The Holy Spirit is not only active in the Church as a corporate body. The action of the Spirit extends in a "most intimate and peculiar" way<sup>3</sup> to the individual souls of the just—those members of the Church living in grace. Concerning His activity in these souls, Leo XIII states that "the manner and extent of the action of the Holy Ghost in individual souls is no less wonderful, although somewhat more difficult to understand, inasmuch as it is entirely invisible."<sup>4</sup> Through the gift of the Holy Spirit given at baptism, the members of the Church are given the grace of becoming adopted sons of God. They become partakers of the divine nature, raised to the supernatural life as coheirs of the heavenly kingdom with Christ. The love of God is poured out into the hearts of the just at the moment of justification (cf. Rom 5:5). Not only this created supernatural love but the Giver of this great gift Himself also comes to dwell in the

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical on the Holy Spirit *Divinum Illud Munus* (9 May 1897).

<sup>2</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 687.

<sup>3</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.

<sup>4</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §7.

soul of the just. It is characteristic of love to give gifts to the beloved; yet the first gift of love is love itself.<sup>5</sup> The Holy Spirit is thus properly called the Gift of God Most High<sup>6</sup> as Love proceeding from union of the Father and the Son. It belongs to His very Person to be Love. He proceeds from God as the supreme gift to the Church and to individual souls in such a way that He can even be called, “Person-Gift.”<sup>7</sup> He personally gives Himself to souls in order to lead them to Trinitarian communion with the Father and the Son. Having been adorned with the created supernatural gifts of justification and sanctifying grace, the soul thus becomes a fitting temple for the Spirit of God who is sent to unite us to God in a bond of love.

This doctrine of the Catholic faith, that the Holy Spirit—and indeed all three persons of the Most Blessed Trinity<sup>8</sup>—comes to dwell in the souls of the just is a sublime truth which has vast implications not only for theology but for the practical living of the Christian life unto

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<sup>5</sup> Luis Martinez, *The Sanctifier* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2003), 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> “Augustine says (*De Trin.* iv, 20): *As ‘to be born’ is, for the Son, to be from the Father, so, for the Holy Spirit, ‘to be the Gift of God’ is to proceed from Father and Son.* But the Holy Spirit receives His proper name from the fact that He proceeds from the Father and Son. Therefore Gift is the proper name of the Holy Spirit.” *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 38, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P., ed. Aquinas Institute, 2020. <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.I>.

“For [the Holy Spirit] not only brings to us His divine gifts, but is the Author of them and is Himself the supreme Gift, who, proceeding from the mutual love of the Father and the Son, is justly believed to be and is called ‘Gift of God Most High.’” *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.

<sup>7</sup> “In his intimate life, God ‘is love,’ [Cf. 1 Jn 4:8, 16] the essential love shared by the three divine Persons: personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Therefore, he ‘searches even the depths of God,’ [Cf. 1 Cor 2:10] as uncreated Love-Gift. It can be said that in the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine Persons and that through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is the personal expression of this self-giving, of this being-love [Cf. *Summa theologiae*, I, qq. 37-38]. He is Person-Love. He is Person-Gift. Here we have an inexhaustible treasure of the reality and an inexpressible deepening of the concept of person in God, which only divine Revelation makes known to us.” Pope John Paul II, Encyclical on the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World *Dominum et Vivificantem* (18 May 1986), §10.

<sup>8</sup> The appropriation of the work of the divine indwelling to the Holy Spirit is well-established in the theological tradition. For the purposes of this paper, I will assume that this appropriation is aptly done on the basis of the Holy Spirit’s property of proceeding from the Father and the Son as from one principle. Throughout the paper, I will use “divine indwelling,” “indwelling of the Holy Spirit,” “indwelling of the Trinity,” and other like phrases to designate the same work, which always involves all three Trinitarian Persons. Likewise, where I predicate the action of indwelling, justification, sanctification, etc. to the Holy Spirit, this in no way excludes the other Divine Persons from the action, for all actions of the Divine Persons *ad extra* are actions of the entire Trinity. For an account of Trinitarian appropriations in theology as well as the Spirit’s role of introducing the believer into communion with the Trinity, see Gilles Emery, O.P., *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*, trans. Matthew Levering (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 164-168.

eternal life. Through the divine indwelling, man can truly be said to be a friend of God who lives within Him in a substantial, special, and personal way. Leo XIII offers a brief yet provoking treatment of the profundity of this mystery, which he reminds the faithful can be attributed to the whole Trinity and to the Holy Spirit by appropriation:

Moreover, God by grace resides in the just soul as in a temple, in a most intimate and peculiar manner. From this proceeds that union of affection by which the soul adheres most closely to God, more so than the friend is united to his most loving and beloved friend, and enjoys God in all fullness and sweetness. Now this wonderful union, which is properly called ‘indwelling,’ differing only in degree or state [*conditione tantum seu statu*] from that which God beatifies the saints in heaven, although it is most certainly produced by the presence of the whole Blessed Trinity...nevertheless is attributed in a particular manner to the Holy Ghost.<sup>9</sup>

Leo stays well within the tradition on this teaching of the divine indwelling, but his words are a reminder of the great dignity and calling of the soul in grace who possesses the Trinity dwelling within him. This union, this friendship the soul experiences with God differs “only in degree or state” from the beatitude the saints experience in heaven. While there is certainly an incompleteness to man’s union with God in the wayfaring state, there is also a way in which the soul tastes that heavenly beatitude *already* in this life by the divine indwelling.

It is the project of the following chapters to attempt to explain and defend Leo XIII’s statement above, namely that the soul’s union with God via indwelling here on earth differs *conditione tantum seu statu* from the soul’s union with God in heaven. The Latin terms used to draw the comparison between the divine indwelling and the soul’s state in beatitude already gives a hint as to the truly exalted status of the soul in grace. The word *conditione* is translated above as “degree.” This could also be translated as “condition.” Furthermore, Leo’s use of the word *statu*, translated here as “state,” could also be translated as “position,” “status,” or even

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<sup>9</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.

“appearance.” Thus, in the Latin, what becomes clear is that only the earthly condition or position of the just soul is what separates it from heavenly beatitude. The just soul already anticipates its heavenly reward by its communion with the indwelling Trinity in the earthly state. He is only separated from his final end by his “position” as a *viator*, an earthly pilgrim on his way to his eternal destiny. In a sense, death is the only thing that keeps him from being a *comprehensor*, that is attaining the goal of his heavenly calling.

In defending Leo XIII’s profound statement on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, I hope to uncover the sublimity of this doctrine, so often merely presumed or even forgotten in theological and pastoral work, as well as the practical implications for the spiritual life that come about as a result of possessing God within our souls in this life, albeit in an incomplete manner compared to the blessed souls in heaven. Because of the Trinity’s unique presence in the souls of the just, the veil that separates time and eternity is shown to be quite thin. In the divine plan for salvation, God allows us to become His friends, a kind of coequal, in *this life*. This friendship will then be deepened in the unmediated vision of God in the heavenly kingdom. Thus, what the blessed soul experiences between this life and the next is not so much a new kind of beatitude but the completion of that which had begun on earth in a mediated way. This doctrine thus compels Christians to begin to seek the things of heaven *now*, not to wait for some alternate reality once this life is over.

In order to properly answer the question posed by this paper, whether indeed the union of the souls of the just with God here on earth differs only in degree or state from that union which God beatifies the saints in heaven, I will first establish the *fact* of the divine indwelling from Revelation and Tradition. Next, I will proceed to a discussion of *how* it is that the Trinity dwells in the souls of the just, that is to say, the manner in which this union takes place. This is,



admittedly, a great mystery to a large extent, but its answer has profound implications for how the soul is able to know and love God supernaturally even in its earthly life. Third, I will draw a comparison between the state of the soul in grace (that is, the just soul here on earth) and the state of the soul in beatitude with respect to how the soul knows and loves God. This will be a pivotal chapter for answering the question at hand regarding the question of “only in degree or state.” While there are admittedly many differences between earthly life and eternal life in heaven, this third chapter will seek to also examine whether there are *similarities* between the two states. In this way, it will be seen just how great is the union with God that the soul in grace experiences on this side of eternity. Finally, I will conclude with a chapter on the practical implications of the doctrine of the divine indwelling for the Christian life. These consequences offer a glimpse into the sense of urgency for eternal life with which the Christian soul is called to live. Like all dogma and doctrine, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is no esoteric consideration of truths beyond human comprehension. Though it remains a deep mystery, it ultimately stands as a reminder of God’s loving pursuit of all persons and a prompt for our loving response as His faithful children.

## Chapter I: The Fact of the Divine Indwelling

The fact of the divine indwelling has never been seriously contested in the history of the Church or in the theological tradition.<sup>1</sup> That the Holy Spirit comes to dwell personally in the souls of the just is firmly attested to by Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, Magisterial documents, and even the Church's liturgy. While this fact is perhaps taken for granted in the work of theology, it is nevertheless important to ground our current theological project in the data of Scripture and Tradition.

Notably, the presence of the Holy Spirit—along with the other two Divine Persons—is distinguished from the created gifts that are infused in the soul in justification. God not only floods the soul with gifts of grace; He comes to dwell in the soul in a substantial<sup>2</sup> and personal way. In this way, He establishes a loving friendship with the souls whom He is pleased to inhabit, since He both possesses the soul and the soul, in its own way, possesses Him. This is a friendship, writes Leo XIII, “by which the soul adheres most closely to God, more so than the friend is united to his most loving and beloved friend.”<sup>3</sup> In the following consideration of the data of Divine Revelation, Tradition, and theology, the fact of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in the just soul will become clear. More than this, however, the indwelling is no mere static reality; the

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<sup>1</sup> Severino Gonzalez Rivas, S.J. writes that “the fact of some indwelling is a truth of *divine and Catholic faith*.” Severino Gonzalez Rivas, S.J., *On Grace, On the Infused Virtues*, volume IIIB of *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, revised by Joseph A. de Aldama, S.J., trans. Kenneth Baker, S.J. (Ramsey, NJ: Keep the Faith Publications, 2014), 137. Ludwig Ott's *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* adds the note “*Sent. certa*” to the proposition, “Sanctifying grace makes the just man a Temple of the Holy Spirit.” Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch, fully revised and updated by Robert Fastiggi, Ph.D. (Baronius Press, 2018), 278. Theological opinions differ, however, concerning the *manner* of the indwelling, as will be seen later.

<sup>2</sup> In one place, Rivas goes so far as to use the word “physical” to describe the indwelling presence of the Divine Persons in the soul. Likely this is meant to ward off any notion that the union between God and the soul is merely moral and not the actual and personal indwelling of God. For the sake of clarity, however, the word “substantial” will be used throughout this paper. See Rivas, *On Grace, On the Infused Virtues*, 139.

<sup>3</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.

Spirit comes to dwell in the soul for the sake of Trinitarian communion and friendship even on this side of eternity.

### **The Divine Indwelling in Sacred Scripture**

Beginning in the Old Testament, the closeness of God to the people of Israel is revealed in quite intimate terms.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the presence of God's Spirit in the just men of the Old Testament foreshadowed the Spirit's mission of indwelling in the souls of the just.<sup>5</sup> On the eve of the Lord's Passion, however, we learn explicitly of the Father's plan to send His Spirit into the world in an intimate and enduring manner: "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and *will be in you*" (Jn 14:16-17 RSV, emphasis added).<sup>6</sup> Christ confirms this word a few verses later when He promises that both He and His Father will come to dwell personally with those who love Him: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (Jn 14:23). While the Spirit certainly came upon certain individuals in the Old Testament, as attested to by the scriptures themselves, it is clear that Christ's Paschal Mystery inaugurates something new. As the Last Supper discourse shows, the Trinitarian nature of the indwelling is revealed even before the outpouring of the Spirit at

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<sup>4</sup> For an account of the unfolding of the mystery of divine indwelling throughout the biblical history, see Thomas Dubay, S.M., "The Indwelling of Divine Love: The Revelation of God's Abiding Presence in the Human Heart," in *Letter and Spirit*, vol. 4 (2008): 167-188.

<sup>5</sup> Among the many examples of men in the Old Testament filled with the Holy Spirit are: Moses (Ex 33:7-19), Joshua (Nm 27:18), Othniel (Jdg 3:9-10), David (1 Sam 16:13-14), and Isaiah (Is 59:21). Moses is perhaps the greatest example of the foreshadowing of the divine indwelling in the Old Testament. Scripture says that Moses spoke with God "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Ex 33:11). Furthermore, God accedes to Moses' prayerful request to go with the Israelite people on their journey from Sinai and tells Moses, "[Y]ou have found favor with me *and you are my intimate friend*" (Ex 33:17, emphasis added). Translation of Ex 33:17 comes from Dubay's article. See Dubay, "The Indwelling of Divine Love," 173.

<sup>6</sup> All scripture quotations come from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Pentecost. All three Persons come to make their home in the souls of the just, for They are inseparable from one another in love which is their very essence.

St. Paul consistently sheds light on the doctrine of the indwelling Spirit in his pastoral letters. In the fifth chapter of the letter to the Romans, Paul writes that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom 5:5). This is an effect of justification by faith, which unites the believer to Christ along with hope and love. Later in the same letter, Paul writes that the indwelling of the Spirit in the soul is a condition of living a life “in the Spirit,” (Rom 8:9) a true spiritual life that is not of the flesh but of God. The Spirit Himself bears witness to the just soul’s adoption as a son or daughter of God by praying in us to the Father (cf. Rom 8:15-16). His personal agency in making us live a spiritual life is a testimony to His actual (and not just virtual) presence in the souls of the just. The Spirit comes personally only to those who have become children of God—this personal presence is to be distinguished from God’s presence in all things by power, presence, and essence.<sup>7</sup> The biblical data makes clear that God’s Spirit does not belong to just anyone but is given to those who have become partakers of the divine nature. Paul touches on this truth in his letter to the Galatians: “And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Gal 4:6). It is the Spirit who brings us into communion with God the Father through the Son. Without the Spirit’s presence in us, we have no claim to adoptive sonship, no claim to call God, “Father,” in the order of grace. This passage from St. Paul in Galatians also reveals the Spirit’s joint mission with the Son in revealing the Father. The Spirit does not speak of Himself

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 8, a. 3; I, q. 43, a. 3, in *Summa theologiae*, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P., ed. Aquinas Institute (2020), <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.I>. God is present in this way to all of creation, without consideration of supernatural grace. Francis Cunningham refers to this presence as God’s presence of *immensity* or His *common* presence. As will become clear, God’s Triune presence in the human soul is distinct from this ordinary way of being present in all things. See Francis L.B. Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity: A Historico-Doctrinal Study of the Theory of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Dubuque: The Priory Press, 1955).

when He is poured into our hearts; rather, He only speaks to reveal the Father and the Son to us (cf. Jn 16:13).<sup>8</sup> It is through His presence in us, along with His inspirations and prayer in and through us that we are able to know the Father as our Father; through the Spirit we come to know ourselves as sons (and daughters) in the Son.

Paul develops this doctrine of the indwelling Spirit by comparing the just soul to a temple. In the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul is exhorting his audience to put away artificial divisions amongst themselves, to not seek worldly wisdom, and to cease their immoral behaviors. As part of his fervent plea, he writes, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are” (1 Cor 3:16-17). God’s temple is destroyed and undermined by immorality and division; thus, human persons who live this way become a counter-sign to their Spirit-infused dignity as a temple of God. Paul strengthens his claim later in the same letter when he writes that those who possess the Spirit within them no longer belong to themselves: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own...So glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20). The justified soul is thus consecrated for a sacred purpose, to glorify God.<sup>9</sup> Just as a temple is designated for a sacred rites and requires a certain kind of behavior within its premises, so the one with the Spirit dwelling in him is deputed for spiritual worship and upright conduct. This fact of the divine indwelling is no mere static reality; the revelation of the Spirit in the souls of the just makes practical demands on the life of the justified person.

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<sup>8</sup> See CCC, 687.

<sup>9</sup> See Dubay, “The Indwelling of Divine Love,” 172-175. Here, Dubay writes of how God reveals His closeness to Israel through the Temple. He requires purity of His ministers. He is said to be close to those who love Him and worship Him rightly, while He is said to be far from the wicked.

The indwelling of the Triune God is further confirmed in the first letter of St. John. Writing of the need to keep God's commandments, John notes that those who keep God's commandments not only please God but *abide* in Him: "All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, *by the Spirit which he has given us*" (1 Jn 3:24, emphasis added). The Spirit serves as the evidence, the proof that the soul abides in God. While His mission of indwelling is invisible, it is revealed clearly by Christ and His presence bears fruit in visible ways, among them the keeping of the commandments and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the center of Christian morality is not to be reduced to the mere keeping of a set of precepts. The center of Christian morality is the law of charity, the keeping of which is the supreme sign of God's presence in man. "So we know and believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16). The whole moral law, for the Christian, begins from and returns to this fundamental truth: that the Spirit of God dwells in us. St. Thomas writes of this in the *Secunda Pars* of his *Summa Theologiae* in the section on the New Law of the Gospel. This new "law" is nothing other than the grace of the Holy Spirit given to us through faith in Christ.<sup>10</sup> The Holy Spirit Himself gives us this grace to know and love God in a supernatural way, in a way beyond our natural capacities were we left without grace. The Holy Spirit is rightly named as the one who perfects us in love of God because He is Love in His very Person, he being the substantial Love proceeding from the Father and the Son as their principle of unity. The moral life of the Christian is thus primarily a life of love, that is to say a life of charity. It is a life that is inspired and directed by the Spirit of God who dwells within us, working within us not only to keep God's commandments but also to pursue perfect union with God. The Sermon on the Mount in

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<sup>10</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 106, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

Matthew's gospel presents the portrait of perfection as legislated by Christ, the new Moses.<sup>11</sup>

Union with God is now a matter of *interior* life—communion with God, the life of grace, and the theological and supernatural infused virtues—as well as upright exterior conduct.<sup>12</sup> For it is the perfection of the interior life of the soul that we will experience in heaven once the veil of our flesh is removed. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit gives us a foretaste—albeit imperfect—of that union with God which we will one day experience fully in the beatific vision.<sup>13</sup>

That the Holy Spirit dwelling in the soul gives a taste of final happiness with God forever in heaven is further confirmed in the New Testament by Paul's designation of the Spirit as a "seal" or "pledge" of eternal salvation. In the opening chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, after his Christological hymn in verses 3-10, Paul writes to his audience that they have been sealed in the life of Christ "with the promised Holy Spirit" (Eph 1:13). This seal of the Spirit not only marks the Christian as belonging to Christ, but it is a guarantee that we already possess Christ, albeit in an imperfect and inchoate way.<sup>14</sup> The seal of the Spirit also includes the personal presence of the Spirit, who St. Paul writes is the "guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" (Eph 1:14). Thus the life lived in the Holy Spirit is by no means an alternate reality from the life experienced by the blessed in heaven. Rather, the seal of the Spirit is preparatory for the perfect possession of God which the blessed experience in heaven.

### **The Divine Indwelling in the Fathers**

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<sup>11</sup> For a more complete account of Christ as the new Moses in the Sermon on the Mount, see Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (New York: Image, 2007), 64-99.

<sup>12</sup> For an article that explains this reality well from the Thomistic perspective, see Servais Pinckaers, O.P. "Aquinas and Agency: Beyond Autonomy and Heteronomy?" in *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, eds. John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 167-184.

<sup>13</sup> Bede Jarrett, *He Dwells in Your Soul: Encountering the Living God Within You*, (Manchester: Sophia Institute Press, 1998), 29-32.

<sup>14</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 37.

The Fathers of the Church received the scriptural evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and bear witness to it themselves in their own writings. It is not the purpose of this paper to investigate deeply or make an exegesis of the patristic sources on this topic. It will suffice to name and cite a few of the Fathers who contribute to the tradition of this doctrine. This will by no means be an exhaustive list. In every case cited, however, the Fathers show themselves clearly to be heirs of the scriptural tradition that has gone before them.

Ignatius of Antioch (c. 110 AD), a man of great pastoral sensitivity, takes for granted the truth of the New Testament claims of the divine indwelling. He calls on those to whom he writes to recall their own status as a temple of God and their great dignity and responsibility in bearing God within them. In his letter to the Philadelphians, Ignatius writes, “[K]eep your bodies as if they were God’s temple,”<sup>15</sup> echoing St. Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians. In another letter, this time to the Ephesians, he writes, “Let us, then, do everything as if he were dwelling in us. Thus we shall be his temples and he will be within us as our God—as he actually is.”<sup>16</sup> Ignatius clearly reflects the biblical tradition in his exhortations to these Christians to live out their unity with the Spirit in a worthy manner. Indeed, this indwelling of God in the soul provides the practical impetus for Ignatius’ own journey towards his martyrdom. He knows that his body is a temple of God here on earth, and he so longs to join Christ in order to complete what has already begun in him on earth. Notably, too, Ignatius prefers to speak of *God* dwelling in the soul versus the appropriating this action to the Holy Spirit. Development on the person of the Holy Spirit would follow later in the theological tradition.

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<sup>15</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Philadelphians*, 7, in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril Richardson (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1970), 110.

<sup>16</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 15, in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril Richardson (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1970), 92.



Following Ignatius, the next prominent patristic source on the doctrine of divine indwelling is Irenaeus of Lyons (d. 202). His major work, *Adversus Haereses*, primarily seeks to refute the Gnostic heresy. In the fifth book of this work, Irenaeus takes an eschatological turn toward the salvation of man in Christ, which never occurs apart from the Holy Spirit. In the course of the book, Irenaeus affirms that the indwelling of the Spirit is a necessary condition of coming into and remaining in the justified state. Against the Gnostic tendency to downgrade the body as a hindrance to the freedom of the soul, Irenaeus affirms that the perfect man is not a spirit but the handiwork of God, soul *and* body, in possession of the Spirit of God within, just as Adam was upon being created.<sup>17</sup> Without the Spirit of God, Irenaeus writes, man would remain in his animal nature and be imperfect.<sup>18</sup> He would be in the image of God by the mere fact of being created human, but he would not possess the “similitude” to God through the infusion of the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> After affirming that the perfect man is indeed a temple of God, as St. Paul says (1 Cor 3:16), Irenaeus also writes that the possession of the Holy Spirit in the soul prepares man for his final end, that is, incorruptible life with God forever.<sup>20</sup> Man’s glory is not in putting off his flesh, says Irenaeus; rather, it is in receiving the Spirit into our substance, the Spirit who makes us spiritual persons not enslaved to the passions or carnal desires.<sup>21</sup> Thus, it is the indwelling of the Spirit that, in a sense, completes man with respect to his final end. The reception of the Holy Spirit is the pledge of future glory, imperfectly possessed here on earth but

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<sup>17</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, V.6.1, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 531.

<sup>18</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, V.6.1, 532.

<sup>19</sup> “But if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such is indeed of an animal nature, and being left carnal, shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the image [of God] in his formation (*in plasmate*), but not receiving the similitude through the Spirit; and thus is this being imperfect.” Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, V.6.1, 532.

<sup>20</sup> “But we do now receive a certain portion of His Spirit, tending towards perfection, and preparing us for incorruption, being little by little accustomed to receive and bear God; which also the apostle terms ‘an earnest,’ that is, a part of the honour which has been promised us by God...” Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, V.8.1, 533.

<sup>21</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, V.8.2, 534.

which will be perfected in heaven. It is through the Spirit dwelling in us that we are truly able to call out, “Abba, Father,” and to behold God face to face.<sup>22</sup>

St. Athanasius also takes up the doctrine of the divine indwelling via a defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. During his lifetime, there were bishops and theologians who, based on certain reading of Scripture, thought that the Spirit was only a creature and not coequal with the Father and the Son in the Godhead.<sup>23</sup> In his first letter to Serapion, Athanasius equates this position to Arianism, for just as those who deny the Son’s divinity also disparage the Person and work of the Father, so those who deny the Spirit’s divinity deny the Person and work of the Son.<sup>24</sup> Athanasius points to the scriptures to show that it is the Holy Spirit who joins us to God:

And when the Holy Spirit is given to us...God is in us. For this is what St. John wrote: *If we should love one another, God remains in us. In this we know that we remain in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit* [1 Jn 4.12-13]. But when God is in us, the Son is also in us. For the Lord himself said: *I and the Father will come and make our home with him* [Jn 14.23].<sup>25</sup>

Using these texts of St. John as a basis, Athanasius explains how the Person of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of God’s presence within us. When He is present within us, it is rightly said that God dwells within us. If the Spirit were merely a creature, it is difficult to see how His presence within us would be different from actual grace or simply the providential, sustaining action of God by His presence of immensity. Rather, when we say God has given us of the Spirit, we acknowledge this as the personal and substantial presence of God within us. This personal presence of God includes all three Trinitarian Persons, for where one is present, there are the

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<sup>22</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, V.8.1, 533. Cf. Rom 8:15.

<sup>23</sup> Those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit Athanasius called the “tropikoi” (from *tropos*, meaning “mode”) for their “mode of exegesis” of the Sacred Scriptures. See Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*, 1.2.2, in *Works on the Spirit: Athanasius’s Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit and Didymus’s On the Holy Spirit*, trans. Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres (Yonkers: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 54 (footnote 6).

<sup>24</sup> Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*, 1.1.3, 53-54.

<sup>25</sup> Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*, 1.19.7, 83.

other two. They are not separated in their action in human souls, though we appropriate certain acts to the different Persons. In His great love, God comes to dwell within us as in a temple. This is no mere moral union between the soul and God. The Holy Spirit—who is God—brings us into true and personal communion with the Father and the Son, such that it is the life of God that flows through us when we possess the Trinity in our souls.

St. Basil, known as one of the premier defenders of the Holy Spirit among the fathers, writes of the Spirit's effects in the soul for the purpose of showing He is in fact divine. Based on the data of Scripture, the names of the Spirit include "Spirit of God," "Spirit of righteousness," and "directing Spirit."<sup>26</sup> He is called "Spirit" because He is incorporeal, immaterial, and indivisible.<sup>27</sup> These names in Scripture do not denote a created nature, for creatures always lack certain perfections. In the Holy Spirit, we find a Person who lacks no perfection and is a provider of every grace and benefit for creatures.

Everything that needs holiness turns to him. All that live virtuously desire him, as they are watered by his inspiration and assisted toward their proper and natural end. He perfects others, but himself lacks nothing. He lives, but not because he has been restored to life; rather, he is the source of life. He does not grow in strength gradually, but is complete all at once. He is established in himself and present everywhere. He is the source of holiness...He is inaccessible in nature, but approachable in goodness.<sup>28</sup>

The Spirit is rightly said to be the source of the soul's holiness, which is nothing less than union with Christ and the Father. The Spirit is the one who gives us kinship with the Father and the Son, as St. Paul writes (cf. Gal 4:6).<sup>29</sup> Basil even offers the beginnings of a theology of the indwelling when he writes of the manner in which the soul has kinship with the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup> It

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<sup>26</sup> Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 9.22, trans. Stephen Hildebrand, Popular Patristics Series 42 (Yonkers: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 52.

<sup>27</sup> Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 9.22, trans. Hildebrand, 53.

<sup>28</sup> Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 9.22, trans. Hildebrand, 53.

<sup>29</sup> See Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 19.49, trans. Hildebrand, 85.

<sup>30</sup> This summary of Basil's thought on how we have kinship with the Holy Spirit comes from: Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 9.23, trans. Hildebrand, 54.

is not a matter of being near to Him as in a place, as if the Holy Spirit became somehow locally present where he was not before. Rather, through a cleansing of the soul, the Holy Spirit is said to come closer to man. Man must be illumined in intellect and purified in will before he can fully perceive the Holy Spirit, similar to how a person in darkness must be brought into the light before he can perceive the sun. It is through the light of the Holy Spirit, then, that man is able to know and confess the truth about Christ. The Spirit never acts on His own, apart the Father and the Son, for it is them that He is sent to reveal. In a stark yet illuminating demonstration, Basil writes how it is only those who have preserved the seal of the Holy Spirit in their souls who will inherit heaven, noting that “there is no one confessing in Hell and no one who remembers God in death—the help of the Spirit is no longer present.”<sup>31</sup> The indwelling Spirit—and indeed the entire Trinity—thus serves as the foundation of the Christian life, for it is through the Spirit that we receive this supernatural life and only by His assistance that we will reach our final end.

The final patristic source to be considered here is St. Augustine. With Augustine’s theology of the Trinity, the idea of the divine indwelling will also undergo significant development.<sup>32</sup> Augustine not only reaffirms that the Trinity does indeed dwell within the soul in grace<sup>33</sup>, but he goes further than this by establishing the basis for the indwelling in the visible

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<sup>31</sup> Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, 16.40, trans. Hildebrand, 75.

<sup>32</sup> A brief yet clear analysis of Augustine’s account of the divine indwelling is found in Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 48-55. The summary given here on Augustine relies on Cunningham.

<sup>33</sup> Augustine affirms this doctrine by way of showing the Holy Spirit to be divine. If the Spirit who dwells in us is divine, then God is rightly said to dwell within us as in a temple. “Do you not know that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit in you, whom you have from God?” [1 Cor 6:19] But is there anything more foolish and more sacrilegious, than that anyone should dare to say that the members of Christ are the members of a creature who, according to them, is inferior to Christ? For he says in another place: ‘Your bodies are the members of Christ.’ [1 Cor 6:15] Now if they, who are the members of Christ, are the temple of the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit is not a creature, because we must offer to Him, to whom we present our bodies as a temple, that service whereby God is to be served which is called in Greek *latreia*. Hence, he says in conclusion: ‘Therefore, Glorify God in your body.’ [1 Cor 6:20]” Augustine, *The Trinity*, I, 6, trans. Stephen McKenna, C.S.S.R. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 18.

missions of the Son and the Spirit and the act of sending by the Father.<sup>34</sup> The missions of the Son and Spirit do not imply their inferiority to the Father; rather, in being sent they are being *manifested* to the person to whom they are sent. They are sent so that they can be known in time by those who receive them. What exactly becomes known to those whom the Son and Spirit manifest themselves? Precisely the Persons themselves, through their being sent. A mission simply makes the divine Person known when He is manifested in time.<sup>35</sup> Thinking specifically in terms of the divine indwelling, the Trinitarian Persons come to inhabit the soul at the moment they become known or perceived by that soul. Concretely, this happens at the moment of baptism, when the divine Persons cleanse the soul of Original Sin and take up their abode within. The problem arises, however: what about those who are baptized as infants? What about those who are perhaps ill-catechized on the effects of baptism? These do not *actually* know or perceive the Holy Spirit in them through supernatural acts. It seems in these cases, the mantra *mitti est cognosci* (to be sent is to be known) does not apply. To solve this dilemma, there will have to be a distinction made as to what *kind* of knowledge or perception is required to possess the Trinity in the soul.<sup>36</sup> Regardless, Augustine's development of the indwelling yields

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<sup>34</sup> Augustine draws a connection between the *visible* missions of the Son and Spirit to their *invisible* missions of being sent to dwell in the hearts of believers. The Trinitarian missions reveal the indwelling of all three Persons in the soul (and not only the Father and Son). "As the Father, therefore, begot and the Son was begotten, so the Father sent and the Son was sent. But as He who begot and He who was begotten are one, so He who sent and he who was sent are one, because the Father and the Son are one. So too the Holy Spirit is one with them, because these three are one. For as to be born is for the Son to be from the Father, so to be sent is to know that the Son is from Him. And as for the Holy Spirit to be the gift of God is to proceed from the Father, so to be sent is to know that He proceeds from Him." Augustine, *The Trinity*, IV, 20, 29, trans. McKenna, 167-168. See Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 50.

<sup>35</sup> "The Word of God, therefore, is sent by Him of whom it is the Word. It is sent by Him of whom it is born. He sends who begot; that is sent which was begotten. And then the Word of God is sent to each one, when it is known and perceived, insofar as the rational soul is capable of knowing and perceiving it, either when it is advancing towards God or has already been perfected in God. The Son is not said to be sent, therefore, because He was born of the Father, but either because the Word made flesh has appeared in this world...or because He is apprehended in time by the mind of each man..." Augustine, *The Trinity*, IV, 20, 28, trans. McKenna, 166-167.

<sup>36</sup> "For Augustine, therefore, a mission necessarily implies some sort of manifestation of a proceeding Person. But because of this very fact, one must carefully distinguish between the processions themselves and the knowledge of them acquired in time..." Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 51-52. The dilemma of how the

important insights: (1) that the indwelling of the Trinity can be identified with the missions of the Son and the Spirit as sent by the Father; and (2) that the indwelling Persons can be *known* to the soul and *loved* by the soul via their missions and relations to one another.

### **The Divine Indwelling in Magisterial Sources**

The doctrine of the divine indwelling is handed down so securely and clearly through the Christian tradition that it is difficult to find formal expressions of it declared in conciliar or other official declarations and documents of the magisterium.<sup>37</sup> This attests to the universality of this teaching to which the Church has assented to this mystery through the ages. In most cases, the fact of the Spirit's indwelling is simply taken for granted and simply incorporated uncontested into statements of belief, without an accompanying justification. Anyone seeking a defense for the fact that God dwells in the souls of the just is thus directed to the scriptural and patristic sources cited above. Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness, in what follows I will present a few places where this doctrine is confirmed in the teaching authority of the Church, including sources of the more recent magisteria.

#### *Creed of St. Epiphanius (374 A.D.)*

In his own brief outline of magisterial confirmations of the divine indwelling, Francis Cunningham lists the Creed of St. Epiphanius chronologically first in the witnesses of the tradition.<sup>38</sup> This creed, thought to be prepared by Epiphanius (Bishop of Salamis) himself, was intended for catechetical use or as a baptismal formula for heretics.<sup>39</sup> In the confession of the

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Trinity is known to baptized infants with no actualized power to know and love God will be taken up in a later chapter.

<sup>37</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Hünemann, Helmut Hoping, Robert L. Fastiggi, Anne Englund Nash, and Heinrich Denzinger. *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 44-45. See the description preceding the text of the creed on page 28. Hereafter, this edition is cited "DH".

Person of the Holy Spirit, Epiphanius includes this statement: “[W]e believe in the Holy Spirit...speaking in the apostles and living in the saints.”<sup>40</sup> That this was intended for catechetical use attests to the incontestable fact of the Spirit’s indwelling. While we are still far from entering the particulars of the manner in which the Spirit inhabits the soul, historically speaking, it is clear that the divine indwelling is a foundational reality for the baptized Christian. Furthermore, it is a beginning of eternal life while still living in the flesh.

### *Council of Trent*

The magisterial tradition remains quite silent as to any formal definitions of the doctrine of indwelling for several centuries until the Council of Trent.<sup>41</sup> As the patristic tradition reveals, the main doctrinal controversy surrounding the Holy Spirit was whether or not He was divine, i.e. coequal with the Father and the Son. His work of justification, sanctification, and indwelling serves as evidence to His divinity, which in turn call for belief in His joint inhabitation in just souls with the Father and the Son as His coequals.

At the Council of Trent (1545-1563), called on the heels of the Protestant Reformation, it was necessary for the council fathers to address some particular doctrinal issues; among these was the nature of justification. The Council Fathers, seeking to clarify the absolute gratuity of justification, spell out the ways in which God is cause of justification for the sinner. The efficient cause of this justification is “the merciful God,” who gives us the Holy Spirit as the pledge of our heavenly inheritance.<sup>42</sup> By clarifying the causal role of the Holy Spirit, who “washes and sanctifies,”<sup>43</sup> the Fathers indirectly affirm the relationship of the indwelling of the

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<sup>40</sup> DH 44.

<sup>41</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 6.

<sup>42</sup> “[E]fficiens vero misericors Deus, qui gratuito abluit et sanctificat signans et ungens ‘Spiritu promissionis Sancto, qui est pignus hereditatis nostrae’...” DH 1529.

<sup>43</sup> DH 1529 [English translation].

Holy Spirit to sanctifying grace. God is the cause of this grace, and He dwells in the souls who possess it. Grace does not “produce” the indwelling; rather, God gives Himself to the soul through the bestowal of sanctifying grace. Through the indwelling, the soul is *related to God in a new way*. This new way of relating to God is the peculiar intimacy of possessing God Himself which Leo XIII will later speak of in *Divinum Illud Munus*. That this kind of intimacy exists is why Trent also reaffirms the gravity of sin as a violation of the temple of God and a grievance against the Holy Spirit Himself.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, this new way of being related to God via the divine indwelling already anticipates heavenly beatitude, when our way of relating to God will be transformed forever as we behold the divine essence in an unmediated way.

#### *Ex Omnibus Afflictionibus*

Another magisterial landmark for the exposition of the doctrine of the divine indwelling can be found in the 1567 papal bull of Pope Pius V, *Ex Omnibus Afflictionibus*. The document condemns 79 erroneous propositions of Michael Baius on the nature of man and grace.<sup>45</sup> While the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not the central issue at hand in this theological controversy, it is closely connected and has immense implications for the theology of grace. Take, for example, the fifteenth condemned proposition, which reads:

He teaches that the nature of merit does not consist in the fact that whoever acts well has grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (inhabitantem Spiritum Sanctum) but only in that he is obeying the divine law, and this opinion he often repeats, and with many arguments he demonstrates this in almost the entire book.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> DH 1690. This affirmation by the council fathers comes within the Decree on the Doctrine of the Sacrament of Penance, Chapter 8 (The Necessity and Fruit of Satisfaction): “Indeed, the nature of divine justice seems to demand that those who have sinned through ignorance before baptism be received in grace in one manner, and in another manner those who have already once been liberated from the slavery of sin and the devil, who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and yet have not feared knowingly to violate the temple of God and to grieve the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>45</sup> DH 1901-1979.

<sup>46</sup> DH 1915.



The idea contained in this proposition belongs to Baius, who himself appears to admit the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. While the divine indwelling remains firmly undisputed, for Baius the indwelling has no bearing on the elevated nature of human acts done in grace nor does it have anything to do with the meritorious nature of those acts. This proposition follows a very similar one in the same document, the thirteenth:

The good works done by the adopted sons do not receive the nature of merit because they are done by the spirit of adoption that lives in the hearts of the sons of God (*spiritum adoptionis inhabitantem corda filiorum Dei*) but only because they are in conformity with the law and through them obedience to the law is achieved.<sup>47</sup>

Important to note is that the divine indwelling is a result of an *elevation* of human nature to a deified state. This elevation means that the soul is related to God in an altogether new way than it was in the unjustified state. The soul relates with God as a friend, a kind of co-equal, capable of acquiring merit and acting in union with the Holy Spirit in a stable manner. If this elevation of human nature by grace is rejected—as in the case of Baius—the divine indwelling does not name a new relation between the soul and God but is merely imputed. Furthermore, the reality of merit is also undermined. The new relation of the soul to God that comes about in justification is fundamental to the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is what distinguishes God’s presence in all things by His immensity from His intimate presence in the souls of the justified. It is what distinguishes the movements of the Holy Spirit in the unjustified soul on the way to justification from those movements of the Spirit in the soul in grace.<sup>48</sup>

*Divinum Illud Munus and Mystici Corporis Christi*

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<sup>47</sup> DH 1913.

<sup>48</sup> This distinction is upheld—at least implicitly—in the condemnation of the following proposition of Baius: “Likewise, that distinction of a twofold justice—the one that takes place by the indwelling of the Spirit of charity (*per Spiritum caritatis inhabitantem*) and the other, in fact, as a result of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who excites the heart to repentance but does not yet dwell in the heart and diffuse in it the charity by which the justification of the divine law is fulfilled—must be rejected with the greatest repugnance and firmness.” DH 1963.

From the end of the Council of Trent through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the doctrine of the divine indwelling became, for all practical purposes, the private possession of theologians.<sup>49</sup> While fruitful debate and reflection on the precise manner of the indwelling certainly took place, the practical implications of the doctrine for the Christian life were likely taken for granted or even forgotten. Thus, in 1897, Pope Leo XIII set out to write an encyclical on the truths and mysteries concerning the Holy Spirit, seeking to bring to the Church's attention once again the profundity of the Spirit's action in the Church as well as His wonderful union with and inhabitation of the souls of the just. While the Pontiff does not go beyond what is most fundamental to Catholic faith regarding the Holy Spirit, he states this belief in a way that emphasizes the exalted state of the soul in grace. Through possessing the Spirit of God within, the soul is more united to God "than the friend is united to his most loving and beloved friend, and enjoys God in all fullness and sweetness."<sup>50</sup> This language of friendship, enjoyment, and sweetness speaks to the nature of *union*. It anticipates the union the soul will one day experience with God in heaven, certainly. Leo's words, however, pertain even to what the soul experiences *now* when it is in grace. The Christian is thus not subject to only momentary experiences of union with God, e.g. in the sacraments, but at every moment, he is able to commune with God who is within him in a real and personal way.

Later, in the twentieth century, Pope Pius XII revisited this doctrine when he wrote his encyclical on the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>51</sup> It was this pope who encouraged the deeper study of the mystery of the divine indwelling, albeit with an intellectual caution grounded in a spirit of faith and loyalty to the Church.<sup>52</sup> In the document, he reminds the faithful that the

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<sup>49</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.

<sup>51</sup> Pope Pius XII, Encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943).

<sup>52</sup> See *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §78.

Divine Persons are present to intellectual creatures and are known in a supernatural manner alone within the deepest sanctuary of the soul.<sup>53</sup> God is thus present in a distinct manner in the just soul as compared to His ordinary presence in all things by immensity. This new way of God being related to the just soul, i.e. how He is known in a way “which transcends all created nature,”<sup>54</sup> will be taken up in the next chapter.

### *Lumen Gentium and Dominum et Vivificantem*

As a conclusion to this section, it seems appropriate to include sources from the more recent magisterial sources which speak about the divine indwelling attributed to the Holy Spirit, beginning with the Second Vatican Council. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*<sup>55</sup>, is a document imbued with the importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, and indeed, the world. For the Church came into existence through the Holy Spirit and she is only a sacrament of Christ to the nations by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who reveals and radiates Christ. The document gives ample space to the notion of the Church as the “People of God,” the body of believers joined to Christ their Head by the bond of charity and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>56</sup> The council fathers also note that, as a result of the presence of the Holy Spirit within them, the People of God are not only sanctified in the sacraments and exterior rites and practices of the Church (important as these are); but the members of the Church also receive special graces through the interior workings of the Spirit.<sup>57</sup> God works to sanctify His people in every time and place, in all the various tasks and labors that are theirs.<sup>58</sup> Thus, even the most ordinary work can be the means by which the People of God become holy. Even

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<sup>53</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §79.

<sup>54</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §79.

<sup>55</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964).

<sup>56</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, §9-10.

<sup>57</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, §12.

<sup>58</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, §41.

the most hidden occupations and vocations are arenas for exercising the virtues and attaining perfection through the grace of God. Indeed this focus on the interiority of the Christian life, lived in communion with the Holy Spirit, becomes foundational for the document's emphasis on the universal call to holiness.

Finally, approximately two decades after the conclusion of the council, Pope John Paul II synthesized much of the council's work in his own encyclical on the Person of the Holy Spirit, *Dominum et Vivificantem*. The Holy Father places his own document within the tradition of magisterial documents on the Holy Spirit, which includes those mentioned above. Furthermore, he repeated Pope Paul VI's call for a new study of the Holy Spirit following the Council's work.<sup>59</sup> While the legacy of the council is largely ecclesiological, John Paul was quick to affirm that "[a]t the same time, the teaching of the Council is essentially 'pneumatological.'"<sup>60</sup> For it is the Spirit who brings perfection and completion to the work of Christ in space and time. It is the Spirit who brings Christ to maturity in each and every human soul, imparting and bringing to fruition sanctifying grace and the adoption of the faithful as God's beloved children.<sup>61</sup> Because the Spirit dwells within the "inmost sanctuary"<sup>62</sup> of every just soul, the Church has great reverence for the human being as the subject of the supernatural work of grace.

### **The Divine Indwelling in the Liturgy**

As the Church's prayer is a reflection of and a directing principle for right belief, it is *dignum et iustum* to consider how this sublime doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is declared in the sacred liturgy. Perhaps the clearest proclamation of this truth appears in the

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<sup>59</sup> "The Christology and particularly the ecclesiology of the Council must be succeeded by a new study of and devotion to the Holy Spirit, precisely as the indispensable complement to the teaching of the Council." Pope Paul VI, *Udienza Generale* (6 June 1973). Cited in *Dominum et Vivificantem*, §2.

<sup>60</sup> *Dominum et Vivificantem*, §26.

<sup>61</sup> See *Dominum et Vivificantem*, §52.

<sup>62</sup> *Dominum et Vivificantem*, §67.

Solemnity of Pentecost. In the Mass for the day, the preface gives thanks to the Father for sending the Holy Spirit upon those whom He willed to make His adopted sons.<sup>63</sup> Although the Holy Spirit pours out many gifts upon the Church and upon individuals, it is the role of introducing the faithful into communion with the Father and the Son that is attributed to His very *Person* (and not simply His creative power and action). It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that guarantees Trinitarian communion for the faithful on earth. This idea is confirmed in another liturgical text, Preface I of the Holy Spirit, which calls to mind the sending of the Holy Spirit by the ascended Christ on all of God's adopted children.<sup>64</sup> Thus the liturgy reminds us that, because of the personal gift of the Holy Spirit, God has not left the Church alone. On the contrary, He is intimately close to each of the faithful through the Holy Spirit.<sup>65</sup>

Another profound liturgical text confessing the person of the Holy Spirit is the Pentecost sequence, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*.<sup>66</sup> To be sung or said between the second reading and the Gospel acclamation in the Mass of Pentecost, the sequence praises the person of the Holy Spirit as well as His supernatural works of grace. Among these praises, the Holy Spirit is proclaimed as the *dator munerum*, the *lumen cordium*, and *consolator optime*. Yet, the Holy Spirit not only gives these gifts; He also comes Himself to be present in the souls upon whom He bestows His

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<sup>63</sup> "Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere: Domine, sancte Pater, omnipotens aeternae Deus. Tu enim, sacramentum paschale consummans, quibus, per Unigeniti tui consortium, filios adoptionis esse tribuisti, hodie Spiritum Sanctum es largitus..." Prefatio: De mysterio Pentecostes, Dominica Pentecostes, *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2002), p. 447.

<sup>64</sup> "Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere: Domine, sancte Pater, omnipotens aeternae Deus: per Christum Dominum nostrum. Qui, ascendens super omnes caelos sedensque ad dexteram tuam, promissum Spiritum Sanctum in filios adoptionis effudit..." Prefatio, Missa Votiva: De Spiritu Sancto A, *Missale Romanum* (2002), pp. 1168-1169.

<sup>65</sup> This doctrine appears in other places in the liturgy throughout the year. For example, see the *Collect* for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: "Deus, qui te in rectis et sinceris manere pectoribus asseris, da nobis tua gratia tales existere, in quibus habitare digneris. Per Dominum." *Collecta*, Dominica VI per annum, *Missale Romanum* (2002), p. 456.

<sup>66</sup> *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, Pentecost Sunday Mass During the Day, in *Lectionary for Mass For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, Vol. I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and the Saints (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), p. 482.

supernatural gifts. He is *dulcis hospes animae*—sweet guest of the soul—who comes to personally remain with those who abide in the love of God. So much is contained within this short line of the Pentecost sequence. The Spirit comes as a sweet guest, for He is known by His fruits that accompany Him, and yet He does not impose Himself upon our persons such that He impedes our freedom or our other spiritual faculties. He is, in a sense, a guest who will stay as long as He is welcomed but will flee if we turn away from God into serious sin. He is truly said to be guest of the *soul* since He is present to us as the object of supernatural knowledge and love. He is beyond the reach of our sense knowledge, but He is still present to us really and personally through the supernatural acts of the soul (which have their foundation in grace).<sup>67</sup>

## Conclusion

From the foregoing data and sources in the tradition regarding the existence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just, there are a series of conclusions that can be drawn about this doctrine. These conclusions<sup>68</sup> will guide the rest of the paper as we seek to determine the theological accuracy and implications of Leo XIII's claim in *Divinum Illud Munus* that this wonderful union [i.e. the divine indwelling] differs only in degree or state from that union with God which the saints in heaven enjoy. The conclusions are as follows:

1. The existence of the divine Persons in the soul of the just is real and substantial.
2. This existence of the Trinity in the souls of the just is really distinct from the presence of immensity.
3. This new way of being present is realized by sanctifying grace.
4. This new presence of God, realized by sanctifying grace, is common to the Three Persons.
5. The inhabitation of the Trinity in the souls of those in a state of grace is the effect of the invisible missions of the Son and the Holy Ghost.

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<sup>67</sup> The place of grace in the mystery of the divine indwelling will be treated in a later chapter. It is sufficient here to say that the divine indwelling is not a matter of the Trinity being present by man simply directing his intellectual and volitional acts toward God. Grace must be the foundation of this intimacy and relationship. It is grace that allows man to enjoy the Divine Persons within his soul. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 3; III, q. 7, a. 13, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>68</sup> The six conclusions that follow are drawn from Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 181-185.

6. The presence of the Trinity in the souls of the just, the result of the divine missions, involves the manifestation of the divine Persons.

This consideration of the Holy Spirit as guest of the soul leads naturally to further considerations of the *manner* in which He is such a guest. Up to now, we have considered the wide array of places in Scripture and Tradition which present the doctrine of the divine indwelling as a truth of faith. The next chapter will examine more in-depth the way in which the Holy Spirit—and indeed the entire Trinity—comes to be present in the soul. Much remains mysterious about the hidden action of the Spirit in souls. Yet, our examination of this great mystery will lead us to a deeper understanding of our heavenly calling. If we can truly be said to possess God in our very souls—and Scripture and Tradition clearly affirm this—then union with God is something not far off or remote from the souls of the just. Indeed, our final end of eternal beatitude with God may be closer to us than it appears to our earthly eyes.

## Chapter II: The Manner of the Divine Indwelling

To ask how or in what way the Trinity comes to dwell in the depths of the human soul is to ask about the *formal reason* of the divine indwelling.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, we seek the manner *how* the Persons can be said to indwell in a real and substantial way, in a way distinct from God's presence everywhere in the world. In our quest to understand this great mystery, we do not simply want to stop at the fact of the indwelling of the three Trinitarian Persons in the souls of the just, as profound and penetrating a truth as it is. In probing the mystery as to its formal reason, we will come to a deeper understanding not only of the magnitude of mystery of the life of God within souls, but we will come to see the exalted nature and immense dignity of the Christian vocation with respect to anticipating heavenly beatitude while still on earth.<sup>2</sup>

In the previous chapter, it was established that the divine indwelling is a supernatural act of all three of the Divine Persons. At the same time, we can wholeheartedly affirm the fittingness of speaking about indwelling as an act of the Holy Spirit, who is sent by the Father and the Son to communicate the divine nature, to sanctify, and to unite the soul to God. His role in the divine economy is never to act alone but always to speak of Christ and reveal the Father and the Son.<sup>3</sup> Concerning the indwelling, the Holy Spirit, as the personal Love proceeding from the Father and the Son as one principle, comes to dwell in the just soul as in a temple, uniting the soul to God in a bond of love. As the Father and the Son are present where the divine nature is present, they, too, come to personally dwell in the soul of the just. Union and mutual indwelling

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<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 1-11. To seek the formal reason for the indwelling differs from simply asking after the *efficient* cause of the indwelling. Here, we seek the reason *how* the *Triune* God, i.e. God as three distinct Persons, is said to indwell. While He is one in essence as efficient cause of the indwelling, we also need to account for the distinct presence of all three Persons in the just soul.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the need to be open to the Holy Spirit's movement in our souls in order to become conformed to Christ, Archbishop Luis Martinez writes, "To be a devotee of the Holy Spirit is to comprehend the august dignity of the Christian." Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 54.

<sup>3</sup> CCC, 687, 689. Cf. Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 101-109 (chapter entitled "The Holy Spirit Leads Us to the Father").



are proper effects of love<sup>4</sup>, which makes the divine indwelling appropriate to the Holy Spirit, to whom the name “Love” is fittingly applied.<sup>5</sup> While the divine indwelling in the soul is certainly an act of love, the soul itself is not a merely volitional reality. The rational soul also possesses an intellect. Thus, the manner of the Divine Persons’ indwelling, i.e. its formal reason, will need to account for the intellectual faculty of the soul as well as the will.

Pope Pius XII acknowledges the limits of reason in approaching the mystery of the divine indwelling in his encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ. At the heart of the mystery of the Church is the mystery of the divine indwelling, which joins the members of Christ’s Body to their Head. While divine revelation certainly makes clear Christ’s promise of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s role in uniting the members of the Church to Christ, the way in which this union is brought about is deeply mysterious. The Holy Father writes:

For indeed We are not ignorant of the fact that this profound truth—of our union with the Divine Redeemer and in particular of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls—is shrouded in darkness by many a veil that impedes our power to understand and explain it, both because of the hidden nature of the doctrine itself, and of the limitations of our human intellect.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this “darkness” that prevents full comprehension of this great mystery, this ought not discourage the theologian from seeking greater understanding, Pius clarifies. In fact, he encourages those who seek to study this doctrine within the bounds of the Church’s faith.<sup>7</sup> For it is immensely important to speak in a theologically correct and robust way about this doctrine in order to prevent erroneous thinking about how man is truly said to possess God within his soul.

Pius continues:

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<sup>4</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 28, arts. 1-2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>5</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 37, a. 1; q. 43, a. 5, ad. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §78.

<sup>7</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §78.

But let all agree uncompromisingly on this, if they would not err from truth and from the orthodox teaching of the Church: to reject every kind of mystic union by which the faithful of Christ should in any way pass beyond the sphere of creatures and wrongly enter the divine, were it only to the extent of appropriating to themselves as their own but one single attribute of the eternal Godhead. And, moreover, let all hold this as certain truth, that all these activities are common to the most Blessed Trinity, insofar as they have God as supreme efficient cause.<sup>8</sup>

Here, the Holy Father draws our attention to potential consequences of thinking wrongly about the divine indwelling. If Christians see themselves as being united to God such that they enter into the sphere of the divine nature, they either become (1) divine persons, or (2) an extension of the divine nature (pantheism). The only divine persons are the Persons of the Trinity, while human beings are creatures and can thus never hope to be divine *per se*. Regarding the possible error of pantheism, if in entering a mystical union with God the human soul shares univocally an essential attribute of God, then both the divine and human natures are altered to become something other than what they are.<sup>9</sup> God and the soul are no longer related to one another as two separate beings but only as an ambiguously united substance that is no longer God or a human nature. Practically speaking, a pantheistic view of divine indwelling eliminates the possibility of speaking about a personal *relationship* with God. For if the soul simply becomes melded into God's essence, it is no longer related to God in a loving friendship. For loving union only exists between persons who are united to one another without either losing their identity. In the case of appropriating divine attributes to the soul, the danger Pius sternly warns against, the soul simply becomes God (or a part of God), which is inimical not only to faith but to both divine and human nature, as well as to the nature of love and friendship. Thus, thinking

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<sup>8</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §78.

<sup>9</sup> "The very notion of union of person to Persons excludes all semblance of pantheistic absorption. Union is not unity. It of necessity involves distinction. The personal character of this union of the soul with God postulates on both sides of the relations personality and incommunicability which dissipates, as radically and totally impossible, any shadow of monism." Prudence De Letter, S.J. "Sanctifying Grace and Our Union with the Holy Trinity," *Theological Studies* 13, no. 1 (1952): 50.

correctly about the mystery of the divine indwelling is of the utmost importance. Though it is a doctrine shrouded in mystery, an earnest seeking of the truth about it will shed much light on the relation of the soul to God both on earth and in eternal life.

As a result of the depth of mystery present with the doctrine of divine indwelling, theologians and spiritual writers understandably approach it with caution. Some of their formulations of the manner of indwelling by the Divine Persons in the soul thus often leave the truth of the matter less than clear, correct as they may be. For instance, one twentieth century author describes the indwelling of God this way:

Our soul adorned with grace is truly the abode of God; He dwells within us, not merely as He does in all things, by His essence and His power, by which He sustains and preserves every creature in existence, *but in an altogether special and intimate manner as being the object of supernatural knowledge and love.*<sup>10</sup>

Abbot Marmion's cursory treatment of the divine indwelling is reflective of the theological tradition, especially the Thomistic tradition, surrounding the indwelling. This Thomistic solution to the manner of the indwelling will continue to be unpacked throughout the chapter. Already, however, we see that the intimacy brought about by the union of indwelling is to be attributed to the way in which God is the object, or term, of our acts of supernatural knowledge and love. Yet it remains to be seen how we understand this closeness to God through acts of the intellect and will. It is a truly unique presence with no natural analogue. Pius XII approaches the mystery with an equivalent reverence and caution, fitting to his office as pastor of the Universal Church. He also holds up the basic outline of the Thomist solution to the manner of the indwelling:

The Divine Persons are said to indwell inasmuch as *they are present to beings endowed with intelligence* in a way that lies beyond human comprehension, and in

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<sup>10</sup> Abbot Columba Marmion, *Christ the Life of the Soul* (London: Sands & Co. Ltd., 1925), 117 (emphasis added).

*a unique and very intimate manner* which transcends all created nature, these creatures enter into relationship with Them *through knowledge and love*.<sup>11</sup>

From the previous chapter and the quoted passages above, we have come to see how God promised and indeed comes to dwell in the souls of the just in a way unique from His presence in all of creation. He does this in a way that is proper to rational beings endowed with intelligence, thus excluding lower creation. The indwelling of the Trinity, therefore, is something altogether different from God’s omnipresence in creation, and it is certainly different from a substantial union of the kind found in creation by the admixture of different substances. Rather, in this new and unique presence of God in the soul, the added dimension of this indwelling is God’s manner of relating to the soul, as Pius writes, “through knowledge and love.” We will now begin to develop the basis for this and its importance for the doctrine of divine indwelling.

### **Principles for a Solution to the Divine Indwelling**

In order to understand how God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—can be said to dwell in the soul, it is necessary to grasp how this presence is unique from the way God is ordinarily present to His creation, that is, His presence in all things in virtue of His essence, power, and presence.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is necessary to lay out a few principles which undergird the solution that St. Thomas ultimately gives to the formal reason for indwelling.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §79 (emphases added). The encyclical footnotes St. Thomas on this particular line: “Above and beyond this common mode [of presence by essence, power, and presence], however, there is one special mode belonging to the rational creature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover. And since the rational creature by its *operation of knowledge and love* attains to God Himself, according to this special mode [brought about through sanctifying grace] God is said not only to exist in the rational creature but also to dwell therein as in His own temple” (emphasis added). *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>12</sup> “For God is in all things by His essence, power, and presence, according to His one common mode, as the cause existing in the effects which participate in His goodness.” *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>13</sup> In what follows in this section and the rest of the chapter, I am indebted to the work of Francis Cunningham in *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, where he synthesizes the work of St. Thomas on the divine indwelling, presenting Thomas’ solution as the most robust and theologically correct among his medieval contemporaries as well as in the whole of the theological tradition. An article that gives a good Thomistic account of the indwelling is

First, it is important to recognize the way in which God is related to His creation. The doctrine of the divine indwelling has its foundations in the doctrine of creation.<sup>14</sup> For God only becomes present in this special manner of indwelling to beings which He has first *created*; and among created beings, only rational beings can be elevated through grace. Now God is, by nature, immutable and complete in Himself; He requires nothing outside Himself for His own perfection and happiness. Thus, the work of creation proceeds from God as an act of pure love and goodness which does not in the least add anything to God or strip anything from Him.<sup>15</sup> The act of creating does not change or alter His nature in any way. When God created us, He became present to us by the very fact of having created us. As the principal cause of our being, He is related to us as our Creator, while we are related to Him as His creatures. Without Him, we could not exist, not only because of our inability to cause ourselves into being, but also because God's sustaining action keeps us in existence. Were God to cease existing, *per impossibile*, we also would cease to exist since we would be without an ultimate foundation in which to ground our existence. God is intimately present to all His creatures as their *cause*. Unlike efficient causality among contingent beings, God does not cause His creatures into existence and then leave them to be self-sustained. God's being is pure act, and thus everything that He creates by His power is actively sustained by Him. He actively knows His creation in an intimate manner, for He is more intimate to each creature than it is to itself as the source of its being.

God's closeness to creation takes on special significance with respect to rational creatures, who are the crown of His creation. Rational beings, i.e. human persons, are

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Luigi Ciappi, "The Presence, Mission, and Indwelling of the Divine Persons in the Just," *The Thomist* 17, no. 2 (April 1954): 131-144. With respect to the relationship between nature and grace, another informative article is P. De Letter's article footnoted above, "Sanctifying Grace and Our Union with the Holy Trinity," 33-58.

<sup>14</sup> Jarrett, *He Dwells in Your Soul*, 5-8.

<sup>15</sup> See CCC, 1

intrinsically ordered to God as their final end, for He is First Truth and the Universal Good.<sup>16</sup> In this sense, then, God is even *more* present to human beings than any other kind of creature, since man's final end is altogether higher than that of lower creation. Here, we have the foundations for the inherent dignity of the human person, simply in virtue of his being created in the image and likeness of the Creator.<sup>17</sup> No other creature shares this degree of likeness to God. Yet God did not stop here; He also wanted to give each person a share in His divine life and His intimate friendship.

God is present to all his creatures, especially human persons, but there is something different about His presence in the souls of the just than simply His presence in all things in virtue of being their efficient cause.<sup>18</sup> That this kind of presence via indwelling is a new *kind* of presence is clear from the data of divine revelation. But it can be asked: how does this new kind of presence come about? How is it that God becomes present in a new way when He was already intimately present before? Based on Christ's own promise to His apostles at the Last Supper, it could be easy to draw from divine revelation an erroneous view of exactly how the Trinity comes to dwell in the soul. In John 14:23, Jesus answers Judas (not the Iscariot) regarding how He will manifest Himself to the apostles but not to the world, "If a man loves me,

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<sup>16</sup> Regarding man's final end as the satiation of his rational faculties, see *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 3, arts. 5, 8; q. 5, a. 8.

<sup>17</sup> By this I of course do not mean that God's being is somehow multiplied in human persons vs. creatures of a lower order. Rather, the constitution and operation of human nature reflect the inner life of the Trinity with respect to its intellectual and volitional attributes. The processions of word and love in the human intellect and will reflect the processions in God (cf. Augustine's psychological analogy). The likeness between the processions of the Son and Spirit and the activity of the rational soul make it fitting that God would join Himself to the soul in a way that allows the soul to share in His inner life. See D. Juvenal Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 229-231. Jarrett, *He Dwells in Your Soul*, 5-12.

<sup>18</sup> While the *imago Dei* which all human persons possess reflects something of the Triune God (cf. Augustine's psychological analogy, which St. Thomas picks up in the *Prima pars*), there is a sharp distinction to be made between those who possess the image of the Trinity and those who possess this image *and* the indwelling of the Trinity. The exalted status and utter distinctness of the supernatural order must be respected in theology. Natural knowledge of God and supernatural knowledge of Him through the grace of indwelling are radically distinct with respect to man's final end. See Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 233.

he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and *we will come to him* and make our home with him.”<sup>19</sup> Our understanding of the formal reason for the divine indwelling, the manner in which it takes place, rests on what it means for the Divine Persons “to come” to the soul. Here, we must make a few clarifications.

We stated above that God is intimately present to all His creation, for all His creatures derive their being from and are caused by God’s very essence which is the act of being itself. This already makes God closer to His creatures than they are to themselves, for He knows their inmost being as the source of their existence.<sup>20</sup> This truth finds profound expression in Psalm 139, where the sacred author expresses wonder at God’s intimate knowledge of his being and affairs such that nothing is hidden from God:

O Lord, thou has searched me and known me! Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up; thou discernest my thoughts from afar...Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!...For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb (Ps 139:1-2, 7-8, 13).<sup>21</sup>

God knows us through the entirety of our being; nothing escapes His knowledge. In the Last Supper discourse, however, Christ promises an altogether new “coming” of Himself and His Father to the one who loves Him. Is God to be understood as coming to a place where He was not present previously? Is God altogether absent from His human creatures before the bestowal of the grace of justification? Are we to ascribe a kind of motion to God in the sense that He

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<sup>19</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>20</sup> “Indeed, God’s ‘greatness is unsearchable’ [Ps 145:3]. But because he is free and sovereign Creator, the first cause of all that exists, God is present to his creatures’ inmost being: ‘In him we live and move and have our being’ [Acts 17:28]. In the words of St. Augustine, God is “higher than my highest and more inward than my innermost self’ [*Confessions*, III, 6, 11].” CCC, 300.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Dubay draws sees in this psalm a foreshadowing of the divine indwelling present in the Old Testament and in the religious thought of the Hebrew people. This psalm is an excellent illustration of the intimacy of God to His creation simply by His common presence by essence, power, and presence. See Dubay, “The Indwelling of Divine Love,” 169-172.

“comes” to the soul in the same way material substances move from one place to another? To all these questions, the answer is a firm and resounding “no”. Based on what we know of God’s essence and the doctrine of creation, we can say that God is already intimately present to human beings in virtue of their being created. He is thus not altogether absent from human beings before He graces them with His unique and substantial presence in their souls. Furthermore, we certainly do not want to ascribe change to God via motion from one place to another, as if He needed to come so as to be present where He was not before. Based on this, we can therefore say that God coming to be present in the souls of the just via the unique presence of indwelling is not an alteration or change or motion in God. Rather, this new indwelling presence of God in souls really consists in God’s new way of *relating* to His creatures.<sup>22</sup> This is a fundamental distinction, for it strips away the temptation of overly anthropomorphizing the divine indwelling as if it were like a creaturely motion to a new place. God does not alter or change in His essence as a result of having a new relation with creatures in the temporal sphere, nor does He somehow come to dwell where He did not before. His essence and creative operation are not subjected to change by coming to dwell in a soul. Rather, His presence via indwelling effects a new relation of *reason* (and not a new real relation) from Himself to the soul<sup>23</sup>, such that the soul apprehends

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<sup>22</sup> “Hence God by creation produces things without movement. Now when movement is removed from action and passion, only relation remains...” *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 45, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 9, 182. God’s relation to the soul in grace is a relation of *reason* since it does not involve God being reduced from potency to act, nor does it involve a change or movement in God as in the case of real relations among creatures. The new relation does not involve a change or motion in God. Yet, there remains a *real* relation on the part of the soul to God, for the soul is elevated to friendship with God (which before it did not possess). See *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 7, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. A few other articles that are good accounts of the nature of relations are: John Lamont, “Aquinas on Subsistent Relation,” *Recherches de theologie et philosophie medievales* 74, no. 2 (2004): 260-279. Matthew R. McWhorter, “Aquinas on God’s Relation to the World,” *New Blackfriars* 94, no. 1049 (January 2013): 3-19. David Svoboda, “Aquinas on Real Relation,” *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Theologica* 6, no. 1 (2016): 147-172. Mikail Whitfield, “Aquinas on Relations: A Topic Which Aquinas Himself Perceives as Foundational to Theology,” *European Journal for the Study of Thomas Aquinas* 38 (2020): 15-32.



God in a new way, through grace, as being present to itself as the object, or *term*, of supernatural intellectual and volitional acts.<sup>24</sup>

Positing this new way of relating to the soul through the indwelling protects the Trinitarian nature of the indwelling. While God is present in all things in virtue of having created them, this omnipresence is derived from His operation *ad extra*, which is attributed to the one divine essence and not of any one Divine Person alone. When we seek to understand the formal reason for the divine indwelling in the soul, however, we seek the foundations of the *Trinitarian* habitation. This is not to say that creation is not a Trinitarian act, but neither God's presence in creatures as the cause of their being nor His efficient causal power in bestowing sanctifying grace can be the *formal reason* for the special indwelling of the Divine Persons in the soul.<sup>25</sup> These causal explanations only establish God's closeness to man as one in essence (and origin of his natural and supernatural life), not as three in Persons.<sup>26</sup> Instead, St. Thomas looks to a new relation of reason as being the formal basis for the Trinitarian indwelling. While God is always present to His creation, it is only in the new relation of reason in God to the soul that the

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<sup>24</sup> J.-H. Nicolas synthesizes well this dilemma of God's relation to rational souls via divine indwelling: "The objection is raised that, in such circumstances, it is not the Trinity which comes into the soul, as is stated in the Gospel, but the soul which brings about God's presence through its own acts. That amounts to a gross misunderstanding of things!...Under the radiation of [God's privileged] love, created grace flowers in the soul and becomes actual in this plenary supernatural knowledge composed of faith, love, and all the illuminations of the Holy Ghost, which knowledge insures the Trinitarian presence. For God, who never displaces himself in any way because he is always there and everywhere, coming into a soul means loving it with that new love which determines the Trinitarian presence by creating grace." The manner in which this knowledge and love constitutes the Trinitarian indwelling will continue to be unpacked in the following pages. J.-H. Nicolas, *The Mystery of God's Grace* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), 80-81. See Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 188-191.

<sup>25</sup> Nicolas explains that while divine efficient causality in producing the union of indwelling through grace protects the reality of the divine indwelling as a real union (and not merely moral) with God and His grace as the source and cause, we are unable to distinguish between God's indwelling presence and His presence of immensity solely in virtue of efficient causality. See Nicolas, *The Mystery of God's Grace*, 68-70.

<sup>26</sup> How we are really related to the Three distinct Persons in the Trinity (and not just to the Godhead in His one nature and essence) constitutes the central question of the divine indwelling. As P. De Letter writes, "we are united to the three divine Persons not only *qui tres* but also *qua tres*." De Letter, "Sanctifying Grace and Our Union with the Holy Trinity," 52.

three Divine Persons come to be known and loved in a new, supernatural way.<sup>27</sup> It is in this reality that divine friendship is established through grace.

Thus, from the preceding paragraphs we have established a foundation for coming to a solution regarding the Trinitarian indwelling of God in the souls of the just. We can summarize this via the following principles<sup>28</sup>:

1. God is present in created things by His essence, power, and presence. While God's presence in created effects is an act of the Trinity, it cannot be the formal reason for the Trinitarian indwelling, through which the soul comes to possess the Divine Persons within itself.
2. God's presence in the soul through indwelling is not "new" in the sense that He comes to where He was not before; rather, this presence is new in virtue of a new relation of *reason* to the human soul.
3. God can only be present in a way distinct from His common presence (through essence, power, and presence) by being present as the *term* of the creature.

All that has so far been resolved is how God's way of relating to the soul in the divine indwelling is distinctly new and unique from the way He is present in all things. If He is truly present to all things in an intimate way via His creative operation, the way in which He relates to the soul in grace must be even more intimate and personal. The problem is partially resolved by appealing to a new relation of reason in God to the soul, whereby God pouring His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit becomes the means by which the soul receives the power (which it did not have before) to know and love God in a supernatural way. God's creative operation does not change in the sense that He does not start knowing and loving the soul where He did not before; rather, He is now the term of supernatural acts of the human intellect and will where He was not before. To describe the newness of the indwelling as merely a relation of supernatural

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<sup>27</sup> This is a *real* relation on the part of the soul to God, since something new does indeed come about in the soul.

<sup>28</sup> See Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 185-191. These principles guide the way we think through the divine indwelling as the presence of *God* within us, for it is not just any presence but the Trinity within us.

knowledge and love between the soul and God is also to undersell the divine indwelling. Correct as this may be, the working of *grace* must be taken into account. The divine indwelling is a completely supernatural act; it utterly transcends the capability of human nature to achieve. The created gift of grace, particularly sanctifying grace, lies at the root of the divine indwelling.<sup>29</sup> We must now consider the role of grace as we seek to understand what properly constitutes the Trinitarian indwelling.

### **The Divine Indwelling and Divine Grace**

The role of grace in the divine indwelling is best understood in the context of the kinds of presence of God in the soul. We have already established that God is not to be understood as *locally* present in the soul as material substances are; or again as one who moves locally to a place where He was not previously. Yet, given the data of divine revelation as well as the necessity for a new relation in the Trinity to the soul in the divine indwelling, it is evident that two kinds of presence<sup>30</sup> are attributable to God with respect to His dwelling in the soul. The first is the *substantial* presence of the Divine Persons in the soul. If we are to speak of Trinitarian indwelling in a true sense (and not merely a moral union of the soul with God), then we must be able to say that each Person—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—comes to dwell in the soul in the fullness of their essence and personality. Of course, this amounts to the one divine essence coming to be present in the soul of the justified person; however, we cannot forget that this

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<sup>29</sup> As God's unique presence in creatures is different from His common presence in all things not only in degree but in *kind*. It is in the order of the supernatural, a fact which cannot be overstated. As such, the union which the soul shares with God in the divine indwelling cannot merely be reduced to a natural kind of knowing and loving that is able to make someone or something morally present even if not actually present. In the case of the indwelling, God's presence in the soul has at its foundation a supernatural effect—namely, grace. Luigi Ciappi, "The Presence, Mission, and Indwelling of the Divine Persons in the Just," 141. De Letter, "Sanctifying Grace and Our Union with the Holy Trinity," 38. Jarrett, *He Dwells in Your Soul*, 113-116.

<sup>30</sup> The two kinds of presence here described (physical/substantial and intentional) are noted throughout the theological literature on the topic of the divine indwelling. These specific terms I am using are delineated in Rivas, *On Grace, On the Infused Virtues*, 139.

includes the personal presence of each of the Divine Persons. The second kind of presence we can speak of with respect to the divine indwelling in the soul is *intentional* presence, “which is nothing else but the power of enjoying God by acts of the intellect and the will, and also in a supernatural and friendly way.”<sup>31</sup> This way of describing God’s presence in the soul arises out of the theological reflection on God’s way of relating to the soul in a unique way from simply His presence of immensity. If it is true that God’s essence neither changes nor acquires some new kind of motion when He comes to indwell in the soul, what is the formal reason for this new inhabitation? Intentional presence is one way to account for this in such a way as to protect God’s immutability while being faithful to Christ’s own words in the Gospel regarding His “coming” into the soul (cf. John 14:23).

While both kinds of presence capture important dynamics of the divine indwelling, neither one is sufficient unto itself to account for the formal reason for the indwelling.<sup>32</sup> Each needs the other in order to be faithful to what God has revealed about the state of our souls in the state of grace. So as to understand what both kinds of presence bring to our understanding of

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<sup>31</sup> Rivas, *On Grace, On the Infused Virtues*, 139.

<sup>32</sup> This is to say that neither type of presence is sufficient unto itself in a way that is faithful to what has been revealed by God about this mystery, i.e. that it is a substantial indwelling in the soul (i.e. not reducible to intentional presence alone) which includes union via supernatural mental and volitional acts (i.e. is not explained merely by divine efficient causality). Among the theologians who placed the formal reason for indwelling in the substantial presence was P. Galtier, who thought that this ensured the soul’s continuing on in divine friendship, possessing the divine nature within. Without the presence of the divine nature, there was no ability for the soul to operate supernaturally. While this is certainly true, Galtier’s critics said that he did not sufficiently provide for the *triune* presence of God, that is God’s presence *qua tres*. As for the argument for intentional presence, many theologians since medieval times have sought to locate the formal reason for indwelling in the operation of knowledge and love of God toward the soul and from the soul back to God. Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure are representative of the medieval tradition in this regard. Cunningham presents the position of Alexander thus: “Since the inhabitation is a union with God, it cannot be realized by God’s efficient causality nor by His exemplary causality but only in virtue of a supernatural operation (reductively a habit or power) on the part of the creature: ‘the ultimate effect of grace is more perfect, to unite us to God; but in others besides Christ only by knowledge and love is there union with God.’” *Summa Alexandri*, IV, 161. Cited in Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 122. As powerful as the operations of knowledge and love are, they are unable by themselves to effect a union. For knowledge and love can exist perfectly well in the absence of the beloved or the one known. Thus, most theologians today look for a *via media* in bringing together God’s presence through producing grace in the soul and His presence through knowledge and love. Rivas, *On Grace, on the Infused Virtues*, 139-142.

this mystery, we may now consider that reality of fundamental importance: divine grace. At the close of the preceding section, we said that the consideration of God's new way of relating to the soul did not make sense without the working of some underlying reality making it possible for the soul to participate in this new relationship with God. This is the working of grace in the depths of the soul. The divine indwelling is indeed a completely supernatural act; it is a union which the human soul is unable to participate in without supernatural help. That the divine indwelling is supernatural also means that it is *un-owed* to man. This is not something a person deserves to possess; rather it is something given completely gratuitously from the goodness and love of God. The specific grace which we are referring to is *sanctifying grace*, a new, abiding, and elevating grace given to each person at the moment of their justification, imparting to the soul the gift of divine friendship through a sharing in the divine nature.<sup>33</sup> Finally, concomitant with this profound, immense gift of sanctifying grace is the possession of the Divine Persons, whom the soul is able to know and love in way more intimate than any natural knowledge or love can attain or acquire.<sup>34</sup>

The gift of sanctifying grace whereby God elevates human nature to a share in His divine life also lies at the root of the divine indwelling. A created supernatural gift, sanctifying grace inheres in the soul, which it transforms so as to elevate its faculties and render its acts supernaturally fruitful. Sanctifying grace is the beginning of the supernatural life and the basis

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<sup>33</sup> See "Sanctifying Grace" in John Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 488. For a good account of the nature of sanctifying grace, see John Hardon, *History and Theology of Grace: The Catholic Teaching on Divine Grace* (Ypsilanti, MI: Veritas Press of Ave Maria College, 2002), 119-160, 181-193. It is outside the scope of this paper to dwell at length on the nature of sanctifying grace and its necessity for the divine indwelling. Until now and going forward, I have presumed and will continue to presume its existence and necessity. As stated above, the importance of sanctifying grace for the divine indwelling cannot be overstated. It is ultimately what enables the soul to perform supernatural acts and come to that intimate knowledge and love of God which is peculiar to the soul in grace.

<sup>34</sup> For an account of the divine indwelling in the soul living in sanctifying grace, see Hardon, *History and Theology of Grace*, 193-204.

for the divine indwelling. As with all of His created effects, God is said to be present where He acts. In this particular action, however, God comes not merely as cause or principle, but He comes to be substantially present and to remain. Is sanctifying grace, then, the formal reason for the divine indwelling? Here, we must be careful to distinguish God's relation to the soul as cause versus as a Trinity of persons. Properly speaking, then, sanctifying grace cannot be the formal or proper reason for the *Trinitarian* indwelling, since it is an effect of God's operation *ad extra*, which is always of His one essence and never of one or more of the Divine Persons properly.<sup>35</sup> Instead, we must look further to the soul's intellectual and volitional operations which the divine indwelling makes possible *through grace* for the formal reason of inhabitation.

Returning to the above discussion on the distinction of kinds of presence of God in the soul, what has become clear in ruling out sanctifying grace as the formal reason for the indwelling is that substantial presence alone cannot account for the manner in which the Trinity indwells. True, the Trinity is present personally and substantially in the soul in grace; but saying God is present through the effect of grace is difficult to distinguish (formally speaking) from God being present to a thing through the effect of His creative operation.<sup>36</sup> God's creative operation is at work in both of these acts, but of course in the act of bestowing sanctifying grace, there is more going on. Thus, His manner of presence in the indwelling must be formally sought elsewhere.

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<sup>35</sup> "The fundamental intuition which underlies [the theory that the producing of sanctifying grace constitutes the formal reason for indwelling] should be preserved: God is not only the object of our knowledge and love, he is also their origin. It is his action which makes grace (which is the principle of all our supernatural activities and from which charity derives) spring forth...In this case the action which produces grace, as we shall see, realizes a completely new presence, the very presence which determines grace. But we must yet explain exactly what this presence consists of; and it is in this respect that the solution which we are examining remains inadequate." Nicolas, *The Mystery of God's Grace*, 69-70. Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 192-195.

<sup>36</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 194. Rivas, *On Grace, On the Infused Virtues*, 141-142.

Theologians thus turn to the intentional presence of God in order to better understand God's unique manner of presence in the graced soul. This intentional presence corresponds to God's being present as *term* of the operations of the rational creature (which, as we established earlier, is the only other way God can be present to creatures outside His common presence).<sup>37</sup> For God to be intentionally present to the soul is to be the object of the operations of the soul. He cannot be intentionally present, however, unless He has elevated man's nature to the supernatural realm through sanctifying grace. Through grace, man possesses the three Divine Persons in his soul. To possess a spiritual "object" (if we can so refer to God in this way) is intrinsically an act of the intellect since this requires an act of apprehension before the object can be fully possessed and enjoyed by the will.<sup>38</sup> Love, then, binds the soul to God who is present in His soul and allows the soul to enjoy God's presence within. These graced movements of knowledge and love in the human soul are most fitting vis-à-vis the Divine Persons, for the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father by way of intellect and will and are consequently sent from the Father in time to indwell in the soul.<sup>39</sup> In all of this, grace is presupposed as

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<sup>37</sup> God is present as term of the soul's knowledge and love, made possible by man's elevation by grace. Knowledge alone does not make the object of my knowledge present to me, although it is in a sense interiorly present. Rather, knowledge combined with real effective contact with the object known is what makes someone or something really present to me. This real and effective union is only brought about through the movement of love, which moves toward the beloved and toward union. See Nicolas, *The Mystery of God's Grace*, 74-75. St. Thomas' formulation of this unique indwelling presence is thus: "Above and beyond this common mode, however, there is one special mode belonging to the rational nature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower (*cognitum in cognoscente*) and the beloved in the lover (*amatum in amante*). And since the rational creature by its operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode God is said not only to exist in the rational creature but also to dwell therein as in His own temple." *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Also see Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 188-191.

<sup>38</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 197.

<sup>39</sup> The temporal sending of the Son and Holy Spirit into the souls of the just is the "invisible mission" of each Person. The union the soul has with God via knowledge and love is a relation that resembles the relations in God Himself, i.e. the processions of the Son and Spirit by way of intellect and will. Indeed, the life of grace is a participation in the very life of God, which includes the processions within God. It is fitting, therefore, that the soul's union with God is formally explained in terms of knowledge and love, since these characterize the processions within God Himself. See Joseph M. Dalmau, S.J., *On the One and Triune God*, volume IIA of *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, trans. Kenneth Baker, S.J. (Ramsey, NJ: Keep the Faith Publications, 2016), 361-379 [on the formal principle of the divine processions], 471-489 [on the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit]. The indwelling

absolutely necessary. Sanctifying grace is at the root of the distinction between God's unique presence in the indwelling versus His common presence of immensity.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the acts of knowledge and love are not sufficient in themselves to make another being present to us. We are able to know and love those who are physically absent from us, even in a way that makes our knowledge and love of them grow stronger. This is not the case, however, when God dwells within us. When God dwells within a soul, He is intimately present to it both substantially and as term. This would not be possible without God's grace working within the depths of the soul.

### **Another View**

To this point, I have attempted to establish the formal reason for the indwelling as the union of God with the soul via knowledge and love made possible through the work of divine grace. As can be seen from the foregoing pages, this solution rests on a clear distinction between the natural and supernatural order and between what is possible and not possible to be predicated of God (i.e. local motion, efficient causality as one in essence and not three in persons, knowledge and love, etc.). By saying that God indwells in the soul as *term* of the soul's acts of knowledge and love, we protect the transcendence of the divine essence while also establishing a new relation between God and the soul which did not exist before justification. Yet it is also worth considering another view of God's self-communication, one that posits God's union with the rational creature through a kind of *formal* causality.

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elevates the *imago Dei* already present in human nature: "In the actualization of the image, God is the object of the faculties of the intellect and the will. So also, in the case of the indwelling of the Trinity, God presents himself to the soul of the just man as the object of the soul's knowledge and love. In both cases there results an assimilation of the soul to the divine processions of the Word and of Love." Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 230.

<sup>40</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 191-192.



Karl Rahner is one proponent of the theory that God's self-communication to what is not Himself is to be understood as a kind of formal, or quasi-formal, causality.<sup>41</sup> While Rahner uses this theory for Christological purposes, particularly with respect to the hypostatic union, it applies by extension to a view of the divine indwelling. This principle of this theory is thus characterized by Guy Mansini: "God is related to what he is not somewhat as the soul is related to the body, form to matter, or act to potency."<sup>42</sup> In other words, God comes to dwell in the soul of the just in an analogous manner to a form coming to animate matter which actuates a substance. God actuates the obediential potency of the soul toward His indwelling and thus He enables the soul to share in the divine life with Him.

This theory, however, quickly becomes problematic. First, the soul would stand in a relation of potency to its informing act, God Himself. But God cannot stand in this kind of relation with finite reality, for God—who is pure Act—cannot be limited by any kind of potency.<sup>43</sup> God is not subject to the change of being reduced to act and potency. We can still speak of His "coming" to dwell in the soul. Though we must speak in terms of a new *relation*, not a new informing principle of the soul. Some theologians attempt to get around the problem of God becoming limited by potency by using the term "quasi-formal causality" with respect to the manner of God's indwelling in the soul.<sup>44</sup> Through the use of this term, these theologians

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<sup>41</sup> For a good account of Rahner's theory of God's self-communication to what is not Himself (i.e. that which is 'other' than God) and a response to it, see Guy Mansini, "Quasi-Formal Causality and 'Change in the Other': A Note on Karl Rahner's Christology," *The Thomist* 52, no. 2 (1988), 293-306.

<sup>42</sup> Mansini, "Quasi-Formal Causality and 'Change in the Other,'" 295.

<sup>43</sup> Mansini, "Quasi-Formal Causality and 'Change in the Other,'" 304.

<sup>44</sup> In particular, see P. De Letter, S.J., "Grace, Incorporation, Inhabitation," *Theological Studies* 19, no. 1 (1958): 1-31. P. De Letter, "Sanctifying Grace and the Divine Indwelling," *Theological Studies* 14, no. 2 (1953): 242-272. In his article, "Sanctifying Grace and Our Union with the Holy Trinity," (cited previously), De Letter picks up on the work of Maurice de la Taille, S.J., who sought the formal manner of the indwelling in distinct relations between the soul and the three Divine Persons. Yves Congar gives an overview of the "quasi-formal causality" theory in his treatment of the manner of the divine indwelling. In general, this theory arises out of a general dissatisfaction with appropriation theory among theologians. Yves Congar, *He is Lord and Giver of Life*, in *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. II (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 83-90.

want to ensure divine transcendence remains intact (i.e. that God does not somehow become a part of the substantial composition of the human person) while also advocating for a union of the soul and each of the three divine Persons that goes beyond simply appropriating relations between them. Using the hypostatic union as an analogy, those who advocate quasi-formal causality in the divine indwelling would say that just as the Son has a particular and personal relation to His human nature that only *He* took on (not the Father nor the Spirit), so each of the triune Persons possesses a unique relation to the soul in which They abide. The Father adopts the soul as His beloved son or daughter; the Son shares His unique relation of sonship with the soul; and the Spirit gives Himself and His seven-fold gifts by way of love.<sup>45</sup>

That the Divine Persons come to dwell in the soul with their respective relations to one another is true enough. The soul, however, is related to the indwelling Trinity by participation in God's inner life, not by possessing unique relations to each of the Persons. In short, we must be careful with (quasi-) formal causality in the indwelling because it can easily become a way for the soul to become God, an idea inimical to Pius XII in *Mystici Corporis Christi*. The doctrine of the indwelling cannot justly be compared to the hypostatic union, which is altogether unique in the supernatural order. While it is indeed true that the indwelling enacts a union between the soul and the transcendent God, the soul does not thereby take on the personal properties of the individual divine Persons. Rather, the soul is given the grace (by divine efficient causality) to be taken up into the dynamism of the entire Trinity as one and triune. The soul is related to all three Persons in virtue of a new real *relation* to Them by way of knowledge and love. The supernatural acts of knowledge and love terminate in each of the Persons and allow the soul to share freely in the communion amongst all of Them together and individually.

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<sup>45</sup> De Letter gives these examples and writes, "Each of the three components of the triune relationship has its own distinct character..." De Letter, "Grace, Incorporation, Inhabitation," 15.

In a theory of formal causality regarding the divine indwelling, there is a temptation to attempt to exactly map the relations between the soul and God onto the relations in the immanent Trinity. While the economic Trinity and immanent Trinity are revealed in one another, their relations are not thereby reproduced in the soul in which God dwells. Rather, the acts of the soul are elevated to terminate in God, who draws man into His own blessed life. The God who reveals Himself in history and, in a particular way, in the divine indwelling is always transcendent, simple, and free with respect to His temporal activity.<sup>46</sup> We see a certain fittingness and intelligibility to the way He has revealed His inner life in coming to abide in the souls of the just. We must always, however, keep intact the distinctness, the “other-ness” of the divine vis-à-vis the human.

Thus, the formal causal account of the formal reason for the indwelling is ultimately inadequate.

### **Experiencing the Trinity Within**

The knowledge and love, rooted in grace, by which we possess the Trinity within our souls has profound consequences for the way we think about the spiritual life. By grounding God’s presence within us in the operations of supernatural knowledge and love, this need not leave this doctrine on the level of abstraction. While the indwelling remains a deep mystery, it is not something “too hard for [us], neither is it far off” (Deut 30:11).

Sanctifying grace forms the basis for possessing the Divine Persons, while the infused virtues and Gifts of the Holy Spirit are what elevate our intellect and will such that their graced operations render the Persons perceptible to us in a supernatural way. Just as to know and love a

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<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, Mansini’s issue with Rahner’s theory is that it seeks necessary reasons for the events of the economy of salvation where this is unwarranted (e.g. that only the Son could become incarnate) and that it also puts in danger the divine transcendence, i.e. God’s utter distinctness from the created order as well as His freedom to reveal Himself in whatever way He deigns fitting.

person or a thing in the natural order presumes perception of the object or person in question, so supernatural knowledge and love uniting the soul to God also presumes this kind of perception or experimental knowledge.<sup>47</sup> Since this “experimental” knowledge is not present to the senses, it is often referred to as “quasi-experimental” knowledge.<sup>48</sup> Regardless of the name, we must ask, how does this experimental knowledge come about? Does a person in the state of grace really *experience* God within himself?

The unity between the acts of knowledge and love come to the fore in the consideration of the soul’s experimental knowledge of God within.<sup>49</sup> Though knowledge renders an object present to the knower interiorly, this presence is not thereby made real. While the knowledge of faith has God for its object, God is not thereby rendered immediately present to the mind. There is another movement necessary for this knowledge to terminate in union with the object known. This movement is precisely love, a love that makes the whole soul tend toward God and the penetration of His inner life so as to rest in union with Him. This movement is no ordinary love; it is the love of God Himself which enables the soul to move in this way, thus coming to intimate knowledge of the One known and loved.

What, indeed, does [this knowledge] lack in order to be experimental? Only that the thing known should be at its origin and at its end. As soon as it is there, existentially joined to the knower, his knowledge will become experimental. It is the thing known in its concrete and living reality which affects this knowledge; so if this thing is there, in real contact with the knower, it will find its natural complement in this contact and will identify itself with it. We find this complement realized in supernatural knowledge: God is at its origin, effectively causing grace in the soul, together with faith and love, whose exercise he

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<sup>47</sup> “Thus Augustine plainly says (*De Trinitate*, IV, 20): *The Son is sent, whenever He is known and perceived by anyone*. Now perception implies a certain experimental knowledge; and this is properly called wisdom, as it were a sweet knowledge...” *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. “[Experimental knowledge] is conditional on the physical contact [i.e. union] being at its origin and at its end. In short, it means that the act of knowing is determined by the real action of the thing known on the knower, and that it joins up with the thing at the point where it is in real contact with it. The typical case of this mode of knowing is sensible perception.” Nicolas, *The Mystery of God’s Grace*, 75.

<sup>48</sup> Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 196-202.

<sup>49</sup> See Nicolas, *The Mystery of God’s Grace*, 73-78.

activates; God is at its end also, effectively united to the soul by this very action...By virtue of this knowledge and of the love which animates it, the creative contact of the soul with God becomes a personal presence, the Trinitarian presence...<sup>50</sup>

The profundity but also the mystery of the divine indwelling becomes apparent here. The soul's experience of the Trinity within has its source in God and terminates in God through these acts of supernatural knowledge and the charity of God Himself. Only God can render us intimately united with God.

St. Thomas, commenting on Psalm 34<sup>51</sup>, compares this experimental knowledge of God within us to a kind of tasting. We can gain knowledge of a thing which is either absent or present. If it is absent, our senses of sight, hearing, and smell help us to acquire knowledge of the thing. If it is a present good, knowledge of it comes through our senses of touch and taste. We are able to touch those things which are present but exterior to us, while taste concerns those things present and interior. Now God is one who is intimately *present* to us, more so than we to ourselves. As Psalm 139 declares, He knows our inmost being (cf. Ps 139:13-15). Thus, in an analogous way to sense knowledge, Thomas says, we experience God within us through a kind of tasting.<sup>52</sup> This kind of knowledge has a kind of immediacy, not that it is without mediation but that it is gained in little time, with little to no deliberation, unlike more discursive knowledge. This is because this knowledge is spurred on by the supernatural virtue of *charity*<sup>53</sup>, which

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<sup>50</sup> Nicolas, *The Mystery of God's Grace*, 77-78.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Super Psalmo 33*, ed. Aquinas Institute, 2020, 332, <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~Psalm.Ps33.n332.8>. The verse in question is Psalm 34:8 ("O taste and see that the Lord is good").

<sup>52</sup> "Experientia de re sumitur per sensum; sed aliter de re praesenti, et aliter de absente: quia de absente per visum, odoratum, et auditum; de praesente vero per tactum et gustum; sed per tactum de extrinseca praesente, per gustum vero de intrinseca. Deus autem non longe est a nobis, nec extra nos, sed in nobis: [Hier. 14:9] *tu in nobis es domine*. Et ideo experientia divinae bonitatis dicitur gustatio..." *Super Psalmo 33*, 332.

<sup>53</sup> All supernatural knowledge of God is informed by charity, the form of the virtues, which binds all things together in perfect harmony (cf. Col 3:14). The Holy Spirit Himself animates our love such that it is raised to the mode of divine love. Christian prayer that springs from persevering love also gives the soul a kind of intimate knowledge of God. The Spirit teaches us how to pray, and He is the living water welling up to eternal life in our souls. See CCC, 1827, 2652-2653, 2742.

directs and binds us to the object known and loved. In this case, the object is the Divine Persons sent to dwell in the soul. Aquinas, drawing on Augustine, says that the Son is sent wherever He is known and perceived. Since perception implies a kind of experimental knowledge, the perception by which the soul knows and loves God dwelling in his soul is a kind of experimental knowledge of God, a way in which the soul *tastes* God within him. This experimental knowledge also receives a name: wisdom, a gift of the Holy Spirit which gives us an interior, intimate, and quasi-instinctual knowledge of the divine persons and things to which we are united by love.<sup>54</sup> Thus, this loving-knowledge by which the soul possesses God is properly given the name, *Wisdom*.

Admittedly, this knowledge and love by which the soul is united to God as term does not make God present as He will be known and loved in the Beatific Vision. There, we will experience the completion of the Christian life, the completion of what was begun in a mediated way on earth via the divine indwelling. Nevertheless, the manner of the Trinitarian indwelling already gives a taste of what is to come. Through the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom and the supreme theological virtue of charity, God is perceived as present to the soul in possession of Him. It is the nature of love to unite; and since love is the form and foundation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, wisdom can also be said to unite us to the object of its apprehension, though properly speaking it resides in the intellect. Wisdom and charity are created effects of God concomitant with the infusion of sanctifying grace. In virtue of God's presence of immensity, He is immediately present to His created effects; but *these* particular effects, i.e. wisdom and charity, are supernatural (along with all the created effects concomitant with sanctifying grace). Their operations thus place the soul in intimate contact with God, for they assimilate the soul to

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<sup>54</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 5, ad 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, OP (see quotation in footnote 47).

the Divine Persons themselves.<sup>55</sup> The Father sends the Son by way of intellect and the Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son by way of the will through love. These Divine Persons, in their personal relations, come to dwell in the soul. This soul, through knowing and loving God with the supernatural gifts given to it, thus come to participate in the very life of God Himself, even to the point of being drawn into the life of personal relations within God Himself.

*What to Make of Baptized Infants? Actual vs. Habitual Knowledge and Love*

It is appropriate to ask how a person in the state of grace but who has no use of his or her rational powers is able to experience God in this supernatural way just outlined. Through lived experience, we know that many infants die having received baptism but not yet attaining the age of reason when they are able to perform the acts that have God as their term. How can these infants be said to know and love God in a supernatural way? Does the Trinity truly dwell in those souls as term if they only possess non-operative rational powers?

Here, Aquinas distinguishes between the *act* and the *habit* of the infused virtues.<sup>56</sup> Though baptized infants are unable to perform acts of knowledge and love of God, God still dwells in them because of the *habits* of the infused virtues.<sup>57</sup> Unlike natural habits which are required by repeated acts, supernaturally infused habits inhere in the soul giving the soul the power to perform certain acts. These habits are directed toward God as their object (with regard to wisdom and charity, God *as really present* is the object of these acts), and these habits remain though they may never be perfected by acts. Furthermore, as a result of their being infused, the supernatural habits by their very nature bring the soul into contact with God, since God is present

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<sup>55</sup> The language of “assimilation” to the Divine Persons comes from Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 26-27.

<sup>56</sup> For this and what follows, I am indebted to Cunningham’s treatment of this issue in *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, 208-211.

<sup>57</sup> “Sed spiritualiter dicitur Deus inhabitare tamquam in familiari domo in sanctis, quorum mens capax est Dei per cognitionem et amorem, etiam si ipsi in actu non cognoscant et diligant, dummodo habeant per gratiam habitum fidei et caritatis, sicut patet de pueris baptizatis.” Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, C.3, L.3, 173. ed. Aquinas Institute, 2020. <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~1Cor.C3.L3.n173>.

in virtue of His graced action on the soul, making it share in His divine life. The soul possesses a real relation to the divine Persons truly present in the soul simply in virtue of possessing the infused habits which a non-graced soul does not have. These infants or others without the actual operative power necessary to perform supernatural acts can truly be said to be the dwelling place of God, since God Himself has graced them with the power of moving and acting according to the motions of the Holy Spirit. Thus, what always holds primacy in the divine indwelling is the action of God. God's infusion of grace and supernatural habits are what render Him present in the soul at the beginning of a person's supernatural life. Nothing on the part of man contributes to the action of God coming to dwell in us. God's grace holds priority in the supernatural order.

### **Bridging the Gap Between Time and Eternity**

The indwelling of the Trinity, as an act of love and a gift of grace from God to the soul who receives Him, enacts a transformation on the part of man in his relation to God. The soul receives the divine essence into itself, in a way that it does not thereby become divine but is nonetheless elevated to supernatural friendship and a share in the divine nature. This is no mere static reality but *dynamic*, in the sense that the divine indwelling orders the soul to acts that have the Divine Persons as their term:

By receiving [the divine nature], therefore, I receive something of God and begin to be able to perform divine actions... To act divinely is only possible to those who are made divine. This, then, becomes the formal union with God, its term, its end, its purpose. Therefore, we become deified in our essence by grace, in our intelligence by its light, and in our will by charity.<sup>58</sup>

The soul, through sanctifying grace, receives a participation in the divine nature (God's essence) which is always in act. The supernatural acts of the soul, done with sanctifying grace and the infused habits at their root, terminate in God in such a way that the soul's acts of knowledge and

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<sup>58</sup> Jarrett, *He Dwells in Your Soul*, 56.



love are related to the way the Divine Persons are sent (the Son by way of intellect and the Spirit by way of will). It is these supernatural *acts* that enable the soul to live a true spiritual life that culminates in the vision of heaven.<sup>59</sup>

It is also through these supernatural acts that the soul can truly be said to *possess* God within. It belongs to love to possess and be possessed, and the soul in grace is able to possess God because God has truly given Himself through enlightening the faculties to operate in a divine way.<sup>60</sup> Aquinas notes that the gift of sanctifying grace not only allows the rational creature to use this created gift but also “to enjoy the divine Person himself.”<sup>61</sup> Here, Aquinas is speaking of the way in which the soul is assimilated through grace to the Divine Person who is sent. The Holy Spirit is the one who is sent by way of love<sup>62</sup>, uniting the soul to God, which is why the indwelling is most fittingly attributed to the Spirit. At the same time, the Son is also invisibly sent into the soul, being sent by the Father and manifested by the Holy Spirit who always speaks and reminds us of Christ.<sup>63</sup> As a result of their being given and sent, the Divine Persons are in a true sense said to be “possessed” by the soul. The soul is bound to the Divine Persons through a knowledge and love that is imperfect yet fitting to a rational creature.<sup>64</sup> This union, which the soul experiences deep within, is already a foretaste of the joys of heaven where God will be enjoyed in a complete and unmediated way.

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<sup>59</sup> “The operation of the Holy Spirit in our souls is motion.” Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 43.

<sup>60</sup> “In earthly love, how imperfect, how ephemeral, how inconstant our possession is! In divine love, however, the one who is loved is necessarily possessed and with a more profound intimacy than we know, and so unchangingly—on God’s part always and on ours when love attains its perfection.” Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>62</sup> “The soul is made like to God by grace. Hence for a divine person to be sent to anyone by grace, there must needs be a likening of the soul to the divine Person who is sent, by some gift of grace. Because the Holy Spirit is Love, the soul is assimilated to the Holy Spirit by the gift of charity: hence the mission of the Holy Spirit is according to the mode of charity.” *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 5, ad. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>63</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 5, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>64</sup> “Before the soul reaches the maturity of union it possesses the Gift of God, but as one possessing a treasure whose value is unknown and whose advantages cannot be fully enjoyed immediately. This imperfect spiritual life is the true life, but it does not yet have full consciousness or full possession of itself.” Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 30-31.

For the soul in grace, life on earth thus becomes an anticipation and a preparation for life with God. In possessing God (and more importantly, being possessed by Him), the soul learns to act in accordance with the movements of the Holy Spirit within without at all having its freedom compromised. The soul is thus most in possession of God when it is moved by Him and when it is attuned to the Spirit's inspirations. In the following chapter, we will look to see how the soul in grace resembles (although in a mediated, imperfect manner) the soul that already enjoys God in heaven. The manner in which the soul enjoys God being already established, we move on to the practical ways in which a true spiritual life is an anticipation of heavenly beatitude.

### Chapter III: The Soul in Beatitude vs. The Soul in Grace

Having considered both the fact of the indwelling as well as the formal manner of this union, we are now in a place to consider how this union both resembles and differs from the union whereby the saints enjoy God eternally in heaven. In this way, we will come closer to determining the accuracy of Leo XIII's profound statement in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit, that these unions differ "only in degree or state."<sup>1</sup>

On earth, the indwelling of the Trinity is a participation in the mystery of God, one in essence and three in persons. God, in the act of coming to dwell in the soul and take possession of it, gives sanctifying grace and produces its effects in the soul. This is an act proceeding from the one divine essence which is not proper to any of the Divine Persons; rather, it belongs to all of them together. At the same time, the indwelling creates a new relation between the soul and God, resembling in an analogous way the relations in the Trinity itself. Namely, the soul is able to know and love God in an intimate and experiential way through supernatural acts which are made possible by the state of habitual grace. These acts—and corresponding habits—of knowledge and love which have the three Divine Persons as their object reflect and are participations in the relations of the Trinity: the relation of being sent by way of love belongs to the Holy Spirit; the relation of being sent from the Father by way of knowledge (or intellect) belongs to the Son; and the Father is the origin of these processions in the Godhead. The soul operates in such a way that the Divine Persons are the terms of its supernatural acts (while never dividing the Persons in essence). As a result, the soul is truly elevated with respect to its ability to live in communion with God on the supernatural level.

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<sup>1</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.

As the divine indwelling commences the soul on its spiritual life, we rightly say that the whole of the Christian life is lived out as a communion with the Divine Persons.<sup>2</sup> This life is meant to culminate in eternal beatitude with God forever in heaven. The Catechism of the Catholic Church synthesizes this truth well: “The ultimate end of the whole divine economy is the entry of God’s creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity. But even now we are called to be a dwelling for the Most Holy Trinity.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, the divine indwelling on earth is not the end of the road; rather it serves the end of *perfect* union with God in heaven. Yet even now, this bliss is experienced in a true, albeit imperfect, manner. When the Trinity comes to dwell in the just soul, that soul can truly be said to possess God.<sup>4</sup> We will now investigate what belongs to beatific life and earthly life with respect to the life of the soul (in grace) in its relations with God.

### **The Life of the Soul in Beatitude**

Though the vocation of every human person is to union with God, the comprehension of this truth escapes natural reason. St. Paul names the utter distinctness of the beatific life—and indeed, the whole supernatural order—from the earthly, natural order when he writes, “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9). This beatific life lies beyond the struggles and sufferings of the present age. Life with God in heaven will not include any of these difficulties we experience here below. Again, St. Paul writes, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom 8:18). The newness of the beatific

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<sup>2</sup> “Being a work at once common and personal, the whole divine economy makes known both what is proper to the divine persons, and their one divine nature. Hence the whole Christian life is a communion with each of the divine persons, without in any way separating them. Everyone who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Holy Spirit; everyone who follows Christ does so because the Father draws him and the Spirit moves him.” CCC, 259.

<sup>3</sup> CCC, 260. Cited in Dubay, “The Indwelling of Divine Love,” 167. Cf. Jn 17:21-23.

<sup>4</sup> See Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 26-27.

life after the soul's earthly life is complete was confirmed and clarified by the Church through Pope Benedict XII in 1336 through the papal bull, *Benedictus Deus*.<sup>5</sup> Seeking to answer the question of whether souls receive their eternal reward before the general judgment at the end of time, the pope answered in the affirmative and at the same time wrote of the face-to-face vision of God which the just soul experiences in heaven. He writes:

Since the Passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, these souls [of the just] have seen and see the divine essence with an intuitive vision and *even face to face*, without the mediation of any creature by way of object of vision; rather the divine essence immediately manifests itself to them plainly, clearly and openly, and in this vision they enjoy the divine essence.<sup>6</sup>

In passing from this life to the next, the soul's experience is beyond the comprehension of human reason and sense knowledge. In heaven, no longer will knowledge of God be mediated by creatures (e.g. the created order, sacraments of the Church, images, etc.). Rather, heaven is where God will be seen "as he is," (1 Jn 3:2), i.e. in His essence. God's essence is not a corporeal substance or a created image; this would be something other than God, a creature. Unlike the natural way of acquiring knowledge, the knowledge of God in heaven cannot be through images, for the essence of God is incorporeal and thus cannot be seen by the corporeal eye.<sup>7</sup> In the case of seeing God, the object of the soul's vision and the principle by which the soul is able to see are one and the same, i.e. God Himself.<sup>8</sup> This is why both the theological and magisterial tradition speak of an immediate (that is, unmediated) intellectual vision of God in beatific life.<sup>9</sup> There is nothing that comes between the soul (with its rational faculties still at work) and God Himself.

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<sup>5</sup> Pope Benedict XII, Constitution *Benedictus Deus* (29 January 1336).

<sup>6</sup> DH 1000 [emphasis added].

<sup>7</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 12, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 12, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>9</sup> DH 1000-1002. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 12, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Francis A P. Sola, S.J. and Joseph F. Sagues, S.J., *On Holy Orders and Matrimony, On the Last Things*, volume IVB of *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, trans. Kenneth Baker, S.J. (Ramsey, NJ: Keep the Faith Publications, 2016), 322.

While divine revelation and the authority of the Church testify clearly to the distinctness and utter newness of the beatific life, it remains to be seen in what heavenly life actually consists. In other words, how is the soul affected by God in heaven such that it is considered “blessed”? What acts does the soul *do* in heaven? In answer to the first question, it is evident that life in heaven brings to completion what was initially wrought in the divine indwelling on earth: union with God. The soul in heaven comes to *possess* God who is the object of his happiness. This possession is simply a consequence of the loving union between God and the soul begun in justification and brought to perfection in the blessed life of heaven. The One Whom the soul possessed on earth in an imperfect way now becomes the soul’s possession forever in a union of perfect love.

This brings us to the second question raised above. What kind of acts is the soul actually performing in his life in heaven?<sup>10</sup> One of these acts has already been discussed above: vision. Upon entering heaven, God’s essence will be made known to the eyes of our soul. On earth, we know God through concepts and ideas (natural reason) as well as through the gifts of grace and the virtue of faith (supernatural gifts). In heaven, however, there will be no mediation of concepts and ideas in the vision of God. Grace will continue to be necessary in order to sustain our intellects in the vision of the divine essence, but this grace will not include the infused virtue of faith.<sup>11</sup> Faith is precisely a virtue which gives us knowledge of things unseen, of things not fully possessed in this life.<sup>12</sup> In heaven, we will see the one in Whom we have believed in His

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<sup>10</sup> Here we are speaking of acts which are essentially constitutive of the soul’s beatific union with God. There are of course other human acts which the person will be able to do in heaven, especially after the final resurrection and the soul and body are reunited. For the purposes of this paper, however, it is sufficient to consider the acts of the blessed soul which formally constitute and are essential to the beatific life.

<sup>11</sup> This grace is precisely the *lumen gloriae*, supernaturally infused by God and which gives the soul the capacity to see God through a kind of intellectual vision without the mediation of faith. John A. Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 326.

<sup>12</sup> See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 1, a. 4, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

fullness, while we will also possess Him Whom we have desired. Neither faith nor hope will be necessary in heaven, since they pertain to the soul that has not yet arrived at its final end (although is on its way).<sup>13</sup>

The other acts of the soul in the beatific life are rooted in the soul's union with the object of its final happiness. These acts are, namely, *love* and *joy*.<sup>14</sup> With respect to the intellect, the soul's happiness is satisfied through the act of vision of God, the source of all goodness, while the will is satiated through rest in the object of its appetitive movement toward the universal good. The will is moved toward the universal good through the intellect's apprehension of it, and it is only satisfied by union with the good desired. This movement of the will toward the good—whether present or absent—is *love*, generally speaking.<sup>15</sup> In the case of the relationship between the soul and God, the life of heaven consists in God—the Universal Good—being immediately present to the soul. The soul is perfectly united to God habitually in the love of friendship (willing the good for another) and in the love of concupiscence (willing the good as good for oneself).<sup>16</sup> This habitual state of union and love is made possible through the persistence of the virtue of *charity*, which remains in the soul as it passes from earthly to heavenly life.<sup>17</sup> By the virtue of charity, the soul shares eternally in a union of friendship with God, begun in this life through the divine indwelling. In the case of the soul in heaven, however, the will is fixed forever upon God as the last end and not subject to its own weakness and fickle nature in the earthly state.

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<sup>13</sup> Benedict XII writes in *Benedictus Deus*: “Such a vision and enjoyment of the divine essence do away with the acts of faith and hope in these souls, inasmuch as faith and hope are properly theological virtues.” DH 1001.

<sup>14</sup> Sola, *On Holy Orders and Matrimony, On the Last Things*, 321.

<sup>15</sup> Sola, *On Holy Orders and Matrimony, On the Last Things*, 322.

<sup>16</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 26, a. 4; q. 28, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>17</sup> See *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 28, arts. 1-2; II-II, q. 23, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Cf. 1 Cor 13:8-13.

The consequence of the will being fully satisfied and resting in God as its final end fully present is the *joy* or delight of possessing the good which is loved.<sup>18</sup> While joy is not in itself a virtue, it is an act or effect that follows charity.<sup>19</sup> The soul rejoices either as a result of a good being present to it or because it rejoices in the good of another (as if it were his own good).<sup>20</sup> Both of these sources of joy are to be found in God, either as the result of God being present to the soul (as He is in the vision of heaven), or because of the soul's love of God for God's sake. In both of these cases, the joy that the soul experiences is caused by the operation of the habit of charity.

It is in these latter two acts, i.e. charity and joy, that the veil between heaven and earth is the thinnest. St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that while faith, hope, and love are the gifts of God that ultimately abide in this life, “the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13). After death, faith and hope give way to the vision of God. These virtues are rendered unnecessary by the immediate presence of the God's essence to the intellect. Charity, on the other hand, remains in order to unite us perfectly to God. It is the virtue that renders us friends of God, able to share in His divine life more intimately than the best of earthly friends share their lives<sup>21</sup>, both in this life and in heaven. This virtue bridges the gap, in a sense, between the earthly and heavenly states. We now move on to consider the state of the soul of the just while still on earth, in order to see

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<sup>18</sup> *Sola, On Holy Orders and Matrimony, On the Last Things*, 322.

<sup>19</sup> *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 28, arts. 1, 4, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>20</sup> “For joy is caused by love, either through the presence of the thing loved, or because the proper good of the thing loved exists and endures in it; and the latter is the case chiefly in the love of benevolence, whereby a man rejoices in the well-being of his friend, though he be absent.” *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 28, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>21</sup> “Moreover, God by grace resides as in the just soul as in a temple, in a most intimate and peculiar manner. From this proceeds that union of affection by which the soul adheres most closely to God, more so than the friend is united to his most loving and beloved friend, and enjoys God in all fulness [sic] and sweetness.” *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.



whether the beatific life is an increase in kind or only in degree of union between God and the soul.

### **The Life of the Just Soul on Earth**

Throughout the New Testament, there are a few suggestive passages that allude to the soul's enjoyment of heaven in an anticipatory way *here on earth*. In chapter one, we looked at several passages which spoke explicitly of the divine indwelling. In addition to these there exist passages which clearly suggest a preliminary earthly participation in the reward of heaven to those who believe in the Son and live in Him. The Gospel of John presents eternal life as the consequence of belief in the Son of God: "[H]e who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life" (Jn 5:24). The eating of Christ's flesh also seems to carry with it a promise of present beatitude and not only future reward: "[H]e who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn 6:54). In addition to the Pauline sources which indicate the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Paul is also quite aware of the presence of Christ within him. His union with Christ makes him transparent to Christ, such that Christ lives in him and is the one actively working through him (cf. Gal 2:20). Even while laboring on earth, Paul often speaks as if his final reward is never far off, for the Son and the Holy Spirit are always close at hand.

At the same time, however, the New Testament also indicates that any earthly experience of union with God is not definitive or complete; another prize awaits the souls of the just. St. Paul is well aware of this, having suffered constantly for the sake of the gospel. His hope is firm as he labors on: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:14). In this life, says Paul, we only see shadows of what is to come, as "in a mirror dimly," but later on we shall see "face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). Though couched in the

language of analogy, Paul's language is clear that the heavenly reward which the soul anticipates is far greater than any experience of God on earth, however sublime. Still, this is no reason to downplay the great supernatural work that is the divine indwelling. With God dwelling within his soul, a person is set on the path to eternal life and begins to taste it already through the substantial presence of the three Divine Persons within him. Indeed, the various qualities of the soul in grace show how the soul's union with God is a kind of incipient beatitude which, if nurtured and preserved in this life, will flourish and be perfected in the life to come.

The beginning of the supernatural life is the moment of justification, when God comes to the soul and transforms it from within.<sup>22</sup> This moment is concomitant with the moment the Triune God comes to dwell personally and substantially in the soul. The soul is brought into the state of friendship with God and beautified through sanctifying grace. Through this habitual grace, the soul is thus elevated such that it is able to perform supernatural acts directed by the virtues infused by God Himself into the soul.<sup>23</sup> These virtues include the theological as well as the infused moral virtues, which are given to serve the exercise of the theological virtues.<sup>24</sup> These virtues enable the soul to know and love God as He is in Himself and according to the Divine Law.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, through the theological virtues, the soul has intimate contact with God, even a kind of possession of God through the virtue of charity, for union and possession are proper to a lover and beloved present to one another.<sup>26</sup> The *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* are especially pertinent in the virtuous operation of the soul in grace. Just as the indwelling of the Trinity is attributed in a special way to the Holy Spirit, so the gifts which He bestows on the soul are also

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<sup>22</sup> See DH 1528-1531 (Council of Trent, Session VI, *Decree on Justification*, Chapter 7).

<sup>23</sup> See *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 63, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 63, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>25</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 63, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>26</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 28, arts. 1-2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 26-27.

appropriately ascribed to His personal activity. Through the gifts, the Holy Spirit takes hold of the soul and moves it according to His own divine operation, leading the soul to act in the divine mode, according to the model and pattern of Christ.<sup>27</sup> In other words, through the Gifts of the Spirit, God Himself moves the soul to operate according to the theological virtues.<sup>28</sup> In order to act virtuously according to the Divine Law, to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect, it is insufficient for the soul to act solely from its own directing principle (reason); it is necessary for the divine operation to take hold of him in order to act divinely.<sup>29</sup>

Through the infused virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the soul is already initiated into life according to the divine modality. As we examine the life of the soul in grace while still on earth, we will focus primarily on the theological virtues and the Gifts. These in particular reveal the anticipatory taste of eternal life here on earth. This supernatural tasting is truly able to be experienced, as the mystical tradition of the Church also reveals.

The theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity—are rendered necessary in the Christian life because of man’s supernatural vocation. As the final end of man is happiness, terminating in the vision of God’s essence<sup>30</sup>, man’s natural faculties and powers are insufficient for arriving at this end.<sup>31</sup> Thus, God gives to the soul through sanctifying grace additional principles of operation which enable him to reach his supernatural end. St. Thomas says these are properly

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<sup>27</sup> “All the supernatural virtues and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit come to the soul with him... When the soul has been purified through the virtues, the Holy Spirit more surely possesses it. Now by means of his gifts, he purifies it more thoroughly and harmonizes everything until, in perfect peace, penetrated with charity, now sovereign in it and fully possessed by the Holy Spirit, the soul is transformed into Jesus through the fullness of the gift of wisdom.” Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 39-40.

<sup>28</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>29</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>30</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 3, a. 8, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>31</sup> “Now man’s happiness is twofold, as was also stated above. One is proportionate to human nature, a happiness, to wit, which man can obtain by means of his natural principles. The other is a happiness surpassing man’s nature, and which man can obtain by the power of God alone, by a kind of participation of the Godhead, about which it is written (2 Pet 1:4) that by Christ we are made *partakers of the Divine nature*.” *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 62, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

called “theological” virtues for three reasons: (1) their object is God, i.e. they direct us on the right path toward God; (2) they are infused into the soul by God alone; and (3) these virtues are unknown to us except through divine revelation.<sup>32</sup> Through these virtues, the intellect is enlightened and the will strengthened to reach their proper supernatural end. Through faith, the intellect is given a kind of supernatural light through which is revealed the truths about God and what He has revealed.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the intellect assents to these truths by divine illumination. That is, only by God is the soul able to recognize and apprehend saving truth. The intellect is incapable of moving itself to assent to these truths on its own and thus requires a simultaneous movement of the will toward God who reveals. This is where the virtues of hope and charity enter into the spiritual life.

The virtue of hope is what makes it possible for the will to intend toward the possession of God Himself in heaven, which the articles of faith propose to us as our final end.<sup>34</sup> On a natural level, hope is an appetitive movement (i.e. a movement of the will) toward a future, possible, arduous good.<sup>35</sup> Without divine intervention, i.e. without divine grace, we are unable to hope for what lies beyond our natural capabilities. The theological virtue of hope helps us to both will and assent to what is possible for us to attain—God Himself. The intellect is assisted by this act of the will toward God who is our final end. We are able to do this, even though God is the most arduous of goods to attain.

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<sup>32</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 62, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>33</sup> Here and in what follows is a summary of St. Thomas’ delineation of the act of faith by the relations it has to the object of faith. To believe in what God has revealed is to believe God (or believe in *a* God); to believe at all, however, requires an act by God *through whom* the believer exercises faith; finally, the act of faith insofar as the intellect is moved by the will is to believe in God such that man is placed in intimate contact with the object of faith. *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 2, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>34</sup> *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 17, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>35</sup> See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 17, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

The virtue of charity stands as the perfection of the life of virtue. Charity pertains to union and possession between lover and beloved. Yet, while charity stands first in the order of perfection, it relies on faith and hope in the order of generation.<sup>36</sup> Faith and hope till the ground for charity to flower in the soul. With the intellect illumined and assisted by the will in moving toward God, charity is the union whereby the soul is bound to God in a way that transforms it. The soul in charity becomes a “partaker in the divine nature,” (2 Pet 1:4) one with God such that it possesses God and God possesses it. While on earth, charity remains incomplete since the will is not yet fixed in a final, absolute way on God. Yet, charity is unique among the theological virtues for a very important reason: it is the only theological virtue not to pass away upon entrance into beatific life. Faith and hope, which operate in a kind of spiritual darkness and absence, will be superseded by vision and possession in heaven. No longer will God be known only through what He has revealed to us; He will be seen face to face. No longer will God be hoped for as for a future good; the soul will attain Him and rest in Him for all eternity. Charity, however, begins in this life and is only completed and perfected in beatitude. Thanks to the divine indwelling—the personal and substantial presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the soul—the soul already has an experience of union with the One whom it believes in and desires to possess fully.<sup>37</sup> It is charity which binds the soul to God here on earth as well—we do not have to wait for heaven for this to occur.

Charity thus stands as the premier foretaste of heavenly beatitude. It is not a matter of God placating the soul now as we await an alternate reality on the other side of the veil between

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<sup>36</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 62, a. 4, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>37</sup> Here we recall St. Thomas’ statement: “By the gift of sanctifying grace the rational creature is perfected so that it can freely use not only the created gift itself, *but also enjoy the divine person Himself*” [emphasis added]. Here, St. Thomas is referring to the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, who also comes with the Father and the Son to dwell in the soul. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 43, a. 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

this life and the next. The charity which God infuses into the soul with sanctifying grace is indeed the same charity—differing only in degree and not kind—from the charity with which we will love God in heaven. The French Dominican Jean-Baptiste Henri Lacordaire stated it this way: “Love in heaven and on earth has the same name, the same essence, the same law.”<sup>38</sup> This is the point which Leo XIII establishes in *Divinum Illud Munus*. It is not that the Holy Spirit gives the just soul a merely provisional aid on earth. The one who is Gift and Love in His very Person also animates the soul with the same love with which God loves.<sup>39</sup> In the love between God and the soul, there is a communication of goods, from God to the soul as well as from the soul to God made possible because the soul is related to God in a new way through the divine indwelling. The soul is moved toward God, is bound to God, and wills the good of God. These movements arise from the soul’s own habit of charity (though it is infused by God), which is why the soul is able to be said to be the “friend” of God because he communes with God as a kind of equal. The soul already enters into this love, this friendship, while on earth. The charity which the soul possesses persists through the death of the body, enabling this friendship to continue and to be perfected upon entering into beatific life. “So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love,” (1 Cor 13:13) writes St. Paul. Thus, Leo XIII can say with confidence that the only difference between the indwelling of the Trinity in the soul and the vision of heaven is a difference *conditione tantum seu statu*—of condition or state only.<sup>40</sup> The

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<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 29.

<sup>39</sup> The mystical tradition testifies to this reality that as God possesses a soul more and more, His action in and through the soul increases while the individual soul’s action becomes more passive. Martinez writes, “The mystics call this love produced by the special movement of the Spirit *passive love*. It is not called passive because the soul does not move: for indeed, the soul is never so active as then. It is called passive because the soul does not move itself. The Holy Spirit moves it, and it works under his divine impulse. The act of passive love belongs to the Holy Spirit and the soul, but more to the Spirit than the soul. Therefore, it can truly be said that the Holy Spirit loves in the soul and that the soul loves with the Holy Spirit, especially when this passive love has reached its perfection.” Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 88.

<sup>40</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9. See Jarrett, *He Dwells in Your Soul*, 29-32.

thin veil that separates time and eternity for the soul is the condition of being in the body, a difference purely *accidental* and not essential.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the theological virtues, of which charity is the preeminent, the life of the just soul on earth is brought closer to the experience of heavenly beatitude through the exercise of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Gifts are fittingly attributed to the Holy Spirit as the One who is given by the Father and the Son. Along with the gift of His Person in the divine indwelling, He also distributes to the soul in which He resides particular gifts and charisms. The stable gifts that He infuses are revealed to be wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord” (Is 11:2-3).<sup>42</sup> St. Thomas says that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are subservient to the theological virtues, as they are instrumental to the operation of these virtues which have God Himself as their object. Divine Law requires acts which exceed the natural capacities of man—we can easily think here of the greatest commandment, to love God with all our being. While the theological virtues give man the supernatural principles from which to act, the soul also requires the grace necessary to operate according to these virtues. This is why St. Thomas says that God gives the Holy Spirit along with the seven gifts, by which God Himself moves the soul according to the divine operation. This is a deep mystery and a sublime truth. For the soul’s actions according to the Gifts remain his own free acts; yet, it is the Holy Spirit who primarily acts by moving the faculties according to the divine mode.

Notably, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for the mystical elite; St. Thomas says they are *necessary* for salvation.<sup>43</sup> It is by way of the Gifts that the soul is able to operate also according to the theological virtues. The Gifts give the soul an ease and promptness in obeying

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<sup>41</sup> Jarrett, *He Dwells in Your Soul*, 29.

<sup>42</sup> CCC, 1831.

<sup>43</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

the voice of God and His inspirations.<sup>44</sup> Under the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and counsel, the intellect is more easily prompted to know, discern, and understand divine truths; under the gift of piety the will is moved toward right relations with God and neighbor; and under the gifts of fortitude and fear, the irascible and concupiscible appetites are strengthened in their movements toward the good and away from evil.<sup>45</sup> Under the operative power of the Holy Spirit, the soul advances in its degree of charity and holiness, deepening its union with God and its obedience to the Divine inspirations.

Like the virtue of charity, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are rightly said to endure in heavenly life.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the soul that exercises them in this life already has a foretaste of that union by which it will enjoy the divine essence for all eternity.

The reason for this is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit render the human mind amenable to the motion of the Holy Spirit: which will be especially realized in heaven, where God will be *all in all* (1 Cor 15:28), and man entirely subject unto Him.<sup>47</sup>

While concupiscence and human weakness hinder the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul in this life, the experience of beatific life will be one of complete transparency and docility to the Holy Spirit. The barriers which the gifts helped us overcome in this life will be removed (e.g. temptations), but the soul's life lived under the divine operation will continue.<sup>48</sup> In this sense, a

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<sup>44</sup> See *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9.

<sup>45</sup> See *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 4, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. We are not able to give an expansive treatment to each of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit individually in this paper. What is important here is how they make the soul act according to the divine operation. Of particular importance for the divine indwelling is the gift of wisdom, the habit by which the soul “penetrates the very life of the Trinity.” Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology* (London: Continuum, 2006), 272.

<sup>46</sup> “Wherefore, these gifts are of such efficacy that they lead the just man to the highest degree of sanctity; and of such excellence that they continue to exist even in heaven, though in a more perfect way.” *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9. See *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 6, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>47</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 6, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>48</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 6, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.



life lived in accord with the Spirit's gifts is the most fully actualized, most fully human way of living, for it is in accord with man's supernatural vocation in Christ.<sup>49</sup>

In chapter two, we examined the formal reason for the indwelling rooted in the soul's acts of knowledge and love which have the Divine Persons as their term. Given the place of the theological virtues and Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the soul, it is evident that these acts of knowledge and love must operate under the movement of the Holy Spirit if they are to reach their proper terminus. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the One who enables the soul to enter into the very life of the Trinity through the gift of wisdom and the virtue of charity. The gift of wisdom enables the soul to see everything through the lens of the highest cause, i.e. God.<sup>50</sup> The wise person sees everything in reference to God, the cause of everything that has being and the cause of all supernatural life. The gift of wisdom is informed by the virtue of charity<sup>51</sup>, which binds

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<sup>49</sup> “[The soul’s] activity is more intense and complete under the impulse of the gifts than when it is exercising the virtues. The soul does not move itself through the gifts; it is moved by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as we have previously said, the acts of the gifts have a certain passive character, and the soul is as a mother, fruitful under the divine fecundity of the Holy Spirit.” Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 49. The place of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in St. Thomas’ moral theology (and in moral theology in general) has come to be appreciated once again. Servais Pinckaers is to be considered a leading figure in contemporary times in the restoration of the gifts to their proper place in moral theology with respect to man’s vocation to Christian perfection. A few articles that underline the importance of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit for moral theology and the Christian life include: Servais Pinckaers, “Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit: Aquinas’s Doctrine of *Instinctus*,” in *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, eds. John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 385-395. James W. Stroud, “*Instinctus* and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Explaining the Development in St. Thomas’s Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” *Journal of Moral Theology* 8, no. 2 (2019): 60-79. Charles E. Bouchard, O.P., “Recovering the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Moral Theology,” *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 539-558. Romanus Cessario, O.P., “Religion and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” *Nova et Vetera* 15, no. 4 (2017): 983-998. St. Thomas himself has insightful commentary in this regard in his commentary on Romans (“For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God”): Thomas Aquinas. *Commentary on Romans*, C. 8, L. 3, 635, ed. Aquinas Institute (2020), <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~Rom.C8.L3.n635>.

<sup>50</sup> “The gift of wisdom is a supernatural habit, inseparable from charity, by which we judge rightly concerning God and divine things through their ultimate and highest causes under a special instinct and movement of the Holy Spirit, who makes us taste these things by a certain connaturality.” Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*, 270-271.

<sup>51</sup> “So far as it presupposes a judgment, the gift of wisdom resides in the intellect as in its proper subject, but as a judgment by a kind of connaturality with divine things, it presupposes charity, for this is not a purely speculative wisdom but a practical wisdom. It is true it belongs to the gift of wisdom, in the first place, to contemplate the divine, but in the second place, it pertains to wisdom to direct human acts according to divine things.” Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*, 271. See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 45, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

the soul to God in a loving union. In this way, the soul filled with wisdom is able to direct all acts in the love of God and toward the fulfillment of His will. The gift of wisdom enables the soul to know God from within, as it were. The love by which God and the soul mutually indwell also allows the soul to know God as He is in an experiential way, for the God he knows is the One whom it possesses as dwelling *within* itself. Wisdom is thus said to be a type of *experimental* knowledge which gives the soul a taste for what it knows.

This knowledge and love of God which human beings exercise in virtue of His dwelling within us is more than a truth of academic theology. It has been confirmed in the mystical tradition by the lived experience of holy men and women who pray and listen to the One who resides in their souls. The experience of the saints at prayer is perhaps the greatest testimony to the anticipatory taste of heaven while still on earth. St. Augustine, writing to his friend Dardanus, says, “We pray, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven,’ referring to our souls, which ought to be the temple of God.”<sup>52</sup> Heaven, for Augustine, is not a far-away place that is unreachable by human beings still on earthly pilgrimage. Rather, heaven is in some way present to the one who has God dwelling within him. Already anticipating Leo XIII’s 1897 encyclical, Augustine’s sense of the presence of God within the temple of his soul makes his mortal condition a kind of heaven. Wherever God dwells, there is a sense in which heaven has already begun in that place. Though in the earthly state the soul exercises the virtues of faith and hope (which will pass away upon entrance into beatific life), there is a way in which this marks the beginning of eternal life. “For in this hope we were saved,” (Rom 8:24) writes St. Paul. In making a dwelling for Himself

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<sup>52</sup> Augustine, *Letter 187*, 16, in *Letters, Volume 4 (165-203)*, trans. Wilfrid Parsons (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1955), 233. Augustine also hints at the truth of the divine indwelling in his letter to Proba which is on prayer: “Likewise, when we say ‘Thy kingdom come,’ it will come inevitably whether we wish it or not, but we stir up our desire for that kingdom, that it may come in us, and that we may deserve to reign in it.” Indeed, while God’s kingdom will come for each person, it will come as a *reward* for those who are living in grace. Augustine, *Letter 130*, in *Letters, Volume 2 (83-130)*, trans. Wilfrid Parsons, *The Fathers of the Church 18* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 392.

in the just soul, God promises to it a share in His blessed life and already begins to perfect that soul in holiness. While perfect union with God is still a future reality, through the indwelling of the Trinity the soul shares in that union *now*. At the same time, “[H]ope that is seen is not hope...” (Rom 8:24). The fact that God carries on His work in bringing the soul to progress and perfection is a testimony to the imperfect happiness of the earthly state, even if it be true happiness and joy that the soul experiences. The status of the soul on this earthly pilgrimage is only the *preparation* and the *anticipation* of the blessed life to come.

Among the mystics, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity has been called by one author the “saint of the Divine Indwelling.”<sup>53</sup> A French Carmelite nun who lived at the turn of the twentieth century, she received a special grace from God of knowing intimately the presence of the Trinitarian Persons deep within her soul. Her knowledge and pursuit of God dwelling within her was the secret to her great progress in holiness. Through her writings, she reveals her path toward God as a journey toward “the center of her soul,” where the fullness of the Trinity abides. “[T]his heaven, this house of our Father, is in ‘the center of the soul’!...when we are in our deepest center, we are in God.”<sup>54</sup> This continuous movement to the soul’s deepest center occurs through the operation of charity in the soul. The more the soul grows in love of God, the more fully it is united to Him and the more centered it is in Him, such that the soul takes on the life of God Himself and never strays from communion with Him.

Elizabeth also emphasizes the virtue of faith.<sup>55</sup> Key to the doctrine of divine indwelling with respect to lived spirituality is that it must be detached from sensible consolations and

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<sup>53</sup> M.M. Philipon, O.P., *The Spiritual Doctrine of Elizabeth of the Trinity* (Hubertus, WI: Teresian Charism Holy Hill, 2001), 46.

<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth of the Trinity, *Letter 239* [To her sister, August 1905], in *I Have Found God—Complete Works Volume II* (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2014), 215.

<sup>55</sup> See Philipon, *The Spiritual Doctrine of Elizabeth of the Trinity*, 60-62.

emotions. These are certainly not irrelevant, for God does grant these types of graces (especially for beginners), but the deepest center of the soul concerns the intellect and will (and not the sense appetites) which means that intimacy with the Trinity in one's soul exceeds what can be experienced merely through the senses or the emotions. Because of this, faith as the virtue which places the soul in contact with God takes on a preeminent role in the spiritual life. It is faith that makes the promises of God so certain for us that by our assent and the working of the virtues of hope and charity, the object of faith is intimately present to us. For Elizabeth, this took on concrete significance after a spiritual darkness enveloped her after the initial graces God gave her which had fully convinced her of God's indwelling presence. Like Augustine, John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avila before her, Elizabeth saw heaven as an already-present reality in her own soul as she grew incrementally in faith and charity. Though she was not yet free of the "tempest of this world,"<sup>56</sup> this shook neither her faith nor her peace, for she was already an heir to heavenly promises.

For Elizabeth, the life of charity springing from God's operation within her gave her deep spiritual joy. This joy is one of the effects in souls that are conscious of the riches they possess in the divine indwelling. Through hope and charity, the soul comes to possess (albeit imperfectly) the One whom it knows certainly by faith. This same God is the One who is the object of the beatific vision which the soul will enjoy at the end of earthly life. As a result, the soul is able to experience in spirit the joys of heaven before they become definitive after death. Elizabeth's mystical experiences are the height of the Christian paradox: the joy of *possessing* God comes most fully when the soul *completely forgets itself* and gives itself over to God's

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<sup>56</sup> Augustine, *Letter 187*, 38, 252.

consuming love.<sup>57</sup> In the spirit of Hebrews 12:29, Elizabeth desired to become one with God who is “a consuming fire.” In this fire, Elizabeth knew she would not be annihilated, but rather she will burn with love. As she came into deeper union with God, this burning love in her soul came more easily until it was constant, an anticipation of her will being fixed on God for all eternity in heaven. To enter within one’s soul to find God dwelling there constitutes the core of Carmelite spirituality. Elizabeth lived this in an exemplary way; she anticipated her heaven by living in God’s presence at every moment.

Elizabeth’s mystical doctrine is not meant to be the private possession of contemplatives in convents. The special grace she received from God is a deeper experiential knowledge of what every Christian possesses in virtue of baptism. The Triune God is present in the soul with the smallest degree of sanctifying grace. The common obstacle to souls realizing this great union, Elizabeth says, is a reluctance to withdraw to the inner sanctuary:

Ah, I wish I could tell all souls what sources of strength, of peace, and of happiness they would find if they would only consent to live in this intimacy. Only they don’t know how to wait: if God does not give Himself in some perceptible way, they leave His holy presence, and when He comes to them laden with all His gifts, He finds no one there, the soul is outside in external things, it is not living in its depths!<sup>58</sup>

To begin the journey toward the soul’s deepest center, Elizabeth recommends one concrete act in the spiritual life: to make acts of recollection in God’s presence.<sup>59</sup> These acts in themselves are acts of faith in God’s indwelling presence. They are acts which spur the will on to greater love of the One who dwells in the soul. As the love of friendship deepens between God and the soul,

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<sup>57</sup> Forgetfulness of self is the culmination of love for Elizabeth. This finds a special expression in her famous prayer to the Holy Trinity, which begins thus: “O my God, Trinity Whom I adore! Help me to become utterly forgetful of self, that I may bury myself in Thee, as changeless and as calm as though my soul were already in eternity...” Quoted in Philippon, *The Spiritual Doctrine of Elizabeth of the Trinity*, 53.

<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth of the Trinity, *Letter 302* [To her mother, August 2, 1906], 313.

<sup>59</sup> Philippon, *The Spiritual Doctrine of Elizabeth of the Trinity*, 68.

the soul comes to know more deeply God's abiding presence. This same Trinity, Elizabeth writes in one of her letters, we will behold forever in heaven.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

We are now in a place to offer a more definitive conclusion to our query into Leo XIII's penetrating words in *Divinum Illud Munus*, where he describes the union of the souls of the just with the indwelling Trinity as differing *conditione tantum seu statu* (in degree or state only) from the union the blessed souls share with God in the beatific vision. This proposition can indeed be said to be true, for while union with God in this life is imperfect and always subject to increase or decrease, it involves true knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God. Some of the means by which the soul knows and loves God will even remain through the veil of time and eternity; namely, the virtue of charity and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Allowing for the magnitude of the mystery of heaven ("Eye has not seen..."), we can also say that God has deigned to grant an ineffable grace by pouring the Holy Spirit into our hearts. By coming to dwell in us, God has not essentially altered human nature; rather, He comes to dwell as an intimate friend, infusing habitual grace which is the beginning of the supernatural life. The life of heaven is already lived out in an incipient way through the virtues and gifts, whereby the soul communes with God as with his most intimate friend. This friendship with God enables the soul to persevere in grace so as to be confirmed and perfected in the love of God in heaven. The soul does not wait for some alternate reality or existence in which he will be essentially different than he was on earth. Rather, the beatific life begins *now*, while the soul is still in the body. In fact, if the beatific life does not begin while still in the body, it will not begin once this life is over. The sense of

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<sup>60</sup> "[I]t is love, Infinite Love that envelops us and wants us to share even here below in all His beatitudes. The entire Trinity rests within us, this whole mystery that will be our vision in Heaven: let this be your cloister." Elizabeth of the Trinity, *Letter 172* [To Germaine de Gemeaux, August 20, 1903], 116.

urgency to live in union with God on this earth so as to attain to the joys of heaven drove the saints and mystics in their pursuit of God. It may also serve as an impetus for Christians in every age. We will now consider some of the practical and doctrinal implications of the sublime doctrine of the Trinitarian indwelling.

## Chapter IV: Practical Consequences of the Doctrine of the Divine Indwelling

That the Triune God dwells personally and substantially in the souls of the just has immense consequences not only for theology but for the spiritual life of every baptized Christian. In this chapter, I intend to draw out some of these practical implications of the doctrine of the divine indwelling, especially as they pertain to living the Christian life. This will in no way be comprehensive, as all truths of the faith are interrelated through the analogy of faith. Here, we will focus on a few key conclusions that can be drawn from the truth of the divine indwelling.

The first practical consequence of the Trinitarian indwelling is that souls in the state of grace live in *intimate friendship with God*. This has been alluded to throughout the paper, and this friendship is for Leo XIII himself one of the ways of describing this tremendous union. The word “friendship” is used in particular as the way to describe this union of charity between God and the soul. For St. Thomas, charity can be defined simply as friendship.<sup>1</sup> Friendship exists where there is some equality between the two friends. In the case of the soul and God, the equality is based in the soul’s participation in the divine nature through grace. While the soul does not become divine *substantially* in virtue of being elevated through grace, it is given the capacity to know and love God in such a way that is participatory in the way God knows and loves Himself. Man, via his friendship with God, is made a sharer in God’s nature.<sup>2</sup> The Council of Trent, in its decree on justification, uses the language of friendship to describe the process of entering into union with God and receiving the righteousness of God.<sup>3</sup> However, the soul’s friendship with God is not reducible to knowing and loving God, as if it were only

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<sup>1</sup> *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 23, a. 1, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>2</sup> CCC, 460.

<sup>3</sup> “Hanc dispositionem seu preparationem iustificatio ipsa consequitur, quae non est sola peccatorum remissio, sed et sanctificatio et renovatio interioris hominis per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum, unde homo ex iniusto fit iustus et *ex inimico amicus*, ut sit ‘haeres secundum spem vitae aeternae’” (Council of Trent, Session VI, *De Iustificatione*, Chapter 7, emphasis added). DH 1528.



possible to have an intentional or moral union with Him. Rather, God comes to take up His abode in man, making the soul the temple of God (1 Cor 6:19) and bestowing upon the soul habitual grace and the gifts of the Spirit. The soul thus rejoices in the *presence* of the One it knows and loves not only through a motion of the intellect or will but in the *divine mode* itself. The Spirit, through the gifts He bestows, actually takes up the soul's activity into the divine mode of operation so as to elevate it and make it capable of a true friendship whereby love is exchanged between God and man as between equals. Thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Christian need not fear God in the way the Israelites feared to approach the holy mountain lest God smite them and they die. Now, every baptized Christian has the capacity to live in divine friendship as Moses did. We can speak to God and listen to Him "as a man speaks to his friend" (Ex 33:11). Furthermore, the Spirit prays in us and through us through "sighs too deep for words," (Rom 8:26) putting us in direct contact with God as we seek to commune with Him.

The second practical spiritual consequence of the divine indwelling is *man's ability to act in a supernatural manner* as a result of his new relation to God. In Catholic theology, when we speak of the "ability to act supernaturally," we specifically refer to the ability to *merit*. When God bestows sanctifying grace on the soul and at the same time comes to dwell in the soul of the one justified, the soul enters upon the supernatural life. John Hardon notes, "An animal must first have a rational nature before it can act rationally. Even so a man must first have a *supernature* before he can act supernaturally."<sup>4</sup> Before justification, the soul lives a merely natural life without habitual grace elevating the life of the soul and its faculties. In the state of habitual grace, however, the soul (indeed, human nature itself) is elevated, is made a friend of God, and is able to perform good works which are *meritorious* in the sight of God. That is to

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<sup>4</sup> Hardon, *History and Theology of Grace*, 145. Cf. CCC, 260, 356, 1998.

say, the soul is able, with the help of grace, to perform good works which receive reward from God, culminating in eternal life. This is not to say that God is somehow the debtor of the soul in grace. There could never exist the type of equality between God and man that would give man a claim on God's generosity in the order of strict justice. Rather, God grants this equality of friendship through grace, enabling man to produce good works out of the help that has been given to him by God Himself through habitual grace and the ongoing help of actual grace. Human acts which are done in the state of habitual grace, with God dwelling within the soul, are worthy of reward from God, who grants merit according to His benevolence and generosity. The reason human persons are able to merit at all is only because of the infinite merits of Christ who won these through His passion, death, and resurrection. Indeed, it is from the infinite treasury of these merits that God bestows merit upon His friends in whom He dwells. The Council of Trent, seeking to clarify the nature of merit, defined that the good works of the justified person are not only the gifts of God but they indeed belong to the justified one himself as his own good merits.<sup>5</sup>

This ability to act in a meritorious way before God is not so much a testament to the power of human nature as to the power of grace working within. God's presence within the soul and His grace which He pours out upon it do not merely cover over the deficiencies of the human soul; these *transform* the soul itself and its operations such that God and man relate to one another as equals in the order of grace. Practically speaking, the soul in grace must continue to act in accordance with the grace given to him if he is to merit eternal life, the reward promised

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<sup>5</sup> "If anyone shall say that the good works of the man justified are in such a way the gifts of God that they are not also the good merits of him who is justified, or that the one justified by the good works, which are done by him through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ (whose living member he is), does not truly merit [*vere mereri*] increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life (if he should die in grace), and also an increase of glory: let him be anathema" (Council of Trent, Session VI, *Decree on Justification*, canon 32). DH 1582.

by God to those who persevere in union with Him.<sup>6</sup> The more a person acts according to the infused virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the more closely he comes to union with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The increase of grace merited by these works transform the soul such it becomes more and more transparent to the work of the Holy Spirit within. Ultimately, man has an active role to play in the divine plan of salvation insofar as he is called to respond to and cooperate with the grace given by God to perform good works. The works he performs are truly his own in that they proceed from his own reason and will.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, however, the soul in deep union with God is so attune to the inner workings of the Holy Spirit and grace that it allows itself to be moved freely by God in the events of daily life.<sup>8</sup>

The third consequence to draw from the doctrine of the Trinitarian indwelling concerns man's relationship with the Church. The soul who possesses God dwelling within Him is not only intimately one with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but this soul is also in the closest of unions with the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. This union with the Church allows the soul to participate fully in the *sharing of spiritual goods*. The soul's union with the Church through faith and baptism is a direct consequence of union with Christ, the Savior and Head of

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding the idea that man can and must cooperate with grace in order to merit, see *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 111, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. In addition, the New Testament is full of passages that affirm the reality of merit, i.e. a reward from God for good works done. One example is the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. After naming each beatitude with the reward attached to it, Jesus adds, "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Mt 5:12). In the parable of the Last Judgment in Mt 25, we find these words: "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food...'" (Mt 25:34ff). This theme is prevalent in the Pauline letters as well. For example, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim 4:7-8). Other examples include Rom 2:6; 1 Cor 3:8; 2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:23-24; Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10.

<sup>7</sup> The use or motion of reason is part of all human acts. But in order to achieve man's supernatural end, i.e. union with God, the motion of reason is not *sufficient*. This motion requires an additional motion or inspiration from the Holy Spirit. *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 68, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P. See Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 43-44.

<sup>8</sup> Martinez, *The Sanctifier*, 43-50.

the Church, His Body.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the Church is nothing other than communion of life with Christ. In scripture, life in Christ is compared to a vine and branches (Jn 15:1-8); eternal life is to be had by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ (Jn 6:53-56). This life is interior to man and transforms him from within. As all the baptized are grafted on to the one vine of Christ, as all of these eat of the Body and Blood of Christ, they are brought together with *one another* in a union deeper than any human fraternity. The Holy Spirit is the primary agent of drawing the faithful into unity by the bond of charity.<sup>10</sup> The closer we are united to God through the bestowal and increase of supernatural charity, the closer also we are united to one another in the Church.<sup>11</sup> This charity is not merely an interior reality; rather, it is meant to be manifested in deeds. From the heart of a Christian, the love which binds him to God Himself overflows unto good works and fraternal charity toward one's neighbor. The life of charity gives integrity to the Christian life, as the apostle John testifies: "If someone says, 'I love God,' but at the same time hates his brother, he is a liar. For whoever does not love the brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 Jn 4:20). This bond of charity which unites the members of the Body of Christ is among the primary spiritual goods shared by those in whom God dwells.

As a result of charity, the members of the Church share an abundance of spiritual goods with one another. Because of each baptized person's union with Christ (and the indwelling of the Trinity in their souls), the spiritual riches of Christ are distributed to all through the sacramental life and likewise each person's particular charisms and degree of charity redounds to the good of the whole of the Body. This describes the Church's profession of faith in the

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<sup>9</sup> CCC, 782.

<sup>10</sup> Pius XII notes that the bonds of faith, hope, and charity are the principle of the union of the Church which deepen the bond of the members beyond any other juridic bond. Nevertheless, "[C]harity...more than any other virtue binds us closely to Christ." *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §70, 74.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §74.

“communion of saints,” which is not only a communion among persons but also a communion of spiritual goods.<sup>12</sup> As a result of the bond of charity and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the members of the Church share the same faith, the fruits of the sacramental life of the Church, and the communion of charisms distributed by the Spirit Himself.<sup>13</sup> This communion in the bond of charity is in no way impeded by death, as we saw previously in chapter three. The pilgrim Church on earth is at one with the saints in heaven as well as with the souls undergoing purification before entering paradise. All of these, united in Christ through the bond of charity, share in an intimate communion through their united praise of God and intercession for one another.<sup>14</sup> Through the intercession of the saints for us here on earth, we are greatly helped in our weakness by their fraternal concern for us and the power of their prayer coming from the merits they won while engaged in their own earthly struggle.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, the prayer and works of the souls on earth are of great benefit to our suffering brethren who are undergoing purification for their sins. With respect to the dead, the Church cherishes their memory not only out of respect but because of the living relationship that still exists with them through the veil between time and eternity.<sup>16</sup> Even among the members of the Church who are still living, the charity that fills all the souls of the just benefits each and every member of Christ’s Body. The least acts of charity carry tremendous weight and value for the Church; likewise the sorrow and suffering of one member resounds throughout the Church due to the intimate communion of the Church’s members.

This communion in charity and the treasury of spiritual goods of the Church is a consequence of God’s generosity in pouring out His Spirit upon us. Far from leaving us orphans

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<sup>12</sup> CCC, 948.

<sup>13</sup> CCC, 949-953.

<sup>14</sup> CCC, 954.

<sup>15</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, §49.

<sup>16</sup> See CCC, 958. *Lumen Gentium*, §50.

upon His ascension into heaven, Christ has remained intimately close to His Church and to each individual member of it through the indwelling Spirit—and indeed the entire Trinity. The Mystical Body of Christ is both the result and the guardian of the reality of God’s indwelling in the soul. The Church is constituted and built up by the Holy Spirit animating the souls of the individual members. At the same time, the Church stands as the vehicle through which the indwelling is communicated to souls.

Finally, the implication of the divine indwelling that pertains most directly to the project of this paper is that *the veil is thin which divides us between our earthly state of life and eternal beatitude with God in heaven*. Leo XIII’s statement that the distinction between the soul’s earthly life in grace and the beatific life of the blessed is one of condition or state only is indeed true, as we saw in chapter three by examining the status of the soul in both states with respect to its activity vis-à-vis God. In a particular way through the theological virtue of charity and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the soul in grace already enters into a quasi-beatific life here on earth. Indeed, without this virtue and these gifts, one cannot be an heir to the promise of eternal life. These also enable the soul to have true and intimate contact with God as with an intimate friend. The graced knowledge and love of God that the soul exercises in this friendship are an anticipatory taste of God’s sweetness that will be confirmed in eternity. While the experience of beatific life remains a mystery beyond human comprehension, even in the order of grace, it is not thereby to be reduced to some alternate reality detached from the Christian life on earth. Only the fact that the soul on earth is a *viator*—and not a *comprehensor*—can it be said that he is separated from life with God. The soul in grace is even now the privileged temple of the Holy Spirit, indeed of the whole Trinity, and as such is able to come to know Him by the light of faith and love Him as his closest friend. The earthly state is a favored time to grow in these virtues so

that, upon entering the heavenly kingdom, one's beatitude and delight will be great. For every soul, it is never too early nor too late in life to begin to pursue the kingdom of God. For the one we have come to know and love interiorly in the soul will continue to be the object of our beatitude in eternity. The tragedy is to never begin this pursuit at all or to give it up, which is to be cut off from one's inheritance as a child of God. For if the soul is not confirmed in grace at the point of death, there is no altering the trajectory of the will in eternity. This life, then, depending on the person's life and participation in the life of grace, becomes the antechamber either to eternal beatitude or eternal loss of God.<sup>17</sup>

When He comes to dwell in the soul, God bestows these gifts of grace (especially the theological virtues and the Gifts of the Spirit) which will not pass away upon our death and entrance into heaven. Charity and the Gifts will only be perfected and confirmed upon meeting God face-to-face. The pastoral impetus of this truth becomes readily clear: *now* is the time to begin living the life of grace in union with the Holy Spirit who has been poured into our hearts. The degree of union with God to which He brings us in this life through prayer, good works done under the inspiration of grace, and the sacraments of the Church will have a direct correlation to our degree of glory in heaven. The vision of God and union with the Trinity is the final end toward which the Christian life is oriented<sup>18</sup>, and the journey there begins on earth.

Though the mystery of the divine indwelling can never be exhausted by theological investigation, the implications of the doctrine are far-reaching. Touching every other aspect of Catholic Church doctrine—grace, the Church, sacraments, morality, soteriology, etc.—the

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<sup>17</sup> C.S. Lewis incorporates this idea into his allegorical work, *The Great Divorce*. In the preface to this work, he writes: "Earth, I think, will not be found by anyone to be in the end a very distinct place. I think earth, if chosen instead of Heaven, will turn out to have been, all along, only a region in Hell: and earth, if put second to Heaven, to have been, from the beginning a part of Heaven itself." C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (London: William Collins, 2015), ix.

<sup>18</sup> CCC, 260. Dubay, "The Indwelling of Divine Love," 167.

indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just brings the possibility of a true “spiritual life” to each and every baptized soul. The graces and gifts of God poured out in the giving of the Holy Spirit are not for the contemplatives alone. Rather, the entire Christian life is to be lived out in communion with the Trinity and in the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.



## Conclusion

While the indwelling Trinity remains a great and unfathomable mystery, we have seen how it is revealed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is to Him that this divine work is fittingly attributed. For it is the Spirit which is the gift of the Father and the Son; He is the One sent by Them to the world and to the Church. It is of the Spirit's very personality that He is the One sent to dwell in our souls (*dulcis hospes animae*), and so He can even rightly be called "Gift" as His proper name.<sup>1</sup> Leo XIII's desire for the world to come to know the Holy Spirit prompted him to write his encyclical and to exhort the Church to a deeper devotion to the One who dwells not only in the Church as a whole but in each baptized person *individually*. While the Spirit's work is so often mysterious and hidden, it is nevertheless powerful and indispensable for the life of the Church and for the Christian. Greater knowledge and devotion to the Holy Spirit dwelling in our souls will ultimately lead to greater love for Him and a more robust spiritual life.

Cultivating a love for the Holy Spirit as God has a two-fold effect, writes Leo. The first is to excite in our souls a deeper desire to know Him and His constant presence and power in us. For the lover is not content with merely superficial knowledge of the beloved but seeks to plumb the depths of intimate knowledge of the other.<sup>2</sup> The second effect of this increased love for the Spirit is a greater outpouring of His gifts. Love causes the heart to expand and open to the gifts which God bestows. Furthermore, love of the Holy Spirit is directed toward action—it is thus eminently practical. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit move the soul to *action* in accordance with the Divine Will. Acting in union with the Holy Spirit, which also means acting in charity, is the fitting mode of operation for the person in whom the Godhead dwells personally and

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<sup>1</sup> *Divinum Illud Munus*, §9. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 38; III, q. 3, a. 8, ad 3, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

<sup>2</sup> See *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 28, a. 2, trans. Laurence Shapcote, O.P.

substantially. If the soul knows itself to be a temple of God because of the Gift of the Holy Spirit, then the vocation of that soul is nothing less than to shine with every virtue, to flee from sin, and to avoid the darkness of intellectual error. For the temple of God is a holy place, which admits of no defilement or grave sin. Man does not fulfill this work on his own; only with the supernatural help of the Holy Spirit does he act in accord with the gifts given by He who dwells within him.

In this state of possessing the indwelling Triune God, man already possesses a share in his heavenly reward. This possession of God is a matter of *conditione tantum seu statu* (condition or state only) between his earthly state in grace and the beatific vision in heaven. The Holy Spirit Himself is given to the soul as Gift and help on the way toward the prize of eternal life. Man cannot attain this goal under his own power but needs the constant assistance of the Spirit. It is only by His grace that man operates in the divine mode fitting to his supernatural vocation. Thus, the Christian life is given its own sense of urgency by the upward calling of the beatific vision. It is not something we passively wait for but in which we actively participate *now* through the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son to be our Advocate. To that end, the proper response is a continual pursuit of a relationship with the Triune God, dwelling in us, and especially with the Holy Spirit. A true spiritual life can never be divorced from His activity. We must beg for His grace with prayer that never ceases. *Veni, Sancte Spiritus.*

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