

# Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Spirit of Ecumenism

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I have chosen a strange subject to celebrate the centenary of Thomas Aquinas *here*, at Oxford. Is it not paradoxical, if not a little provocative, to speak of 'St Thomas and the Spirit of Ecumenism'? For several reasons great caution is to be recommended.

First of all, there can only be ecumenism if one accepts the other *as other*, that he *also* has insights, that he has something to give. Now St Thomas lived in an epoch of a Christianity very sure of itself, and even, one can say, of a latin Catholicism loyal to the Pope as its head, absolutely assured of its legitimacy and its truth. England was certainly no exception. In these circumstances, what could possibly have been an ecumenical dialogue? Heretics were to be 'exterminated': that does not mean *killed*, but driven far away, chased from the land; though the process of 'exclusion' could culminate in physical destruction. One thinks of the cathars of Montségur. Listen to this account of an indicative incident. It happened at Cluny, at the beginning of the reign of St Louis, who recounted the episode to Joinville: 'There was a great conference of clerics and Jews at the monastery of Cluny. There was a knight there . . . , who stood up and leaning on his crutch, asked that the greatest cleric and the greatest master of the Jews he brought to him. And so they were. . . . "Master", said the knight, "I ask you if you believe that the Virgin Mary, who carried God in her womb and in her arms, gave birth while remaining a virgin and that she is the mother of God". And the Jew replied that he did not believe a word of it. . . . "Truly", said the knight, "You will pay for it". And then he lifted up his crutch and struck the Jew near the ear and knocked him to the ground. And the Jews fled, carrying away their master, badly wounded, and thus ended the conference'.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, in such a situation, St Thomas would have debated with his opponent (cf. IIa IIae, q. 10, a. 7), and so he did. It is true that he defends the principles accepted by the Christianity of his time as to the appropriate conduct to be adopted with regard to heretics, Jews, infidels or pagans (cf. IIa IIae, q. 10, a. 10 to 12): principles inspired by a 'law of the faith' which, for St Thomas however, does not destroy the law of nature (natural law). Certainly

<sup>1</sup>Joinville, *Histoire de saint Louis*, Ch. X (Ed. N. de Wailly).

he also wrote a *Contra errores Graecorum*. About that I will make three remarks: First, that title is not his, but is that of the catalogues. In fact, there is *nothing* in this work, *against* the Greeks. In it St Thomas qualifies a certain number of statements that a Libellus, passed to him by Pope Urban IV, attributed, often wrongly, to the Greek Fathers or authors. But at no point does Thomas impute these errors to the Greeks. However, he does criticise as erroneous the rejection of the papal primacy and of the Filioque (which he took to be equivalent to 'per Filium'). Secondly, Thomas had an immense veneration for the Greek Fathers.<sup>2</sup> He, whom one represents as a man of pure speculation—and, God knows, he was gifted for speculation—he passed a large part of his life in searching out and reading new texts, in having new translations made, in dialoguing or debating with every current of thought. Remember what we are told: When he was returning from Saint-Denis to Paris with a group of students, they said to him: 'Ah. If only you could have Paris'. And he replied: 'I would much prefer to have a translation of Chrysostom on St Matthew!'<sup>3</sup> And if he had actually taken part in a discussion with the Greeks, he would certainly have referred to the fact, which was to save everything at Florence in 1439, that in the past the Latin and Greek Fathers had lived in communion, although they already held, on both sides, the positions from which they were later to be confronted and opposed. Thirdly, we shall consider further on what he would most likely have said to the Greeks on the subject of the Procession of the Holy Spirit, if he had taken part in the council of Lyons—it is known that he died on his way there.

Yet another reason for which one might think it misplaced to speak of St Thomas as a model or precursor of ecumenism: the temper of his sensibility is so distant from ours—or ours from his. Not only was he rooted in a profound calm, whereas we live in a time of drama, the putting of everything into question, but also he is a representative of what has been called 'gradualism'.<sup>4</sup> It is a whole world-vision, passing from physical realities to God, by way of man and the angels, according to a hierarchy of being: 'the Great Chain of Being'. That presupposes an ontic view of beings. Even in matters of ethics or politics, Thomas liked to justify a rule by the general

<sup>2</sup>*Praesumptuosum esset tantorum doctorum tam expressis auctoritatibus contraire*: C. err. Graec., I, 10; Ia q. 39, a. 5 ad 1. 'Quamvis contrarium non sit reputandum erroneum, praecipue propter sententiam Gregorii Nazianzeni cuius tanta est in doctrina christiana auctoritas, ut nullus unquam eius dictis calumniis inferre praesumpserit, sicut nec Athanasii documentis, ut Hieronymus dicit': Ia, q. 61, a. 4c. 'Neutrum autem horum (Augustine and Gregory Nazianzus) aestimo esse sanae doctrinae contrarium: quia nimis praesumptuosum videretur asserere tantos Ecclesiae doctores a sana doctrina pietatis deviasse': De natura angelorum c. 17.

<sup>3</sup>The Deposition of Bartholomew of Capone at the process of canonization: Aota SS 7th March, c. 9, n. 78.

<sup>4</sup>G. Miller, Gradualismus. Eine Vorstudie z. altdeutschen Literaturgeschichte, in Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift f. Literatur Wissensch, u. Geltesgesch, 2(1924) 681-720.

order of the world, by a cosmological reference.<sup>5</sup> And in fact latin catholicism, the ordinary teaching itself of the Roman Magisterium, is penetrated by this spirit. I am convinced that this is one reason for our difficulty in really understanding the protestant theologies or that of Luther, which start from an existential point of view, which are personal, dramatic, which talk of concrete historical situations and not of the nature of things, abstracted from their historical and existential conditions. It is clear enough, for example, in the case of anthropology. And how can one forget that Thomas speaks of sin, of grace, of the whole topic of ethics before speaking of Christ (which would have been impossible for the Protestants), and the sacraments (which would hardly suit the Orthodox)?

I do not wish to minimise the difficulties, which are at the heart of the sort of disaffection with regard to St Thomas which one encounters today in catholic theology itself. One is more at home with the Fathers, more personalist, more historical, more existential, less systematic, less analytical. However, I would like to make two remarks :

Firstly, whether in his analyses ordered according to schemata such as, 'quae sunt supra, quae in ipsa (persona, anima), quae sunt infra . . .',<sup>6</sup> or whether in the distinctions that he makes, St Thomas is only presenting things from a formal point of view. It is necessary to reconstitute the reality for which these analyses or distinctions are but approaches or means of perception. Unfortunately one has often reified the formalism of the analyses or distinctions, of this approach to reality. Thomists have often treated history as an accident which does not modify reality. With them, there is frequently a contempt for the facts. One of my brethren likes to say : There is a heresy which, sadly, has never been condemned : Abstraction. That is not the spirit of St Thomas. One attains the total, concrete reality from a particular angle. The modern human sciences proceed no differently, but, incontestably, they have a lively sense of the global and complex totality of which they treat.

Secondly, St Thomas personally had an extremely vivid perception of the originality of the human subject, of his, in a certain sense, autocreative liberty. Perhaps I astonish some people in saying that. However, it is the truth. It even orders the plan of the Summa, in which Thomas treats first of all of the realities and structures prior to man's exercise of his liberty, and thus prior to history, and then of the conditions in which this liberty is exercised.<sup>7</sup> But above all

<sup>5</sup>See for example in the Summa. Ia IIae q. 94, a. 2; IIa IIae q. 2, a. 3; q. 58, a. 3 ad 2; q. 104, a.1, 4 and 5; etc. For the schema for the graduation of beings, cf. for example C.Gent. IV,11 Q.disp. de anima a. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Thus Ia qq. 85-88; Ia IIae, q.2.

<sup>7</sup>Such, at least, is the interesting interpretation of A. Patfoort, L'unité de la Ia Pars et le mouvement interne de la Somme théologique de S. Thomas d'Aquin, in Rev. Sc. Phil. théol. 47 (1963) 513-544.

this concept of liberty shows itself in the IIa pars, where man is not treated as a 'nature', in the current sense of the word, but as the creator of that which he is called to be, by his virtuous acts and the *habitus*: He creates himself. It appears in his most profound and vivid conception of liberty, of the condition of the christian as free.<sup>8</sup> It is shown in the fact that personhood is seen as the supreme realisation of created being,<sup>9</sup> etc. But again, do not transform Thomas into a modern, but learn how to recognise that which renders him still readable and profitable for us today.

Finally, the most valuable criterion of the ecumenical value of St Thomas would be to invoke the opinions that non-catholics have entertained, or entertain, of his theology. Obviously we cannot aim at more than a sampling, but we can make it fairly broad.

Let us leave aside judgements which are merely ignorant or prejudiced, though they can come from distinguished minds. For example, one Vilmar, who died in 1872, and whose dogmatic sensibility was highly developed, wrote: 'St Thomas was assassinated in 1274 by Charles of Anjou. He pushed his distinctions to such a limit as to forget even the matter of which he was treating'.<sup>10</sup> There is not a true word in either of these two sentences.

I am not going to present a history of the (favourable) judgments passed on St Thomas from the Reforms of the 16th century until today. Luther could not stomach the role accorded to Aristotle by St Thomas. But he seems to have consulted rather than *studied* him.<sup>11</sup> The attribution to St Thomas of the pseudepigraphical *De venerabili altaris sacramento* gained us the fantastic accusation, in the Apologia of the Confession of Augsburg (XXIV, 62) that he maintained that whereas the sacrifice of the Cross had been to atone for Original Sin, the sacrifice of the Mass was instituted for everyday sins.<sup>12</sup> The re-

<sup>8</sup>cf. several rather all-encompassing pages by M. McGorce on the subject in Rev. Sc. phil. théol. 19 (1930) 266-267; et cf. H. Vorster, cited below, n. 19.

Freedom, the condition of Man and of the Christian: Ia IIae, q. 108, a. 4; IIa IIae, q. 183, a.1 and 4, and the doctrine of obedience q. 104, a. 5 and 6, to which John Huss refers.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, C. Gentiles, IV, 11; Ia q. 29, a. 3; Ia IIae prol. C. J. Geffré, Structure de la personne et rapports interpersonnels, in Rev. Thomiste 63 (1963) 672-692; J. B. Metz, Christliche Anthropozentrik, Munchen, 1962.

<sup>10</sup>Dogmatik I, p. 78; quoted by K. Barth, Die protestantische Theologie des XIX. Jahrhunderts. Zurich, p. 571.

<sup>11</sup>Without doubt Luther *consulted* rather than truly studied the Summa. He believes that, starting from scriptural texts, Thomas concludes with Aristotle and interprets Scripture with reference to him (*Tisch Reden*: W.1, no. 280; 8th June 1532). But he is particularly critical of the Contra Gentiles, which he finds ridiculous (*ibid*): it is no catechism. St. Thomas holds there the impious thesis that infused faith is compatible with mortal sin (*ib.* no. 438: the beginning of 1533). There is the view which compares and opposes Thomas and Bonaventure: 'Huc mihi Bonaventuram numero, incomparabilem virum, in quo multum fuit spiritus prae omnibus, qui ex Academiis servati sunt. De quo numero et S. Thomas Aquinas, si tamen sanctus, est nam vehementer dubito, cum adeo nihil olfat spiritus in eo . . .' (Ad librum Ambrosii Catharini responsio, 1521; W.7, p. 774).

<sup>12</sup>Fr. Clark, *The Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation*, London, 1960, p. 469-503 and 572-592 treat of the historical question.

proach figured initially in the Articles of the Church of England, but was suppressed from the text of 1571. Was this because the Anglican Reformation had a quite different, a much more positive attitude to Reason and Tradition, than the Continental Reformers and especially the Lutherans? The Anglican classics of the 16th century, especially Richard Hooker, quote St Thomas and accord him a certain esteem<sup>13</sup>, and many contemporary theologians do likewise.<sup>14</sup> But one can witness a very interesting and positive re-evaluation of St Thomas in contemporary continental protestantism. Karl Barth mentions the fact that during the 17th century a thick book was published at Strasburg, entitled *Thomas Aquinas, veritatis evangelicae confessor*, and he adds on his own account: 'An attentive reading of the works of the *Doctor Angelicus* permits one to verify in him certain lines of force which, even if they do not lead directly to the Reformation, do not tend, any the more, towards Jesuitical Romanism. Thus when one knows how to use intelligently this immense compendium of the previous tradition which constitutes the Summa, one remarks that its author is, on many issues, an evangelical theologian useful to know'.<sup>15</sup> One can discover other declarations of this sort from lutheran theologians: 'Thomas Aquinas belongs among the fathers of protestant theology', said Thomas Bonhöffer.<sup>16</sup>

I am not going to present a history or balance sheet of what non-Roman theologians have said about St Thomas: it would be pointless in a lecture. However, I cannot pass over in silence several very profound, and sometimes very voluminous, studies which have been published in Germany during these last years. And they do not only concern secondary issues but questions of theological anthropology and soteriology, just where one would expect to find the maximum opposition between the ontological and sapiential point of view of Thomas and the existential-dramatic approach of Luther. I allude to the study of Fr Stephan Pfürtner, a Dominican, who has, since then, even aroused the intense interest of journalists on the certitude of salvation:<sup>17</sup> to that of Ulbrich Kühn, Assistant Professor of the Faculty of protestant theology at Leipzig, on the theology of Law in St Thomas,<sup>18</sup> that of Hans Vorster, then protestant pastor at

<sup>13</sup>Cf. J. K. Ryan, *The reputation of St Thomas Aquinas among the English protestant Thinkers of the Seventeenth Century*, Washington, 1948.

<sup>14</sup>Thus Ch. Gore on pneumatology (*The Holy Ghost and the Church*, London, 1924, p. 190-196); E. L. Mascall, *Existence and Analogy*, London, 1949; 2nd ed. 1966; *Corpus Christi. Essays on the Church and the Eucharist*, London, 1953, ch. VI.

<sup>15</sup>*Kirchlich Dogmatik* 1/2, Zurich, p. 686.

<sup>16</sup>Th. Bonhöffer, *Die Gotteslehre des Thomas von Aquin als Sprachproblem*, Tübingen, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Stephanus Pfürtner, *Luther und Thomas in Gespräch. Unser Heil zwischen Gewissheit und Gefährdung*, Heidelberg, 1961.

<sup>18</sup>H. Kühn, *Via Caritatis. Theologie des Gesetzes bei Thomas von Aquin*, Berlin, 1964. On this subject see the study of M. Froidure *La théologie protestante de la Loi peut-elle se réclamer de S. Thomas?* in *Rev. Sc. phil. theol.* 51 (1967) 53-61.

Stuttgart, on the understanding of freedom in Thomas and Luther;<sup>19</sup> finally to that of Otto H. Pesch, then teaching at the Dominican Studium (House of Studies) at Walberberg, on the theology of justification in Luther and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>20</sup> He establishes that Thomas was able to express, in a rigorously rational form, authentic evangelical insights. His conviction that the order of redemption encompasses the order of creation, and that they are both subject to the same Lord, prevents him from opposing or even separating them. It is this profound conviction which is also expressed in the theological use of the analogy of being, on which we have not only the study of E. L. Mascall, but also that of the Swedish Lutheran H. Lyttkens<sup>20a</sup>. Certainly, one cannot superimpose the theologies of Thomas and Luther, the sapiential theology of the one and the 'theologia crucis' of the other, and the same is true of Thomas and Barth. But we have established that Thomas can be, for protestant theology, a valuable partner in dialogue and even a source of inspiration, or at least a witness.

One would have to very naïve, so much so as to suppose a good measure of ignorance and complacency, to think that Thomas could have answered in advance all the questions which have emerged since his time, and most particularly those which derive from the great spiritual universes of Eastern Orthodoxy or the christian communions which issued from the Reformation. When Fr Lacordaire was preaching the panegyric of the saint before the famous relic of the head of St Thomas at Toulouse, he cried out, 'Open to it (this unquiet century) the mysteries of that doctrine in which, even though you did not foresee it (all that was to come about), you have already said everything'.<sup>21</sup> It is eloquent, but could be nothing but the striking formulation of a ridiculous pretention. Anyone who is at all aware knows that the human spirit is always searching, always creating and that, whether on the philosophical or theological level, it has yielded, since the time of Thomas, insights that he would never have suspected. Ecumenism lives, from its very first moment, in the recognition of the other and in the effort to understand him. It is in this respect that we now wish to establish the value of St Thomas: let us say, his value as one who welcomes.

St Thomas always speaks 'formally'. It is this that the greatest commentator on the Summa never ceases to point out, Thomas de

<sup>19</sup>H. Vorster, *Das Freiheitsverständnis bei Thomas von Aquin und Martin Luther* (Kirche und Konfession 8). Gottingen-Zurich, 1965.

<sup>20</sup>O. H. Pesch, *Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin*. Mainz, 1967. Pesch has presented the works of Kuhn and Vorster in *Catholica* 18 (1964) 24-27 and 20 (1966) 54-78.

<sup>20a</sup>H. Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World, An investigation of its Background and Interpretation of its Use by Thomas Aquinas*. Upsalla, 1952. For Mascall, see above, n. 14.

<sup>21</sup>Discours pour la translation du Chef de S. Thomas d'Aquin, Toulouse, 18 juillet 1852: péroration.

Vio, known as Cajetan, the man who, as pontifical legate, had to receive Luther in October 1518.<sup>22</sup> To speak formally is to speak of something from within a defined perspective, and to remain faithful to that perspective in any analyses or distinctions one might wish to make. That corresponds well enough to the English usage of the adverb, *qua*: 'Man *qua* Man'. It is not a useless procedure. It allows one to talk of something from a precisely determined point of view. How many discussions have dragged on because people have confused the terms of the argument, thinking that they are talking about the same thing, whereas in fact they are doing so under different aspects. How many times have I not heard discussions of this type: 'Churchill saved liberty in the face of Nazism. I tell you: he was a bad painter'. Who is one talking about? The politician or the painter? Under what formality? Now formal language has this advantage among others: it allows one to attain to an essential which endures under the concrete forms that it can take in the course of history, rather as gold abides under the fluctuations of currencies. That is one of the reasons for the possibility of applying the arguments and distinctions of St Thomas to situations which he had not foreseen. Because he talks of things at such a level, in a way that is so formalised, his insights always remain valuable. Only, one has to raise oneself up to that level, to that rigour.

I could cite an interesting example. One might ask oneself: what will the new creation be like, the new heaven and the new earth of eschatology? Will Thomas use the physics of Aristotle, obviously no longer valid today, to describe it? No, he confines himself to saying that this new creation would be such 'ut congruat statui hominum qui tunc erunt', that is to say, corresponding to the state of resurrected humanity, that of the glorious liberty of the children of God (C. Gent. IV. 97 and 86). Here is a formal principle that no change in physics or cosmology can nullify.

To the *formalissime semper loquitur* of Cajetan corresponds the *Prudentissimus frater Thomas* of a contemporary. I wish to speak here of the distinctions he made between that which it is necessary to maintain and opinions that one is free to hold, or between the proved certainty and the hypothetical. Speaking of the *sancti*, or, as we would say, the Fathers, he says, on the subject of the various positions that they had adopted about the beginning of the world: 'Convenientes in eo quod fidei est . . . varia, ad minus quantum ad verborum superficiem, dixisse inveniuntur; in his quae de necessitate fidei non sunt licuit eis diversimode opinari, sicut et nobis'.<sup>23</sup> 'Whilst they agreed about that which is of the faith, they seem to differ, at

<sup>22</sup>See, for example, his commentaries in Iam q. 13, a. 4, n. IV; q. 54, a. 1, n. XXI the end; q. 79, a. 9, n. III; Iam Iae, q. 5, n. I; q. 18, a. 4, n. III; IIam Iae, q. 4, a. 1, n. I; in IIIam, q. 14, a. 3, n. II.

<sup>23</sup>In II Sent. d. 2, q. 1, a. 3.

least if one considers their statements superficially. But on those questions which do not strictly belong to the faith, they were free to think differently, just as we are'. He applied this principle most especially to cosmological questions, whether these were purely philosophical or rational, or whether 'sacred', that is to say, interpreting the account of the six days of creation.<sup>24</sup>

One could also refer to the care with which Thomas awarded 'theological marks': negative ones such as *haereticum*, *erroneum*, *temerarium*, those which he adds, and of which he was perhaps the creator, *stultum*, *stultissime*, *incongruum* leading to the *irrisio infidelium*, just that which he was most careful to avoid.

It is true that Thomists have not always imitated their master very well. They have treated him as the oracle of the absolute, total and definitive truth. The theology of Thomas has, even in modern times, been used in the formulations of the ordinary, and above all Roman, Magisterium: in encyclicals, as the criterion for doctrinal appraisal. All this may perhaps be explained as an intrinsic element of the life of the Roman Catholic Church. After all, other institutions have their classical references which are, in practice, more or less normative. But in Ecumenism, one must hold to more 'catholic' principles of orthodoxy and judgment.

Anyone who has long frequented the works of St Thomas, discovers, in the austere structures of his thought and the rather ponderous and impersonal forms of his scholarly apparatus, the most vivid and profound evangelical insights. Fr Chenu has shown the role that evangelism plays in the theology of St Thomas, considered above all from the point of view of theological method: return to the sources. Here are a few indications of some of the positions held by St Thomas. Each merits a study, for each I could give a quantity of references:

—His astonishing perception of the eschatological reference or measure, whether of faith, or theology or dogma: the vision of the divine truth as tending towards itself ('perceptio divinae veritatis tendens in ipsam': a formula that K. Barth loved to quote (*Die christliche Dogmatik in Entwurf*, 1, 1927, p. 122): his analogous insight into the status of the church, which Thomas saw as intermediary between the Synagogue and the Kingdom: these are activities of *tendence* towards a measure that is never attained.

As an heir of St Augustine, he had a vision of spiritual worship as consisting in faith, hope and charity: 'the three theological virtues', and an astonishing perception of the theological character of these virtues. They have God himself, in the absoluteness of his sovereign Reality, as ground, rule and object. The formal ground of Faith

<sup>24</sup>Very numerous examples. Thus *Declaratio XLII quaestionum*, prol. (2 April 1271: ed Vivès XXVII: 248: ed. Parme XVI, 163); *Quodl.* XII, 8; Ia, q. 61, a. 4; q. 68, a. 4; q. 70, a. 3 c the end; Ia IIae, q. 4, a. 7, ad. 3.



'nihil aliud est quam Veritas prima'. To believe, in the Christian sense of the word, is to welcome in oneself the witness that God gives of himself: it is to live an act of *God*.

—His perception, which was truly original at that time, of the spiritual nature of christian worship,<sup>25</sup> of the originality of this worship and of the sacrifice that it includes, and thus also of the priesthood that accomplishes it, in contrast to the Mosaic cult and the Aaronic priesthood.<sup>26</sup> And concerning the christian priesthood, his recognition of the place of the Word, the ministry of the Word.<sup>27</sup>

—His conception of the baptismal seal and the seal of the Spirit at confirmation as a participation in the priesthood of Christ for the worship that is to be offered here-below.<sup>28</sup> Thomas saw baptism and confirmation as creating the 'fideles Christi', and these as constituting that 'letter written with the Spirit' of which St Paul speaks (2 Cor. 3.3), or that spiritual building, that temple of the Holy Spirit of which he also speaks. The idea of the church as the house of God, a temple that is consecrated and so holy, is fundamental for St Thomas.<sup>30</sup>

He owes much to St Augustine (*De spiritu et littera*) for his conception of the new law, the evangelical law, the law of liberty, consisting principally in the grace of the Holy Spirit. The questions in the *Prima Secundae* on this topic (q. 106, a. 1, a. 2; q. 107, a. 1 and a. 4; q. 108 a.1) are complemented by his commentaries on Romans, Galatians and Hebrews.<sup>31</sup> It is the most extraordinary charter of evangelical theology. It is here, without a doubt, that one finds the principles that would have been decisive for Thomas if he had composed a treatise on the Church.

In his vision of the Church, in fact, St Thomas articulated a most vivid perception of the spirituality of the theological virtues and of grace, which are the earnest of the eschaton, but combined with a recognition of our condition, here and now, as historical and terrestrial, social, bound by the senses: the 'gratia Spiritus Sancti' and the 'inducencia ad usum hujus gratiae': sacraments, texts, dogmas, laws . . . ; or again the seal of predestination and of interior grace and the seal of the sacraments belonging to the 'cultus praesentis ecclesiae'.<sup>32</sup> Without a doubt, Thomas articulated and linked both of these two aspects; but the fact remains that they are two aspects,

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Ia IIae, q. 102, a. 4, ad. 3.

<sup>26</sup>Cf., among others, Come. In Hebr. c. 3 lect. 1; IIa IIae, q. 124, a. 5.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. M.-J. Le Guillou. *Théologie du Mystère. Le Christ et l'Eglise*. Paris, 1963, p. 243f.

<sup>28</sup>IIIa, q. 72, a. 11; Ia IIae, q. 102, a. 4 ad. 9.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. *Expos. in Symb.*, a. 9.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. S. Lyonnet, *St Paul, Liberty and Law* (Paperback), Rome, 1962 = *Liberté chrétienne et loi de l'Esprit selon S. Paul*, in *La vie selon l'Esprit, condition du chrétien* (Unam Sanctam 55) Paris, 1965, p. 169-195.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. IIIa, q. 63, a. 1 ad. 1 and a. 3; comp. C. *errores Graec.* II, 32. And cf. our study, 'Ecclesia' et 'Populus (fidelis)' dans l'ecclésiologie de S. Thomas, in 'St Thomas Aquinas', ed. by L'Institut medieval de Toronto, 1974.

almost two levels. That, on the one hand, accounts for the fact that, with Thomas, 'the mystical body' sometimes refers to the communion of saints, and sometimes to the visible and hierarchical Church, with the consequent problems that have recently been examined by A. Mitterer;<sup>33</sup> on the other hand, such a distinction of levels can pave the way for ecclesiologies such as that of Calvin, as presented by B. Ch. Milner Jr.<sup>34</sup>

St Thomas prepared the way for the modern distinction between the spiritual and temporal domains, and thus for our conception of the secularity of the world. He was able to do so because he had a philosophy of the proper coherence of the natural order,<sup>35</sup> but also because his religious position of mendicant poverty allowed him to disengage himself from theocratic or hierocratic theologies. And even if he did not complete the process himself, he allowed his disciple, John of Paris, to do so.

I could allude to yet other aspects of the theology of St Thomas which have ecumenical value, for example the moderation of his Marial theology, to which he gives a firmly christological context (cf. IIIa., q. 27), without, certainly, minimising the unique grandeur and role of the Mother of God. The moderation is, undoubtedly, conscious and intentional, for he lived in a time of mariological inflation, of which the *Mariale* is a beautiful example, happily no longer attributed to Albert the Great. But the allusions I have made must suffice. I only regret that they have been reduced to a simple enumeration.

St Thomas consecrated himself to the search for and exposition of the truth with a heroic intensity and a genius that have hardly ever been equalled. He was obsessed by the desire to give recognition to every glimmer of the truth, and to adopt the truth that it presented. And no matter from whence it came, in the conviction that 'omne verum, a quocumque dicitur, a Spiritu Sancto est'.<sup>36</sup> 'Every truth, by whomever it is said, is from the Holy Spirit'. The system of the *quaestio* (the discussion of the *pro* and *contra*, the determination of the doctrine to be held, the response to the objections), evidently had, and sometimes for Thomas, a formal character. But very often, and at any rate for every important question, it enabled Thomas to discern the point of view from which a position or statement erred, and the point of view from which it represented an aspect of the truth; hence one finds conclusions of this type: in certain respects both positions are true; 'secundum aliquid utrumque est verum'<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup>A. Mitterer, *Geheimnisvoller Leib Christi nach St Thomas von Aquin und nach Papst XII. Vienna, 1958.*

<sup>34</sup>Benjamin Charles Milner, Jr, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Church, Leiden, 1970.*

<sup>35</sup>Cf. IIa IIae, q. 10, a. 9, 10 and 12.

<sup>36</sup>A formula of Ambrosiaster (PL 17,245), often quoted by St Thomas, and generally in the Middle Ages.

<sup>37</sup>IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 2.

'utraque pars objectionum secundum aliquid vera est';<sup>38</sup> 'utrumque est aliquid verum'.<sup>39</sup> But such affirmations are relatively rare, and they only bear on secondary questions. However, the principle, adopted from Aristotle, is general. Thomas formulates it thus: 'Oportet amare utrosque, scilicet eos quorum opinionem sequimur et eos quorum opinionem repudiamus. Utrique enim studuerunt ad inquirendam veritatem et nos in hoc adjuverunt'—'We must love them both; those whose opinion we follow and those whose opinion we reject. For both have laboured to discover the truth, and have helped us in that task'.<sup>40</sup> I would love to show—but to do so adequately would demand a whole lecture—*how* St Thomas applied this principle; how he liked to start from unsatisfactory, if not erroneous, solutions to problems which bore on dogmatic affirmations, in order to integrate their valid insights into a more synthetic solution, or, again, how he took up certain formulations from other schools of thought and placed them in a context in which they could bear an acceptable meaning: for example in christology, the themes of the school of Abelard. . . . His whole life's work, heroically accomplished, was guided by these principles. Consider, for example, that during the second period that he taught in Paris, Thomas was committed to a lesson of biblical commentary in the morning, to comment on Aristotle in the Priory of St Jacques, to several 'Questiones Disputatae', and the redaction of, on average, two or three articles of the Summa! And so, I say, during the whole of his life Thomas was engaged in dialogue, which was often polemic, but of which the first step was to obtain the texts, the latest translations—and it mattered little if the texts were banned<sup>41</sup>—the second step being to really understand what the author had wished to say, the *intentio auctoris*. We must pause a moment on this quest for the *intentio*, because it is a major factor in what I call the ecumenical spirit of St Thomas.<sup>42</sup>

The examination of the *intentio* enables Thomas, first of all, to establish the catholic meaning of a formula which is either questionable or has been misused. It is a new form of the classical 'exponere reverenter', which Thomas also adopted as his rule. But it is a means of applying the ancient principle in a manner that is profounder, less artificial and less superficial. It was in this way that Thomas re-established the meaning of this or that text of Denis, or

<sup>38</sup>IIa, q. 64, a. 3 ad obj.

<sup>39</sup>Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. c. 10, lect. 3.

<sup>40</sup>Comm. in Metaph. lib. XII, lect. 9 end.

<sup>41</sup>Albert the Great had started to comment on Aristotle in Paris, where his 'Libri naturales' had been banned in 1210, and several times subsequently; cf. M. D. Chenu, Introduction à l'étude de S. Thomas d'Aquin. Montréal-Paris, 1950, p. 31 and 36f. The writings of Maimonides had been burnt in 1233!

<sup>42</sup>I have treated of this subject in greater depth in, Valeur et portée oecuménique de quelques principes herméneutiques de saint Thomas d'Aquin, in Rev. Sc. phil. théol. 57 (1973), ps. 611-626.

Augustine or Anselm.<sup>43</sup> He would appeal to another passage of the same author to show that one could not impute to him a position which one of the texts might have suggested.<sup>44</sup> On other occasions he has recourse to the general aim or global intention of a work to situate a passage that has been misused: it is thus that he treats a text of St John Chrysostom which had been used against the Mendicant Friars by the Seculars.<sup>45</sup>

St Thomas is not an historian, it is true. But his grasp of texts in their authentic meaning is often remarkable, and even his critical flair, given the means at his disposal. In any case, he was persuaded that one can best understand a text or an author when one knows the question he was trying to answer, the vocabulary and categories at his disposal, and how the problem presented itself to him.<sup>46</sup> Thus we can see him reconstitute the problematic and approach of St Cyril of Alexandria or of St Augustine, in order to explain by their *intentio* an ambiguous text.<sup>47</sup> In the case of Augustine, Thomas demonstrates that his argument is unsound, and then he adds, 'Sed tamen ut profundius intentionem Augustini scrutemur . . .' ('However, if we examine more deeply the intention of Augustine'), and he draws up a list of the major philosophical options on the question of epistemology: Presocratic, Socratic, Platonic, Augustinian, and lastly Aristotelian. Thus a text that one struggles to understand should be interpreted in terms of that which preceded and gave rise to it. What results would have been yielded by a study which, after pointing out the questionable or even unacceptable meaning of a text by Luther, would have continued: 'Sed tamen ut profundius intentionem Lutheri scrutemur'? But there is no need to ask, for we could draw up an account of what such a study has already achieved. For decades the question has been approached in this way, and has obtained extremely positive results.

St Thomas died on the 7th of March, 1274 on his way to the Council which had been convoked at Lyons and was to open on the 7th of May. (It was this fact that brought it about that I scandalised or disturbed, quite involuntarily, a group of young Dominicans of Naples, where I had gone to give a course of lectures towards the end of Vatican II. They asked me: What happened to St Thomas at the Council? I replied, thinking of Lyons II: 'The Council killed him'. They thought that Vatican II had got rid of St Thomas.) But let us return to 1274. What would St Thomas have said on the decisive

<sup>43</sup>Denys: *De veritate* q. 3, a. 1 ad. 6; Ia, q. 19, a. 4 ad. 1. Augustine: IIIa, q. 75, a.1 ad. 1; Anselm, *De Veritate*, q. 3, a. 1 ad. 10.

<sup>44</sup>In order to show that the psychological Trinity of Augustine is not opposed to the identity of *memoria* and the *intellectus*: Ia, q. 79, a. 7.

<sup>45</sup>Quodl. III, 17; IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 8 ad. 1.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. The prologue of the Declaration XLII quaest. (Parme XVI, 163; Vivès XXVII, 248.)

<sup>47</sup>S. Cyril: IIIa, q. 2, a. 6 ad. 4. S. Augustine: *De Spiritualibus creaturis* a. 10.

question of the Procession of the Holy Spirit if he had taken part in the Council, and if this article of faith had really been discussed? We can gain a fair idea from two writings which date from ten years previously, the *Contra errores Graecorum* (we have already explained that this title was not St Thomas': it contradicts the aim of the book), and the *De Potentia*, a. 10. The latter is especially important because it seems likely that St Thomas had, very early, begun to doubt the value of the texts which Nicholas of Cotrone had gathered together, and which Urban IV had submitted to St Thomas for his appraisal: three years later, when he was composing the treatise *De Deo Trino* for the Summa, he does not quote a single text from it. In the *De Potentia* Thomas articulates the two major principles that he will apply most particularly to the question of the Filioque: (1) the principle of development, necessary to respond to the errors that successively arose; (2) the principle of the difference between the concepts and the terms in which, here and there, in the East and in the West, the question had been approached, elaborated, and the solution formulated. For example, the Greeks use the term 'cause' to speak of the Father in his relationship with the Son and the Spirit, whereas the Latins avoid the word.<sup>48</sup> 'Cause' had inappropriate connotations. However, that which was important was not the word, but what one wanted to say. 'There are terms which it is not convenient to employ in Latin, but which one can very well use in Greek, on account of the idiom of the language'; 'Aliquid inconvenienter in lingua latina dicitur quod propter proprietatem idiomatis convenienter in lingua graeca dici potest'.

St Thomas puts into practice that which Fr Maurice Villain calls in ecumenical theology, 'the principle of equivalence'.<sup>49</sup> Adopting an idea already expressed by St Anselm, Thomas says: As the Greeks admit that the Spirit is the Spirit of the Son, and that he proceeds from the Father *by the Son*, 'So, if one carefully considers the statements of the Greeks, they differ from us more in the terms that they use than in the meaning of their affirmations—Si quis recte considerat dicta Graecorum, inveniatur quod a nobis magis differunt in verbis quam in sensu'.<sup>50</sup> If St Thomas had actually engaged in dialogue with the Greeks, he would have been confronted with more subtle difficulties, from which one cannot very easily escape. But I believe that our doctor would have maintained the same attitude, the same line of research.

In fact, the truly profound discussion of the Council of Ferrara-Florence was to lead to the same conclusion. It was on that basis of equivalence that the union of Florence was achieved, as well as on

<sup>48</sup>*De potentia*, q. 10, a. 1 ad. 8.

<sup>49</sup>M. Villain, *Introduction à l'Oecuménisme*. 3rd ed. Casterman, 1964, p. 249f.; 4th ed. 196; p. 297f.

<sup>50</sup>*De potentia*, q. 10, a. 5 c.

the conviction that the equally venerable Fathers of the East and the West had been in communion on that basis. The bull *Laetentur coeli*, of the 6th of July, 1439, declares, in effect, that 'That which the holy doctors and the Fathers declare, that is to say, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father by the Son, is intended to signify that the Son, as well as the Father, is the cause—according to the Greeks—the principle—according to the Latins—of the subsistence of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>51</sup> This formula is not to be found at Lyons in 1274. Its addition is the fruit of dialogue and also, doubtless, of the spirit of St Thomas.

Clearly, we are concerned with principles that can be devalued, talking glibly and with too much facility of equivalence, of pluralism and of complementarity. Thomas knew that the spectacle of different teachings being proposed by men of repute could engender scepticism,<sup>52</sup> and ecumenism ought not to be, and is not, a school of scepticism. Listen, and this will be our conclusion, to these lines from the conciliar decree, *Unitatis redintegratio*: 'Preserving unity in that which is necessary, let everyone in the Church, each according to the function which is given to him, preserve his due liberty, whether in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline, or in the variety of liturgical rites, or even in the theological elaboration of revealed truth; and may charity be practised in everything. Thus they will show forth, always more fully, the true catholicity and apostolicity of the Church'.<sup>53</sup>

# Workers' Control in Chile

## by 'Jose Obrero'<sup>1</sup>

The last assembly we held before the coup was impressive. It was a sequel to an assembly which the administration had called several days before to inform us that our stock of raw material was down to zero; that with the truck owners' strike there was no way of bringing the stock of ingots reserved for us in Concepcion; that we'd have to consider seriously the prospect of a halt in production. The news was badly received.

<sup>51</sup>Denz. 691; Denz-Schonn. 1300-1301.

<sup>52</sup>C. Gentiles lib.I c.4 9 Tertium inconveniens.

<sup>53</sup>Ch. 1, n. 4 9 7. For the important idea relating certain differences to the apostolicity itself, cf. also ch. 3, n. 14 9 3.

<sup>1</sup>The author of this article is still living in Chile and writes under a pseudonym.