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On the Fate of Nations

to Alphons Horten

There is a church downtown St. Paul, Minnesota, on the corner of Cedar and Tenth Streets. It is a small church, and looks rather insignificant when one passes it. This may be because of its location. The church is very near the State Capitol building, whose dome seems to defy any building near it to look imposing, and is directly in front of the large Great American History Theater, which stretches its shadow across the block. To make matters worse, the church is on an intersection that leads to St. Paul's freeways, and is adjacent to a larger Presbyterian church, both of which seem further to mute its presence. And yet the church on Tenth Street is a striking one. It is dedicated to St. Louis, King of France.

One of the startling things about the church, aside from the gold-embossed fleur-de-lys that grace its doors, its walls, and its vaults, are its stained glass windows. There is one that depicts Joan of Arc bearing her sword and her standard and bears the inscription *Jeanne d'Arc et la France*—Joan of Arc and France. There is one that depicts Bernadette Soubirous and bears the inscription *Lourdes et la France*. There is one that depicts Marguerite-Marie Alacoque and

bears the inscription *Le Sacré Coeur et la France*. There is one that depicts the baptism of Clovis, king of the Franks, and bears the inscription *Le Baptême de la France.* There is one that depicts the martyrdom of Pierre Chanel and bears the inscription *La France Missionnaire.* To be brief: every large pane in the church, with the exception of one, is dedicated to a French saint, and every inscription on every stained-glass window, with the exception of that one, links the mission of that saint with the life of France herself. The message to be read in the decorative elements of the church is a clear and distinct one: France is a sacred nation.

This is not an original message. France has been convinced of her sacredness for centuries. But it is a startling one, especially for contemporary ears. It is a startling one in a century in which both Western and non-Western powers have drawn Middle-Eastern and African borders to suit their needs, rather than those of the peoples who populate those lands. It is a startling one in a century in which "imperialism" and wars have made us wary of emphatic patriotism. It is a startling one in an age in which globalization, the European community, national elections, and the Internet seem to make nationhood look not only like a thing of the past, but like a thing well forgotten as well. For the simple truth of the matter is that the sacredness of nations and twentieth-century perceptions of nationhood are at odds with one another.

If nations are sacred, then there is no warranting our having drawn the map of the Middle East to suit our needs rather than those of the peoples who populate those lands. If we have the right to draw world maps to suit our needs rather than those of the peoples who populate those lands, on the other hand, then there is no warranting the claim that nations are sacred. If patriotism is love of one's nation, then patriotism's being a dangerous thing makes nations a dangerous thing. And if nations are a dangerous thing it would seem impossible to warrant the claim that they are sacred. But if nations are a sacred thing, then there would seem no warranting the claim

that patriotism is a dangerous thing. If nations are things of the past, then there is no claiming that they are sacred, and if nations are sacred there is no claiming that they are things of the past. So the little church on Cedar Street begs us to ask terrible questions. Are we right in thinking that nations are a thing of the past? Or are they things to be protected, loved, and celebrated? Are nations sacred?

Both of our mutually exclusive claims can be backed with philosophical and religious arguments. One of the strongest defenses of the sacredness of nations from the religious point of view is given by the very history of France that our church on Cedar Street celebrates. For France was saved, or arguably even founded, by a saint whose divine mission it was to ensure that France survive.

Joan of Arc and France

The historical facts of this matter are well known. In the 1420s the kingdom of France was on the verge of extinction. After nearly a hundred years of war with England, the then king of France, Charles VI, signed a treaty with Henry V of England that made the English king the successor to the throne of France. And nothing in sight seemed capable of ensuring that Henry not become the king of France. The dispossessed French *dauphin*, who, one would expect, would be the first person to challenge the treaty and his disinheritance, was a weak man and did virtually nothing to ensure that his kingdom not fall into foreign hands. After a few meager attempts to sway the tide of his and his kingdom's fortune, he retreated to Bourges and set up an alternate court there. Nor did the powerful noblemen of France seem to be capable of resisting the advent of English domination, those noblemen, that is, who wanted to resist the English. For there were many who did not. The duke of Burgundy, a first cousin of the king, for instance, decided to back the English in 1417, and fought with them against the *dauphin*. As for the people of France, they probably just prayed that the war come to an

end. It had lasted nearly a hundred years at that point and had taken a terrible toll, the French population literally halved in those years.

And then the miracle took place. In 1429, a young girl appeared from the *marches of Lorraine* and in a few short months single-handedly changed France's fate. She led the French army to its first victory against the English army in decades when she lifted the siege of Orléans in May 1429. A month later, she liberated the Loire from the stranglehold the English army had put on it. She had the French *dauphin* crowned king of France in July of that same year. Joan of Arc saved France:

> Her brief appearance on the political scene had extraordinary repercussions. Although she had died, with her intervention the tide had suddenly and miraculously turned. Despair was banished, and even her death could not check the movement that she had initiated. It was to lead to the liberation of France from English occupation twenty years later.[1]

Now, the amazing thing about Joan of Arc is that her quest to save France was, by her own admission, divinely inspired. Joan claimed to have done nothing, as far as her defense of her country was concerned, which was not commanded by God.[2] What this means, of course, is that if she was right, God wanted France to belong to the French: that France is a sacred nation. And the fact of the matter is that there is simply no explaining how she could possibly have achieved what she did if she was not right.

I do not want to engage in a comprehensive defense of Joan's claim in this article. The charges levied against it in the five hundred and seventy-odd years that have passed since she made the claim are simply too many—and too diverse—to be dealt with here.[3] It has been estimated that over twelve thousand books have been written about Joan of Arc, and the aim of numerous of these is precisely to challenge her claim.[4] But it is, perhaps, not amiss to state why it is reasonable to accept Joan's claim, and what that claim entails.

The cogency of Joan's claim stems from the extraordinary nature of her deeds. This is something that those who would attack Joan's claim do not seem to realize. It takes more than simply questioning Joan's claim, or finding ordinary causes for *some* of her extraordinary deeds, to put her claim in doubt. It takes more than finding a physiological or psychological cause for Joan's hearing voices, for instance, to put the divine origin of Joan's quest in question. For a physiological and psychological cause for Joan's hearing voices—whether it be Ménière's disease, a brain tumor, or schizophrenia—in no way explains how Joan was capable of doing everything she did. It does not explain how she, an illiterate *peasant girl* from the hinterlands of France, managed to convince a pusillanimous and leery *dauphin* to give her an army to lead in a day and age in which waging war was strictly managed by *noble men*. It does not explain how she, a peasant girl who had no military training at all, did manage to lead an army to victory, when there was no hope for victory.[5] It does not explain how she could foretell events.[6] It does not explain how she could do the thousand and one extraordinary things she did. How does schizophrenia account for Joan's ability to control a war horse in the crush of a battle? Controlling a war horse takes training in any circumstance, training Joan simply did not have, and which schizophrenia does not provide. How does a brain tumor explain Joan's foretelling when and how she would be wounded? Clairvoyance is not a necessary outcome of a brain tumor. How does Ménière's disease explain how Joan could have argued so brilliantly at her trial? Arguing well takes training, training Joan simply did not have, and which Ménière's disease does not provide.

The point is that those who would contest Joan's claim to have been given a divine mission forget just how incredible her deeds were. Indeed, they try to downplay the extraordinariness of her deeds in order to explain them. The fact of the matter is, however, that extraordinary deeds do require extraordinary causes. And the extraordinariness of Joan's deeds can be accounted for by nothing short of supernatural aid.

But if there is no explaining how Joan of Arc could have done everything she did without recurring to divine aid, then it is reasonable to assume that her claim to have been sent by God to forestall English domination of France is true. The point did not escape the judges at Joan's rehabilitation trial:

> This girl . . . was sent for the liberation and consolation of the king and kingdom . . . and in the service of God she liberated the kingdom from the hands of the English, with God compassionately cooperating, as one can piously believe.[7]

Nor, interestingly enough, did it escape the English crown. It paid for the Inquisition, which led to Joan's death.

What this means is that France's claim to sacredness has very good grounds. This is not to say that France is the only nation that can make this claim. This is simply not true. France is by no means the only nation that God sent someone to protect, or even found. St. Mesrop was canonized for giving the Armenian nation a means with which to maintain her identity under foreign domination when he invented her alphabet. St. Nicholas of Flue is revered for founding the Swiss federation. Nor is it to claim that France is the primary nation that has a claim to sacredness. Israel, one would think, is, given not only the number of Jewish prophets, but also her role in divine economy. The conclusion to be drawn from the fact that Joan of Arc was given a divine mission to save France, I think, is that God's plan for the universe includes nations.[8]

Nations and Sacredness: The Unholy Mix

And yet, there would seem to be something contradictory about the claim that God's plan for the universe includes nations: that nations are sacred. Nationhood seems to contradict several of the prerequisites of a sacred unity. Nations, to begin with, cannot be universal unities: unities, that is, that are universal in their intent. A nation is

a unity of people who share a specific and particular culture, and who live (or originate) within specific and particular geographical boundaries.[9] It is a unity from which those people who do not live within the nation's geographical boundaries and who do not share the nation's culture are necessarily excluded. It is a unity of people who view themselves as other than those people who do not share their specific culture and who do not live (or originate) within their boundaries. Nations are particular unities.

If this is so, however, then nations cannot be sacred unities. For a sacred unity, it would seem, is ideally universal. It is a unity whose intent is to include everyone. It is a unity from which no one is necessarily excluded. A sacred unity, it would seem as such, transcends both borders and cultures. Is that not why the Nicean Creed states that "We believe in one, holy, *Catholic*, and apostolic Church"?

Nationhood also admits of the existence of multiple and diverse nations, precisely because a nation is a particular unity, rooted in a particular culture that exists within a particular geographical area. For a unity of this sort cannot by definition include all people. And that not so much because it cannot include those people who do not live (or originate) within its specific geographical borders. Borders may change, or indeed not even exist, as Europe has begun to prove. A nation cannot by definition include all people because it is rooted in a particular culture, and no human culture can aspire to be the only valid human culture.[10] A culture is a way of life that emphasizes a particular virtue, or a particular combination of virtues, and the fact of the matter is that no particular virtue, or combination of virtues is (or can claim to be) the only virtue, or combination of virtues. There are *de facto* many human virtues: prudence, temperance, courage, and justice, just to mention a few of the primary ones. And there are *de facto* far more ways of combining these virtues into a harmonious *modus vivendi* than there are virtues. If a nation is rooted in a particular culture, as such, no nation can aspire to be the only nation. Nations must, as such, admit of the existence of multiple and diverse nations.

A sacred unity, it would seem on the other hand, cannot admit of the existence of multiple and diverse sacred unities. A sacred unity is rooted in a belief, or set of beliefs, that does claim to be the only true belief or set of beliefs. A sacred unity, it would therefore seem, is in its intent the only true sacred unity. Is that not why the goal of Christianity is the formation of *one* mystical body of Christ? Indeed, were a sacred unity to admit of the existence of multiple and diverse sacred unities, Christians, it would seem, would pray not for God's kingdom to come, but for His kingdom*s* to come, which is exactly what they do not do, since different kingdoms entail different kings, and there can be only one king of the universe, since there is only one God.

But if a sacred unity is one that in its intent is the only sacred unity, nations cannot be sacred unities, precisely because they must allow for multiple and diverse nations. Oneness and multiplicity, uniqueness and diversity, to put the point simply, are different things. They are, it would seem, mutually exclusive things. So it would seem reasonable to claim that if oneness is indeed God's plan for us, then nations cannot be.

Logic aside, there would seem to be many good reasons why nationhood cannot be sacred. Peace and harmony, for instance, would seem to be products of sacred unities, and they simply aren't products of nationhood. And there is a good reason why. Diversity is a dangerous thing. Pierre Cauchon, who presided over Joan of Arc's trial, pointed this out in the double-monarchy theory with which he and his colleagues at the University of Paris justified the English takeover of France. For, he claimed, since the division of the kingdoms of France and England had led to war, sedition, and the diminution of faith, their union would bring about the immediate cessation of hostilities and usher in a new age of hope.[11] His point, it would seem, is that the diversity implicit in nationhood itself is the cause of war.

Cauchon's theory would seem to be reasonable. Diversity, in our minds at least, seems to imply a negation of sorts. To say that an

apple is different from an orange, is to say that an apple is not an orange: that an apple has characteristics that an orange lacks.[12] And negations of this sort are dangerous things when they are applied to human beings. The word "barbarian" makes this point very clearly. It derives from *bar-bar*, and is the word that the ancient Greeks and Romans used to designate all people who did not speak Greek or Latin: all people who were not Greek or Roman. And to the Greeks and Romans, people such as these were to be conquered, enslaved, and enlightened: taught the proper way of life. It is not difficult to understand why. If we apply the same principle to a contemporary situation, we will see just how dangerous diversity is. To claim that an American is different from a Mexican implies that a Mexican is not an American. And this in turn implies that a Mexican is lacking something the American has. But if a Mexican lacks what an American has, it would seem to follow that a Mexican is inferior to an American. It is just this sort of thing that lies at the root of racism.

If nationhood does imply diversity, as such, and if diversity as applied to human beings has such terrible connotations, nationhood would seem to be inherently evil. Indeed, nationhood would seem, in some sense, to be the direct result of sin, at least from the religious perspective. After all, one of the prerequisites of distinct nations are distinct peoples, and one of the definite signs of a people's considering itself distinct from others is having its own distinct language. Language is what keeps the culture of persecuted peoples alive. It is what distinguishes a people under foreign domination from its conquerors. It is not by chance that the makers of the great empires of the past ensured that their language was spoken throughout their domains, or at least at the important functions held in their domains. For this had the double function of canceling the local culture—or at least of marginalizing it—and of establishing theirs as the dominant culture.

The point is that languages are, to some degree, the sign of a people's specific difference, of its considering itself different. They are

a sign of the very thing that nationhood requires: particular cultures. But here is the clincher: doesn't the Old Testament teach us that the proliferation of languages was the direct result of a sin, that mankind came to speak many languages while it was building the Tower of Babel, or, to put it plainly, rebelling against God? But if mankind came to speak different languages when it was rebelling against God, and if languages are signs of particular cultures, does it not follow that mankind splintered into particular cultures when it rebelled against God? And if particular cultures are the prerequisites of nations, and particular cultures are the results of mankind's rebellion against God, does it not follow that nationhood is in some sense the product of mankind's rebellion against God? And if it does, can nationhood be a sacred thing? Quite obviously not. It would seem to be the antithesis of what is sacred.

But if nationhood is the antithesis of sacred, can God want different nations? Let's be honest. We all know how God dealt with the first lot of people who started to splinter off into many groups: He blotted them out with the Flood. Why should we imagine, then, that He loves our splintering now any more than He did then? God cannot, after all change His mind. Does the Flood, as such, not allow us to conclude that nationhood is contrary to God's plan?

One could, of course, point out that there must have been something more to the Flood, some grave sin other than different languages and cultures. After all, God has not blotted us out and we speak many different languages, and have different cultures. Thus, it cannot be altogether right to claim that He is in principle opposed to nations. This may be true. But then again, God may not have sent another flood because of the nonintervention covenant He struck with Noah. What is more to the point is that God's not intervening in our world does not prove that He does have great love for nations. Indeed, as Cauchon pointed out, there are a host of things nations seem to cause that would seem to indicate that they are not on His list of priorities: wars, genocides, and things of this sort.

Sed Contra

Can we, then, truly claim that nations are (or can be) sacred, or is there something contradictory about that claim? Can we reconcile the two opposing claims that can be made in their regards? Or is it best to leave the matter moot?

To be honest, the problem is not as large as it seems. What makes the claim that nationhood is a sacred unity appear to be an incongruous one are two things: (1) the fact that a nation's characteristics would seem to be contrary to those of a sacred unity, and (2) the fact that the diversity nationhood implies seems to result in something contrary to the sacred. To be specific, it is the fact: (1) that the particularity, multiplicity, and diversity of nations seem to be irreconcilable with the universality and oneness of a sacred unity, and (2) that diversity as applied to humanity seems to imply a hierarchical view of humanity that results in racism, wars, and genocides. And if we examine the matter closely we can see that neither of the reasons for which nationhood and sacredness appear to be antithetical is valid.

To begin with the first point, a nation, we said, would seem not to be a sacred unity because nations are particular unities—unities that are not universal in their intent: they necessarily exclude those people who do not share the nation's culture and who do not live (or originate) within the nation's borders. But sacred unities are universal in their intent: they do not necessarily exclude anyone. We concluded, as such, that nations cannot be sacred. The reasoning here seems impeccable. And yet, I wonder if the argument's premises are correct. To be precise, I wonder if the minor premise is correct. For as true as it is that a sacred unity is necessarily universal in its intent, if by 'sacred unity' one means the 'unity of all true believers insofar as they are true believers,' the term 'sacred unity' need not and cannot be intended only in this sense. Were the term 'sacred unity' to be applicable only to those unities that are universal in their intent, the personal union of a single human person with

God—beatitude—could not be a sacred unity, for it does not include anyone other than the persons involved in the personal union. Were a sacred unity only universal in its intent, a family could not be a sacred unity, nor could a parish, or a friendship be sacred unities. But this is clearly not so. What it means is that 'sacred unities' cannot only be universal in their intents. If this is so, however, then there must be a more basic meaning to the term 'sacred unity' than the one we gave above.

Now, if what is sacred is: (1) God Himself; (2) what contains God's presence; (3) what is intended or caused by God; and (4) what promotes what is intended or caused by God, then a sacred unity must in its most basic sense be: (1) a unity that is intrinsic to God Himself—such as the Trinity; (2) a unity that contains God's presence—such as a marriage; (3) a unity that is intended or caused by God—such as, one supposes, the unity of all believers, the unity between a believer and God, and the unity between parent and child, are; or (4) a unity that promotes what is intended or caused by God. If this is so, then it is quite clear that it is not at all necessary for all sacred unities to be universal in their intent: to not necessarily exclude anyone. Marriage, to begin with, is sacred unity, but no marriage can be universal in its intent. A marriage cannot be a unity of all people. The conclusion here is obvious. If all sacred unities need not be universal in their intent, the fact that nations are not universal in their intent does not imply that they are not sacred unities.

Our clarification of the nature of sacred unities gives us the means with which to deal with the second characteristic of nations that would seem to be at odds with a sacred unity, and that is their multiplicity and diversity. A nation, we said, would not seem to be a sacred unity because a sacred unity, rooted as it is in a belief or set of beliefs that claim to be the only true belief or set of beliefs, does not admit of multiple or diverse sacred unities, whereas nationhood does admit of multiple and diverse nations. Hence nations, it would seem, cannot be sacred unities.

Here again we must make a distinction. For if by a sacred unity we mean 'the unity of all true believers insofar as they are true believers,' then a sacred unity cannot naturally admit of the existence of other sacred unities. As we have seen, however, a sacred unity need not mean 'the unity of all true believers insofar as they are true believers.' For the unity of all true believers is not the only sacred unity. The unity between a husband and wife, the personal unity between a believer and God, and the unity between a parent and his child are also sacred unities. What this means, of course, is that a sacred unity cannot necessarily preclude the existence of multiple and diverse sacred unities precisely because there are different types of sacred unities. This is not all. It also means that a specific type of sacred unity need not preclude multiple or diverse instances of that type of sacred unity. One would, for instance, hope that the types of sacred unities we mentioned above do admit of multiple and diverse instances both. What a sad world it would be if the existence of one marriage precluded the existence of any other marriage; if the existence of one bond between a parent and child precluded the existence of any other such bond; if the personal union between one believer and God precluded the existence of any other such union. Indeed, it would not be a world at all. Here too the conclusion is obvious. If a sacred unity need not preclude multiple and diverse sacred unities, then the fact that nationhood does imply that there be multiple and diverse nations does not imply that nations cannot be sacred.

But what of the consequences of nationhood? Wars, racism, and genocides would seem to be obvious consequences of there being distinct nations, and these consequences are clearly antithetical to the sacred. The fact of the matter is, however, that if the effects of any given thing are antithetical to the sacred, then the thing itself would seem necessarily to be antithetical to the sacred. All effects are similar to their causes, after all. There being distinct nations would therefore seem to be antithetical to the sacred. But every nation must admit of the existence of multiple and distinct nations. Diversity and

multiplicity are, as we have seen, inherent in the very ground of nationhood. If this is so, then it would seem to follow that every nation must be essentially antithetical to the sacred.

There are several problems with this argument. The primary is that it takes evil to be a positive attribute since its conclusion is that nations are essentially antithetical to the sacred. The source of this problem lies in the argument's misuse of the principle that all effects are similar to their causes. To be precise, it lies in the argument's presupposing that every effect is necessarily similar to something positive in its cause: to some positive attribute in its cause, or some perfection in its cause. The problem with this presupposition is that it, in turn, rests upon the presupposition that everything must act in accordance with its nature: with its attributes, or perfections. That is, in order for every effect to be necessarily similar to some positive attribute in its cause—as the point demands—every cause must necessarily act in accordance with its nature: its positive attributes, or perfections. The fact of the matter is, however, that the latter is not only not a valid presupposition, it also denies a point that the argument against nationhood presupposes: that nations can exist.

It is not a valid presupposition because it denies that there can be such a thing as freedom of the will. The whole point of freedom of the will is to account for the fact that some beings need not act in a way that is dictated by their natures.[13] What is more important, however, is that if the presupposition were true, it would deny the very point of the present argument against nationhood. For were every effect necessarily similar to something positive in its cause, some positive attribute in its cause, then in order for wars, genocides, and things of this sort to be the effects of nations, nations themselves would have to be essentially warlike and genocidal. But in order to be essentially warlike and genocidal, a nation would have to be essentially destructive of unity and life. Were a nation essentially destructive of unity and life, however, a nation could not be a nation at all. A nation is by definition a unity.

What this means is that if a nation is by definition a unity of people who share a common culture and live (or originate) within specific geographical boundaries, a nation cannot be essentially destructive of unity and life. If this is so, however, then a nation cannot have wars, genocides and things of this sort as its necessary consequences.[14] But if nations do not have wars, genocides, and things of this sort as their necessary consequences, then the claim that they are antithetical to the sacred since they can have deleterious consequences has no ground.

There is, as such, no reason for claiming that nations and sacredness are mutually exclusive terms. It is not inherently contradictory to claim that nations are sacred unities. Granted that this is so, we are left with the real question: why nations? What part can nations play in God's world?

Humans and Their Quirks

There are, I think, two striking things about being a human being. The first is that human beings are all unique. There will never be another Joan of Arc, as there will never be another Siobhan, for that matter. In each of us the human form is actualized in a unique way; in each of us the act of being human is qualified in an unrepeatable way; in each of us those characteristics that make a being human blend to make a unique mix. We are all individual substances.[15]

The second important characteristic about being a human being is that we are, none of us, an absolute expression of what it is to be human, precisely because the human form is actualized in each of us in a unique way, and there are a myriad of unique ways in which it is and can be actualized. Thus, although there are no "differences of degree [. . .] among forms or natures of individuals of the same species," as Descartes put it,[16] although in each of us the human act of being is complete, although each of us possesses all of those characteristics that make a being human, none of us is in himself all of the possible ways in which the characteristics that make a being

human can be combined. In none of our acts of being is the human act of being qualified in all of the ways in which it can be qualified. There is a multitude of unique and individual human substances in our world.

Aquinas indirectly made this point when he was dealing with the nature of angels. Angels, in his account, are more individuated than we because each of them is the sole possessor of a unique nature.[17] We, on the other hand, are certainly unique possessors of a sole nature, but we are not the sole possessors of a nature. Our natures are not unique to us: we are all human.

The fact that none of us is an absolute expression of what it is to be human has an important consequence. It implies that the absolute expression of what it is to be human is only to be had in the unity of the entire human race: in the unity of all of the unique expressions of human nature. To be precise, it implies that the absolute expression of being human is only to be had in the unity of human beings each of whom completely actualizes his own unique way of being human: that the absolute expression of being human is only to be had in the unity of perfect human beings. This unity, it would seem then, is the final cause, the goal of human nature. For the final cause of human nature is the perfection of human nature. The perfection of human nature, then, is the absolute actualization of human nature.[18] And the absolute actualization of human nature is to be had in the unity of perfect human beings.[19]

The point here is not just of academic interest. It also concerns the personal perfection of every human being. The perfection of any being requires that it actualize its form—its mode of being—to the fullest possible degree. For a being's perfection entails its actualizing its potential to the fullest possible degree, and a being's potential is defined by its form. What that form is, then, is determined by the existing things that actualize that form. For the form only exists, strictly speaking, in those beings that actualize that form.[20] The actuality of the form is therefore the sum total, the collection, of the

actuality of the existing things that actualize that form. If this is so, however, then in order to actualize its form to the fullest possible degree, a being must actualize its form in all of the ways in which that form is actualized in existing things.

In the case of human beings, as such, actualizing the human form to the fullest possible degree entails not only completely actualizing the form as it is qualified in any single human being. For unlike angels, who are the only expressions of their unique forms, no human being is the only and absolute expression of what it is to be human. It entails actualizing the human form in all of the ways in which it is actualized in human beings: actualizing it as it is actualized in the multitude of unique and individual human beings that form the human race. For this is the fullest actualization of the human form.[21] If every human being is called to be human to the fullest possible extent, as such, every human being is called not only to what we might call his personal perfection: completely actualizing human potential as it is qualified in him. Every human being is also called to a perfection beyond that personal perfection.

Now, no human being can *substantially* actualize the human form as it is actualized in each of the members of the human race: no human being can become every member of the human race. Were one to be able to, human beings would not be unique individual human substances. Moreover, in order to substantially actualize the human form as it is actualized in all human beings—to become every member of the human race—a human being would have to cease to be the individual human substance he is. That individual human substance is, after all, defined by the particular manner in which the human form is actualized in him. Were that human being to cease to be himself, however, he could not actualize the human form in the unique way in which it is actualized in him, and hence he could not actualize the human form in all of the ways in which it can be actualized. The perfection beyond personal perfection cannot, in other words, be attained through subsumption.

This does not, however, mean that no human being can actualize the human form in all of the ways in which it is actualized in all of the members of the human race. A human being does not need to *subsume* another human being in order to actualize the specific mode of being of that other human being. He can do so by *knowing* him. For, as Aquinas puts it: "The person who knows and the one known should in some manner become one in the act of knowing."[22] Knowing is, after all, the act through which a knower "acquires" the known:

> For a thing to have knowledge means to carry in itself the identity (*quidditas*) of some being or thing, and not only its 'image' but indeed its 'form.' A being's ability to know, therefore, is its ability to transcend its own delimitations, the ability to step out of its own identity and to have 'also the form of the other being,' which means: to *be* the other being. 'Knowing' constitutes and establishes the most intimate relationship conceivable between two beings (a fact that is expressed and confirmed through the age-old usage of 'knowing' to indicate sexual intercourse).[23]

In order to actualize the human form in all of the ways in which it is actualized in individual human beings, in order to attain that perfection beyond personal perfection, a human being needs to *know* all human beings.

In order for us to know a human being other than ourselves, however, that being must allow us to know him. He must reveal what he is, he must express himself, give himself.[24] Were he not to, then as Norris Clarke points out:

> There would be no way for anything else to know that . . . [he] exists; [he] . . . would make no *difference* at all to the rest of reality; practically speaking, [he] . . . might just as well not be at all.[25]

The fact of the matter is, however, that expressing oneself, giving oneself to others, is part and parcel of the nature of every human being. For as Aquinas points out, "It is in the very nature of every actuality to communicate itself insofar as it is possible."[26]

Aquinas gives a number of reasons for this. On the highest level, he claims that a human being's desire to communicate derives from his desire to be, like God, a cause of things.[27] Elsewhere, in very Neoplatonic sounding passages, he claims that a being's desire to communicate derives from its goodness.[28] The simplest explanation for a human being's need to communicate, however, may just lie in the nature of being itself. For if being is an act, as Aquinas insists it is, then the perfection of being must also be an act. Indeed, Aquinas claims that the perfection of every being is its operations.[29] But every act, every operation, expresses the being of the agent. For every agent acts according to how it exists. Hence the perfection of every being entails its expressing its being. This expression becomes communication the moment it involves others as, in our case, it inevitably does:

> Now each thing acts insofar as it is in act, and in acting it diffuses being and goodness to other things. Hence, it is a sign of a being's perfection that it produce its like.[30]

To get back to our point, if the complete perfection of any human being requires that he actualize the human form to the greatest possible degree, and if that requires his knowing all human beings, then in order for any human being to attain that perfection beyond personal perfection every human being must communicate what he is to him. If this is so, however, then the complete perfection of any human being requires the communion of all human beings.

The unity of humanity is therefore not just the final cause, the goal, of human nature as such. It is also the final cause of each and every human being. Each and every human being is called to a perfection beyond personal perfection: each and every human being is called to form a unity with all other human beings.[31]

It is, of course, also true that in order for a human being to attain this perfection beyond personal perfection he must also completely actualize the human form as it is qualified in him, as too must all other human beings. No human being can completely communicate his unique way of being human if he has not yet fully actualized it. Nor, as a result, can a human being fully "acquire" the unique way of being another has not yet fully attained. The prerequisite of the perfection beyond personal perfection, in other words, is that every human being fully actualize his own unique way of being human.

Interpersonal relations play a part in this too, very simply because we cannot actualize our own potential by ourselves. It is a scholastic motto that every agent acts in accordance with its degree of actuality.[32] The very sane idea behind the motto is that we can only give what we already have, or by the converse that we cannot give anyone—least of all ourselves—what we do not have. This is something we all know by experience. I can certainly teach someone to play the piano, since I already can. But I would be at a loss if I were to have to teach someone Sanskrit, since I do not know it. The consequence of this law is obvious. In order to acquire what we do not in any way have, we need outside help. Hence the other scholastic dictum: *omne quod movetur ab alio movetur*—everything that is changed is changed by something other than itself. The point of it is that it is with and through others that we actualize our own potential.[33] What this indicates is that the unity of human beings is not only the final cause of human beings. It is also one of the efficient causes of the personal perfection of every human being.

The point is that we are gregarious as well as unique: that our perfection requires both that we be those unique persons we are meant to be in the fullest sense of the term, and that we be an active and receptive part of a greater community. This is the glory of being human: what we might call the dialectic between our uniqueness and our relationality.

The One and the Many

That interpersonal relations are the efficient cause of our attaining our personal perfection is something that philosophers have acknowledged and discussed for a long time. There is hardly a page of classical or mediaeval philosophy that does not mention—or allude to—the importance of the other in our intellectual, ethical, not to mention ontological, development. What is not as markedly developed is the notion that interpersonal relations have anything other than the personal perfection of one of the *relata* as their goal. For all that Aristotle states that man is a political animal, for instance, he nonetheless claims that his perfection is his self-sufficiency.[34] For all that Boethius acknowledges man's radical dependence upon God, he too claims that man's perfection is his being *sui compos*.[35] Augustine makes a similar point.[36]

To be sure, here and there we get glimpses of the recognition that our perfection includes more than just our actualizing our own unique way of being human and consequently that our interpersonal relations have more than just our personal perfection as their goal. Aristotle, for instance, qualifies his definition of self-sufficiency by claiming that it must include friends, since not even the self-sufficient person can be happy without friends,[37] thus allowing for the notions that our relations can have more than our personal perfection as their goal, and that our perfection must be more than a solitary thing. Along the same lines, the Apostle's Creed calls for us to believe in the communion of saints. Even Kant nods at this in his notion of the kingdom of ends.[38] The fact of the matter is, however, that the view that our perfection involves the unity of the entire human race is drowned out by the far more dominant vision of human perfection that defines it as merely an individual thing.

What, then, are the primary characteristics of the 'unity of perfect beings'? And what are the consequences of its being the final cause of every human being? Is this unity like the one depicted in that UNICEF drawing of the many different children of color standing

hand in hand surrounding the world? Is it some kind of an organization that exists outside of us, and independently of us, and to which we have to apply to be admitted? Or is it something else altogether?

I personally think it would be terrifying if the 'unity of perfect human beings' were some entity that exists altogether independently of us. In the best of scenarios, it would make joining it something like going to a party where you are the only unfortunate fool who knows none of the other guests. In the worst, it would make joining this unity something like joining a secret society that calls for us to relinquish our individuality. But we need not really fear anything like this. For this is exactly what the unity of perfect human beings cannot be. Dictators and ideologists to the contrary, the unity of perfect human beings must be something to which we adhere of our own free wills. This unity cannot, after all, involve a negation of ourselves, for it could not then be the perfection above and beyond our personal perfection. What this means is that our belonging to it cannot involve coercion of any sort. One of our faculties, our powers, is, after all, a free will, and being coerced is the exact contrary of exercising one's free will. What seems to be true is the contrary of this: that since our perfection entails the perfection of our wills, the unity above and beyond our own personal perfection must be one that originates in each of us in some sense: one that we all contribute to making.

The best example we have of this unity, I think as such, is to be found in our friendships: in the friendship between two adults. For it is one that we contribute to making. Friendship is also an interpersonal relation in which each relatum has more than his personal perfection as his goal.

Friendship is one of the greatest gifts there is. Aristotle is very poetic on the matter, and rightly so. I'm afraid, however, that I am going to have to forgo the poetic account and concentrate on the three basic characteristics of friendship. For it is these that allow us to understand what that unity we having been attempting to define is.

Friendship, to begin with, is a unique and irreplaceable communion of two people who, as Aristotle puts it, become "each other's good."[39]

> In loving their friend they love what is good for themselves; for when a good person becomes a friend he becomes a good for his friend.[40]

This is meant in different ways. For in true friendship we do not desire merely to know our friend, to "acquire" his way of being, to let his way of being inform our own. We do not desire our friend's good only for the sake of our own perfection. Friendship is not a self-centered thing. We also desire our friend's good for his own sake: "those who wish goods to their friend for the friend's own sake are friends most of all."[41] Our friend's good becomes our own good: something that we seek with and for him. Through friendship our friend becomes a second self. This is why Aristotle can claim that in matters of friendship loving is more important than being loved,[42] and why Clarke claims that friendship entails self-transcendence.[43]

Friendship has a prerequisite: that friends have a common understanding of a common goal. By this is meant not so much that friendship makes friends their mutual goals in some sense, although it is true, but more basically yet that their friendship is constituted by their common pursuit of a common goal:

> Whatever someone [regards as . . .] the end for which he chooses to be alive, that is the activity he wishes to pursue in his friend's company. Hence some friends drink together, others play dice, while others do gymnastics and go hunting, or do philosophy. They spend their days together on whichever pursuit in life they like most; for since they want to live with their friends, they share the actions in which they find their common life.[44]

Having a common understanding of a common goal is essential to friendship. Without it, friendships die. This happens, unfortu-

nately, quite commonly. How many times have changes in our lives had the unfortunate side effect of making us leave our friends by the wayside: see them less often, and eventually lose sight of them? The reason that this happens is that changes in us bring about a change in our perception of what we are really after—of our goal—and consequently in what we desire to do. Now, if a friend is unable to understand the change that has taken place in us, in our perception of our goal, and in our activities, then he will not want to share our activities. And if he does not want to share our activities, he cannot share our lives. This is the simple, brutal way things go.

The third important characteristic of friendships, of real ones, is that they coalesce. One of the great joys of life is having your friends make friends among themselves. Now, one would expect his own friendship with the various people whom he has introduced to one another to suffer from his having introduced them. This is, of course, why there is such a thing as jealousy. We are all afraid of being replaced. But the truth of the matter is that this is not so. The contrary takes place: when one shares his friends, and the friends do make friends, his friendship with each intensifies. This is because one's friends' becoming friends allows each of one's friends to become one's "good" more completely.

If a friend is one's "good" insofar as: (1) one knows the friend (allows the friend to inform one's way of being), and (2) one seeks that friend's good with and for that friend, then one's friends' becoming friends entails that each friend: (1) know the other friend (allow the other friend to inform his way of being), and (2) seek that friend's good with and for him. If this is so, then one's friends' becoming friends allows one: (1) to know each friend more completely, because each friend can help us to know each other friend more completely; and (2) to seek each friend's good for the sake of that friend more completely, because each friend participates in the search for each other friend's good.

When you introduce Sally, your closest friend, to Algernon, who had the courage to tell you that you were arrogant, both your friendship with Sally and your friendship with Algernon take on a new dimension. They are both strengthened by the new friendship born between Sally and Algernon. But neither your friendship with Sally nor your friendship with Algernon loses its uniqueness, if they are true friendships. Sally is still the person with whom you discuss each event of every day. It's just that your conversations with her are more complete once Algernon is a part of Sally's life. For Algernon helps you know things about Sally that you had not seen before, and helps Sally understand things about you that she had not seen before. Sally is still the person whom you want to ensure is the best literary critic. It is just that you have more ways to ensure that with Algernon's help. And the same thing holds for your friendship with Algernon, and his with you.

When you introduce both Sally and Algernon to Fred the circle widens. Each friendship is deepened. What happens when we introduce our friends to our friends is both that a broader circle is formed out of each of the circles that are our friendships, and that each of the circles within the larger circle intensifies. The life of true friendship, as such, is something like those ripples that appear on still water after we have thrown a stone: a series of expanding circles. The reason for this, ultimately, is that all of the people involved in a web of friendships share a common understanding of a common goal, but since each is unique, each has a something unique to contribute both to understanding that goal and attaining it. Every member of the vaster friendship helps every other member understand and attain that goal.

There are many circles of friends in the world, or at least there should be. We all have specific goals and a corresponding group of friends with whom we pursue each. Ideally, however, every one of these circles should unite to form a larger circle, and the outermost circle of everyone's friends should extend to the entire human race. We are all ultimately pursuing the same thing, after all.

The thing to bear in mind about the game of circles, however, is not only that no circle eliminates another, but that the contrary is true: each of the circles intensifies, or should intensify, the others. That is, just as sharing one's friends should not undermine any one of one's friendships in any way, but should intensify each one, so too should none of the outer circles of one's friends undermine the inner ones. To put the point in simple terms: diversity should intensify unity. Friendships are not like evidence. When one seeks evidence of some given event in order to understand it, his best bet is look for someone who experienced the event directly, and accept his account of the facts as the most trustworthy. With evidence, the more unmediated an account is, the better it tends to be. The exact opposite is true of the circles of one's friendships and the goal one pursues: the more people one involves in his pursuit of his goal, the richer his pursuit is.

The gist of the matter is that humanity is the most wondrous of polyphonies, or at least it should be. For we are all soloists and members of an enormous orchestra at the same time. Each one of us has a unique voice and a unique melody to play in that symphony for which we are preparing. We are all the stars of the performance: the pianists who walk out to take center stage while there is a hush in the audience waiting to hear us play the opening bars of the concerto. And yet none of us is that pianist. For we are, each of us, just one of the many stars who take center stage in the performance. Each of us has his solo. Thus, we are all also members of the orchestra waiting anxiously for the soloist to emerge and to blend our voice with his.

And yet it is richer than that. Our symphony calls us all to play duets with everyone. We are not just the soloist and the orchestra. We play four hands when we're at the piano on center stage, carefully blending our solo with the other pianist's. And yet our duets are all a part of the larger symphony and the symphony is both enhanced by our duets and enhances them.

The marvel of our perfection is such that I'm not even sure that a musical example can relay it. It is hard enough as it is to imagine the intertwining of every possible musical form—concertos, symphonies, duets, quartets, and so forth—into one single composition. But when we come to the number of voices that the composition must blend, our mind balks.

It is not unheard of for a musical composition to have ten distinct voices. Baroque musicians were particularly adept at doing this sort of thing, and it was not that uncommon for them to do so. It showed their architectural prowess. What no one has been able to do, however, and will probably never be able to do, is compose something for a hundred distinct voices. To be frank, I'm not altogether sure that we are losing much. We probably could not even understand a composition that had that many voices at this stage in the game. It takes training to understand and enjoy compositions that use ten voices—most of popular contemporary music uses two or three voices at most. That is why Gregorian chant, and not Bach, has become popular. But the training one would have to have to understand a composition with one hundred different voices is difficult to conceive. And yet the music of creation is greater even than that. It calls for billions of distinct voices. And the miraculous thing is that they should not be cacophonic. It is this music of which we are all called to take a part.

Nor are we just called to perform a symphony that was composed by someone else, and over which we have no control at all. We have been given the chance to have a hand in its making. To ornament our little, and yet indispensable, part, and help others do theirs.

And, of course, there is also the audience for whose pleasure we perform. He awaits us: He has been coaching us for so long.

Nations

So why nations? Nationhood is commonly conceived as a unity of people that is formed for the advantage of each single member of

that unity. Aristotle claimed this sort of thing, and what he seems to have meant by his claim is that nations, or to be precise, communities, allow each member of that nation, or community, to acquire his own "good" more easily.[45]

To be quite honest, this explanation of nationhood makes a good deal of sense, and that not only because it is through interpersonal relations that one acquires his perfection, and communities afford interpersonal relations. Nations also give a person a chance to develop his own unique gifts more completely than he could on his own, because they distribute the duties and necessities of survival among the members of the community.

The fact of the matter is, however, that on this view, nations are precarious things. For if a nation's goal is the personal perfection of each its members, then no nation could subsist once its members attained their personal perfection. Nor is this all. For if nations allow their members to attain their personal perfection, insofar as they afford a great number of interpersonal relations, and allow a person to develop his own unique gifts, thanks to their distribution of the duties and necessities of survival, then it would seem to follow that globalization would make one's attaining his personal perfection even easier than nations do. For the interpersonal relations it affords are many more than can be had in any single nation, and they allow for a greater distribution of the duties and necessities of survival.

Is this view, then, correct? The real questions here are two: (1) Do nations just have the personal perfection of their members as their goal? and (2) Can nations truly be superceded? Given what we have seen regarding human relations and perfection it would seem that a nation cannot just have the personal perfection of its members as its goal. For if a nation is a unity of people, then ideally it would seem to need to have the characteristics of the unity we delineated above. It would therefore seem ideally to be a unity that makes each member of a nation each other member's *good*; it would seem to be a unity that presupposes a common understanding of a common

goal, and that is constituted by the pursuit of that goal; and it would seem to be a unity that does not eliminate other unities, and that is not eliminated by other unities, but that is intensified by other unities and that intensifies them.

That nations have the first characteristic is actually confirmed by Aristotle's account. For if the goal of a nation is the advantage of each single member of that nation, then the goal of each member of that nation *qua* member of that nation must be the advantage of all members of that nation. But the advantage of a person is his good in some sense. Thus, the goal of all members of a nation *qua* members of a nation must in some sense be the good of all members of that nation.

If nations have this first characteristic of the unities we delineated above, however, then it is reasonable to assume that they have the second characteristic too. For the second characteristic of unities is a prerequisite of the first. What this means is that every nation must have a unique mission, a common goal, in order to exist. And I dare say that this is the case. It is these missions that differentiate nations. It is these goals that give each nation its specific culture.

It is not by chance that our nation has taken the defense of the world upon its shoulders: we are the "land of the free and the home of the brave," or at least that is what we aim to be. We do not, of course, quite know what this really means, and have had to turn to our constitution from time to time to clarify just where our conception of our goal is lacking. It took a hundred years for our nation to understand that we can't very well be the land of the free if we permit slavery. Let us hope that it does not take us another hundred years to understand that we can't very well be the land of the free if our children, born and unborn as they may be, aren't free. Let us hope that it does not take us another hundred years to understand that freedom does not really mean doing what one pleases. We are a young nation.

We are also a nation that often forgets what its goal is, which is unfortunate because the other nations of the world do imitate us, and

tend only to see our vices. Nonetheless we can be a great nation when we are true to our goal.

And as our nation has its mission, so too does every other true nation have its own mission. This is why we can all poke fun at the characteristics of other nations: why we can say that the French are chauvinistic, the Spanish proud, the English matriarchal, and the Irish wild, and mean something thereby. Those characteristics we caricaturize are the expression of the bond that arises from a people's common quest: its common mission.

And if nations have the first two characteristics of the unity we delineated above, then it is reasonable to claim that they have the third: that they are unities that do not eliminate and are not eliminated by other unities, but intensify and are intensified by other unities of peoples. If this is so, then it seems safe to say that nations cannot be precarious things.

Nor is this all that can be said about nations. For if nations are indeed unities of unities of people who share a common goal, then we are clearly all responsible for the well functioning of our own nation. After all, if a nation is indeed a communion of people, then it cannot exist independently of the people whom it unites. It is the people whom it unites who must ensure that that unity lives, thrives, and grows: that their nation follows its calling.

This brings us back to the point where we began, to the church on Cedar and Tenth Streets and the terrible question it poses: are nations sacred? Given what we have seen it would seem so.

Notes

1. Georges Duby, *France in the Middle Ages 987–1460* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 245.
2. See, for instance, the transcripts of Joan's interrogations on February 21 and 22, 1431.
3. I have done this elsewhere. See *Joan of Arc: a Spiritual Biography* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 143–64.
4. Cf. E. Lucie-Smith, *Joan of Arc* (New York: W. Norton Co. Inc, 1977), 7. Lucie-Smith's book is an example of this. Its object is to prove that Joan was schizophrenic.

5. Joan's contemporaries were amazed at her command of the arts of mediaeval warfare. She could joust, ride, and handle arms as well as any well-seasoned soldier, they claim. The duke d'Alençon, for instance, was so taken aback by her ability on the tilting field when she first arrived at the royal court at Bourges, that he gave her a charger. Joan was seventeen at the time. See, deposition of Jean d'Alençon, R. Quicherat, *Procès de condemnation et de rehabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc, dite la Pucelle* (Paris, 1841–1849), III, 92.
6. Regarding Joan's ability to prophecy see, e.g., the deposition of Jean Pasquerel, Quicherat III, 107.
7. Elie de Bourdeilles as quoted by Jane Marie Pinzino, "Speaking of Angels: a Fifteenth-Century Bishop in Defense of Joan of Arc's Mystical Voices," in Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds., *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc* (New York: Garland Pub. Inc., 1996), 165.
8. My favorite claim with regards to this point is one made by the Pseudo-Dionysius, who claims that God assigned a guardian angel to each nation. See, *Celestial Hierarchy*, 9, 260^{a} 11–260^{b} 9: "The revealing rank of principalities, archangels, and angels presides among themselves over human hierarchies, in order that the uplifting and return toward God and the communion and union, might occur according to proper order, and indeed so that the procession might be benignly given by God to all hierarchies and might arrive at each one in a shared way in a sacred harmony. So, then, it is the angels to take care of our hierarchy, or so the Word of God tells us. Michael is the ruler of the Jewish people, and other angels are described as rulers of other nations, for the 'Most High has established the boundaries of the nations by the number of his angels' (DT, 32–38)." The translation is by Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).
9. I am presupposing that culture and geographic location are the specific differences of a nation. The primary of these two characteristics, in my mind, is the former. For a people need not live in its original homeland in order to be a nation. There are such things as diasporas: the Jewish and the Armenian, for instance. But a diasporic people needs to maintain its culture in order to continue to be a nation. Once a people's culture ceases to exist, there is no basis for its being a nation.

   I am also presupposing that self-governance is not an essential characteristic of a nation. I think this to be a valid presupposition insofar as a nation can be conquered by another, and governed by another, without losing its nationhood thereby. There are many examples of this: Poland and Armenia, just to mention a couple.
10. This is not to claim that all ways of life are equally valid, or that no way of life can be considered superior to another. I am presupposing that a culture is defined by the manner in which it promotes the actualization of human life and potential: that it is defined by the virtues, or combination of virtues, it emphasizes. Given this definition, a way of life that does not promote the actualization of human life and potential cannot be a culture to the degree in which it does not. Thus, by my criteria, any way of life that is a culture and to the degree in which it is a culture is superior to any way of life that is not a culture to the degree in which it is not.

11. See Pierre Champion, *On the Trial of Jeanne d'Arc*, in Barrett, *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (London, 1931), 487 ff.
12. See Plato, *The Sophist,* 255[a] ff.
13. For a fuller discussion of this point see my book *Participation and the Good* (New York: Herder and Herder), 214 ff.
14. In his comparison of the Armenian and Jewish genocides, Vahakn Dadrian made a similar point: "In origin, structure, and function, the state is not geared to conceiving, organizing, and implementing a monstrous crime such as genocide represents. As a rule, formal authority precludes such a recourse to criminality. In order for a state to get involved in the business of genocidal enactments, it has to undergo structural changes and transform itself into an engine of destruction. In other words, it has to be criminalized. The only instrument capable of generating such a transformation is a type of informal authority that is in ascendance and in rivalry with the authority of the state." "Comparative Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases," in *Is the Holocaust Unique*: *Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (New York: Westview Press, 1997), 123.
15. I am using substance in the Thomist sense according to which it is "That which has a quiddity to which it belongs to exist not in another." (*Contra Gentiles*, I, 25 §10).
16. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, I.
17. Cf., e.g., *De Spiritualibus Creaturis,* VIII, ad 3; *Commentary on the Metaphysics,* IV, lect. 1.
18. Cf. *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, IV, lect. 1.
19. See on this point, *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 10 ad 12. See also W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 1996), 79–80.
20. I am clearly siding with Boethius and Aquinas on this point. The second axiom of Boethius's *De Hebdomadibus* states that the essence of things does not exist in itself, but only exists once it is actualized in existing things. For a fuller discussion of this point see *Participation and the Good,* 246 ff.
21. See on this point, *Person and Being*, 96.
22. *De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 1c.
23. J. Pieper, *Living the Truth: The Truth of All Things and Reality and the Good* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 37.
24. This is because the human intellect is fundamentally receptive. For a fuller discussion of this point see, e.g., *de Veritate*, q. 2, a. 14 c.: "Now, since every resemblance involves an agreement of forms, whatever things are alike are so related that either one is the cause of the other or both are caused by one cause. Moreover, in all knowledge there is an assimilation of the knower to the known. Hence, either the knowledge is the cause of the thing known, or the thing known is the cause of the knowledge, or both are caused by one cause." The first case is inapplicable to the majority of cases in which we know things. We do not make most of the things we know. Nor, however, is the final case applicable to the majority of cases in which we know things. We do not have innate ideas of the essences of all things, for example. What we are left with, as such, is the central one.

25. Clarke, 12–13. The passage at hand, to be honest deals with "every real being" but it is clearly applicable to the case at hand.
26. See, e.g., *De Potentia*, q. 2, a. 1 c.
27. See, e.g., *Summa Contra Gentes,* III, 21 §§ 2, 3, 8.
28. *Summa Theologica,* I, q. 19, a. 2 c: "For natural things have a natural inclination not only toward their own proper good, to acquire it, if not possessed, and if possessed to rest therein; but also to diffuse their own goodness among others as far as is possible. Hence we see that every agent, insofar as it exists in act and possesses some perfection, produces something similar to itself. It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate to others as far as possible the good possessed."
29. See, e.g., *Summa Contra Gentes,* III, 64, § 11: "Every created thing attains its ultimate perfection through its proper operation, for the ultimate end and the perfection of a thing must be its operation."
30. *Summa Contra Gentes*, I, 37, § 5.
31. See Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue of the Seraphic Virgin Catherine of Siena*, tr. Algar Thorold (London: Burnes, Oates, and Washbourne Ltd., 1925), I, 7: "I distribute the virtues quite diversely; I do not give all of them to each person, but some to one, some to others. [. . .] And so I have given many gifts and many graces, both spiritual and temporal with such diversity that I have not given everything to one person, so that you may be constrained to practice charity towards one another. [. . .] I have willed that one should need another and that all should be my ministers in distributing the graces and gifts that they have received from me." I am grateful to Mary Lemmons for indicating this text.
32. See, Aquinas, *De Veritate,* q. 8, a. 6 c: "*actiones non progrediuntur nisi ab agente in actu secundum quod est in actu*."
33. There is a series of apparent paradoxes with regard to this point. For it is not altogether obvious how a being can be actualized by something other than itself. To make the point clear: if a being's actuality is its possession of its own essence, then it is not clear how it can be caused by its possession of something other than itself. For a fuller discussion of this point see *Participation and the Good,* 197 ff.
34. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1097b 7–15. The translation is by Terence Irwin, Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985), 217. All of our quotations of the *Ethics* will be drawn from this text.
35. *Consolation of Philosophy*, II, 4, 75–84: "'Is there anything more precious to you than yourself?' 'Nothing,' [. . .] 'If therefore you were in possession of yourself, you would possess that which you would never wish to lose and which fortune cannot take away from you.'"
36. See, e.g., *De Vera Religione,* 39, 72: "Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi: in interiore homine habitat veritas . . . Tu autem ad ipsam [veritatem] quaerendo venisti, non locorum spatio, sed mentis affectu, ut ipse interior homo cum suo inhabitatore . . . summa et spirituali voluptate conveniat."
37. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1170b 15 ff.

38. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 433 ff.
39. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1165^{b} 7 ff.
40. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1157^{b} 33–35.
41. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1156^{b} 10–11.
42. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1159^{a-} 27 ff.
43. *Person and Being,* 95–96.
44. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1172^{a} 1–8.
45. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1160^{a} 9 ff.