

Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission: A Comparative Study

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A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master's in Philosophy

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Date of Submission: 30 November 2015

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CONTENTS

Abstract	v
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1. The Justification for the need to undertake a Comparative Study of Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger’s theology of Divine Revelation’s Transmission	1
2. The Goals and Methodological Approach of this Master’s Thesis	3
Chapter Two: Thomas Aquinas’s Theology of Divine Revelation’s Transmission .	6
1. Summary of Thomas’s Notion of Divine Revelation Theology: Its Historical Dimension, as it Essentially resides in Prophetic Judgment an as it is a Divine ‘Speech-act’	6
1.1. The Two Stages of Divine Revelation and its Historical Dimension in Thomas’s Theology of Divine Revelation	7
1.2. The Role of Prophetic Judgment in Thomas’s Theology of Divine Revelation	9
1.3. Divine Revelation as a ‘Speech-Act’ in Thomas’s Theology of Divine Revelation	13
2. Thomas’s Trinitarian Theology as the Metaphysical Foundation of his Revelation Theology	14
3. Thomas’s Understanding of Revelation’s Transmission or Communication.....	26
3.1. Thomas’s Understanding of <i>Revelatio</i> , <i>Theologia</i> and <i>Sacra Doctrina</i>	27
3.2. Thomas’s Understanding of how Divine Revelation’s <i>Sacra Doctrina</i> is Transmitted to Successive Generations	36
3.2.1. Thomas’s Understanding of Revelation’s Communication by the Prophets and Christ’s Apostles	37
3.2.2. Thomas’s Understanding of how Divine Revelation is transmitted to Successive Generations: Modern Theologian’s Views of how Thomas conceives this Transmission.....	40
3.2.2.1. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange’s (1945) Neo-Thomistic Doctrine of <i>Revelationis Mediatæ</i> and Thomas’s Understanding of Tradition.....	42
3.2.2.2. Gottfried Geenen’s (1952) “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas”	45

3.2.2.3. ‘The Communication of Revelation’ in Per-Erik Persson’s 1970 Study: <i>Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas</i>	49
3.2.2.4. ‘Thomas Aquinas: Revelation and the Mission of the Son and Holy Spirit’ in Matthew Levering’s 2014 Study	58
3.2.3. Thomas’s Understanding of Scripture’s Role in the Transmission of Revelation	60
3.2.3.1. James A. Weisheipl’s ‘The Meaning of <i>Sacra Doctrina</i> in <i>Summa theologiae</i> I, q.1,’: Thomas’s Distinction between <i>Sacra Doctrina</i> and <i>Sacra Scriptura</i> and the Necessity of Scripture for Thomas given the Occasion of Divine Revelation	61
3.2.3.2. Thomas’s Distinction between the <i>Sensus Litteralis</i> and the <i>Sensus Mysticus</i> in Per-Erik Persson’s 1970 <i>Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas</i>	64
3.2.3.3. Leo Elders’ 1990 article “Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation” and Thomas’s Understanding of the Senses of Scripture as Conveying Divine Revelation	66
Chapter Three: Joseph Ratzinger’s Theology of Divine Revelation’s Transmission	71
1. Ratzinger’s Theology of Divine Revelation as It is in Itself	71
1.1. Ratzinger’s Understanding of the Essential Act of Divine Revelation: a Dialogical Historical Event	72
1.2. Ratzinger’s Understanding of the Christocentricity of Revelation’s Dialogical Historical Event	76
2. Bonaventure’s Trinitarian Theology as the Metaphysical Foundation of Ratzinger’s Theology of Revelation	77
3. Ratzinger’s “Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition and his Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition” (1965)	82
3.1. Ratzinger’s “Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition”	83
3.1.1. Ratzinger’s Consideration of Important Background Questions to the Concept of Tradition	84
3.1.2. Ratzinger’s Notion of the Relation between Revelation and Tradition	87

3.1.2.1. Revelation and Scripture.....	87
3.1.2.2. Diverse Significations of Scripture in the Old and New Covenants: Scripture as Letter and Spirit	89
3.1.2.3. Revelation's Christocentricity and Scripture's Material Sufficiency.....	91
3.1.2.4. Ratzinger's Notion of the Nature of Tradition	92
3.1.2.5. The Function of Exegesis in Revelation's Communication	95
3.2. The Pneumatological Aspect of Tradition: Ratzinger's "Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition"	96
Chapter Four: The Comparison of Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission	102
1. Essential Aspects of Thomas Aquinas's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission	102
1.1. Thomas's Notion of What of Divine Revelation is Actually Transmitted or Communication to Successive Generations: <i>Sacra Doctrina</i>	103
1.2. How Thomas Understands <i>Sacra Doctrina</i> to have been Communicated from Revelation's Original Recipients to Others: Thomas's Distinction between <i>Revelatio</i> , <i>Sacra Doctrina</i> and <i>Theologia</i>	103
1.3. Thomas's Notion of Tradition	105
1.4. The Metaphysical Foundation of Thomas's Understanding of how Revelation is transmitted to Successive Generations.....	106
1.5. Thomas's Notion of Scripture and its Role in the transmission of Divine Revelation to Successive Generations	106
2. Essential Aspects of Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission	108
2.1. Ratzinger's Theology of Revelation's Transmission: Revelation's Dynamism, Scripture and Tradition	109
2.2. Ratzinger's Understanding of the Notion of Tradition.....	111
2.3. Ratzinger's Understanding of the Role of Scripture in Revelation: Letter and Spirit	113
2.4. The Metaphysical Foundation of Ratzinger's Revelation Theology.....	115

3. The Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Differences between Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation	116
3.1. Foundational Differences: Thomas Aquinas's Intellectualism as a University Professor and Joseph Ratzinger's Personalism for Pastoral Concerns	116
3.2. Divine Revelation's Transmission: The Intellectualism of Thomas's <i>Sacra Doctrina</i> and the Personalistic Dynamism of Ratzinger's Revelatory Dialogue	118
3.3. Notions of Tradition: Thomas's Conveyance of <i>Sacra Doctrina</i> and Ratzinger's Entrance into the 'Christ-event'	118
3.4. Scripture's Role in Revelation's Transmission: Thomas's Identification of Revelation's Need for Metaphoric and Symbolic Language and Scripture's Senses, and Ratzinger's Letter and Spirit (<i>Gramma</i> and <i>Pneuma</i>) of Scripture	119
3.5. The Trinitarian Metaphysical Foundations of their Revelation Theology: Thomas's Intellectualism and Ratzinger's Bonaventurian Voluntarism	121
4. Conclusion: The Achievement of the Thesis's Goals	122
Bibliography.....	125

Abstract

This thesis is a comparative study of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Joseph Ratzinger's (b.1927) theology of divine Revelation's transmission. The thesis is divided into four chapters: Firstly, the introductory chapter provides the thesis's purpose, and outlines its scope, goals and methodological approach. The second and third chapters consider their respective theology of how divine Revelation is transmitted. The fourth chapter initially provides a summary of the previous chapters' findings before offering a comparison of the two approaches, outlining their similarities and differences.

Chapter two first offers a summary of Thomas's essential notion of Revelation: a historical act of prophetic illumination, which, since it is the Word of God which is revealed, is essentially a 'speech-act.' Then, I expose Thomas's Trinitarian theology as it's the metaphysical foundation of his Revelation theology. After which I extensively investigate Thomas's notion of how Revelation is transmitted: it essentially consists in the communication of *Sacra Doctrina*.

Chapter three first provides a summary of Ratzinger's essential notion of Revelation: a divine dialogue which unfolds in history. I then expose Bonaventure's (1221-1274) Trinitarian theology as the metaphysical foundation of Ratzinger's Revelation theology. After which I investigate Ratzinger's notion of tradition in relation to his notion of Revelation and its pneumatological aspect.

Chapter four summarises the key findings. Their fundamental thrusts—namely, Aquinas's intellectualism and Ratzinger's personalism—impact their understanding of Revelation's transmission. For Thomas, it is not so much divine Revelation (*Revelatio*) which is transmitted, but *Sacra Doctrina*, which results from *Revelatio*; while Ratzinger holds that it is Revelation itself which is transmitted since it is an on-going dialogue. Therefore, their notions of tradition also differ: Thomas sees it as the continual conveyance of *Sacra Doctrina*, while Ratzinger views it as our entrance into the 'Christ-event.' These respective notions have their metaphysical foundations in their respective Trinitarian theologies.

Chapter One: Introduction

This Master's thesis will consider the fundamental tenets of both Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Joseph Aloysius Ratzinger's (b.1927) understanding of the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted from its original recipients to successive generations. In this introductory chapter I will therefore provide a brief justification for this comparative study (Section 1.), followed by an outline of the scope of this thesis and the goals it needs to achieve (Section 2.).

1. The Justification for the need to undertake a Comparative Study of Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission

As I hope to show more extensively in a future doctoral dissertation on Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation, there are six important considerations concerning Ratzinger's theological career which offer us a lacuna in which a comparative study of his Revelation theology with that of Aquinas' needs to be undertaken. These considerations are: firstly, that although, in his early years and his foundational theological development, Ratzinger was inadvertently steered away from the study of Aquinas,¹ he never had an aversion to the great mediaeval Dominican, but rather to the nineteenth and early twentieth-century neo-scholastic and neo-Thomistic methodological approaches²; secondly, that from the early to middle part of his career,

¹ See Joseph Ratzinger, *Aus Meinem Leben: Erinnerungen (1927-1977)* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1998); English translation, from which all subsequent English quotes will be taken: Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs: 1927-1977*, trans., Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 44. It is here, while speaking of Arnold Wilmsen, his seminar professor who initially exposed him to Thomism, Ratzinger says: "he ... no longer asked questions but limited himself to defending passionately, against all questions, what he had found." And, "I had difficulties in penetrating the thought of Thomas Aquinas, whose crystal-clear logic seemed to me to be too closed in on itself, too impersonal and ready-made. This may also have had something to do with the fact that Arnold Wilmsen, the philosopher who taught us Thomas, presented us with a rigid, neoscholastic Thomism that was simply too far afield from my own questions."

² There are numerous places in Ratzinger's corpus where he speaks fondly of Thomas Aquinas's theological work. For example: Pope Benedict XVI, *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, the Signs of the Times* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 17. [Emphasis added]. See also, Joseph Ratzinger, "On the Relationship of Structure and Content in Christian Faith," in *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 83. Here Ratzinger, while speaking of the great saints throughout the ages who are our travelling companions, he mentions, "Augustine, Francis of

Ratzinger worked diligently on questions concerning fundamental theology, in particular on the nature of divine Revelation and its transmission³; thirdly, that Ratzinger believes the fundamental tenets of his thoughts throughout his theological career have remained consistent. He believes that even though his thought has undergone developments over the decades the fundamental direction of his thought has not changed⁴; fourthly, that he is categorised by some more modern scholars as a second generation *Ressourcement théologien*,⁵ and that a general characteristic of the *Ressourcement* movement, according to Jürgen Mettepenningen, is a desire among its principal Catholic proponents to return to a fresh reading of Thomas Aquinas, in his own historical context⁶; fifthly, that Ratzinger contributed considerably to the Second

Assisi, Thomas Aquinas”; See Pope Benedict XVI, *Light of the World*, 102, where he speaks of his first scholarly work being a translation of Thomas’s *Quaestio disputata de caritate*; Emery de Gaál Gyulai, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI: The Christocentric Shift* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 18: “As a novice seminarian, Ratzinger translated the first German version of Thomas Aquinas’s treatise *Quaestio disputata de caritate* (*A Disputed Question on Charity*), which would prove foundational for his encyclical as pope, *Deus Caritas Est*”; Peter Seewald, *Benedict XVI: An Intimate Portrait*, trans., Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 148. Here Seewald asked Ratzinger: “Whom do you admire?” To which Ratzinger responded: “Augustine. *Thomas Aquinas—I have worked on him.* Bonaventure. Müller, Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Guardini, *Professor Söhngen, who was my teacher.*” Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1988 [1977]), 24. Here Ratzinger places Thomas alongside Plato (424-347BC) and Aristotle (384-322BC) as those who, “remain the originating figures of an enduring approach to the Ground of what is. In their own way of thought, and its access to the Origin, a certain aspect of reality, a dimension of being, is caught as in a mirror.”

³ See Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 58. Here Ratzinger speaks of his exposure in 1950 to the issue of the Church promulgating the dogma of the Assumption. This awakened in Ratzinger the realisation for the need of a solid Revelation theology. See also Pope Benedict XVI, *Light of the World*, 196-197, and D. Vincent Twomey, *Pope Benedict XVI: The Conscience of our Age* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 53ff. where it is disclosed that Ratzinger’s early work dealt with issues of Fundamental Theology.

⁴ See Joseph Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth: The Church at the End of the Millennium. An Interview with Peter Seewald.* trans., Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 66; Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 184-205.

⁵ See Lewis Ayres, Patricia Kelly and Thomas Humphries, “Benedict XVI: A *Ressourcement* Theologian?” in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, ed., Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 423-439.

⁶ See Jürgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), 10-11; See also, Jürgen Mettepenningen, “*Nouvelle Théologie: Four Historical Stages of Theological Reform Towards Ressourcement* (1935-1965),” in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in*

Vatican Council's debates concerning the nature of divine Revelation and to the drafting of its Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: *Dei verbum*⁷; and sixthly, that by his own admission Ratzinger believed that for his *Habilitationsschrift*, "Bonaventure was naturally a more likely subject than Aquinas."⁸

We must therefore ask, as a second generation *Ressourcement théologien*, did Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation and its transmission agree with the principles of Aquinas's theology of the same? And if it does agree with Aquinas's theology in this matter, has Ratzinger made any developments in this regard? Since an investigation into both these theologians' entire theology of Revelation would breach the limits of the present thesis, and since a doctorate level thesis would provide the opportunity to look at how these two see the essential nature of divine Revelation and its reception through faith, in this Master's thesis I will therefore only deal with how these two theologians view divine Revelation's transmission to successive generations upon its initial reception.

2. The Goals and Methodological Approach of this Master's Thesis

In order to adequately answer this vitally important question, concerning a comparison of Aquinas and Ratzinger's theology of how divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations, a threefold approach is required: I must first outline Thomas Aquinas's understanding in this regard before outlining Ratzinger's understanding, which will lead me into providing a comparison study of the two.

In order to achieve the first goal, of unearthing Aquinas's theology concerning Revelation's transmission, I will begin by providing a summary of Thomas's essential notion of divine Revelation. Here I will concede that for Thomas divine Revelation is essentially a historical event wherein, through the *lumen Propheticum* divinely infused

Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology, ed., Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 172-184.

⁷ See Ayres, "Benedict XVI: A *Ressourcement* Theologian?" 423. Regarding the composition of *Dei verbum* the article says that "much of the work of the *ressourcement* theologians bore fruit, and Ratzinger had done all he could to further that result." See also, Joseph Lam Cong Quy, "Joseph Ratzinger's Contribution to the Preparatory Debate of the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*," *Gregorianum* 94, 1 (2013): 1-19.

⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., 2nd. ed., (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), xii.

into a Prophet's intellect, the Prophet's intellectual judgment is conformed to the divine foreknowledge. For Thomas, therefore, this means that divine Revelation is essentially a 'speech-act.'⁹ After this I will consider Thomas's Trinitarian theology, as the metaphysical foundation for his Revelation theology. This will place the thesis in a better position to identify Thomas's essential notion of how this Revelation (or the *Sacra Doctrina* resulting from this Revelation) is transmitted to successive generations. I will then analyse Thomas's understanding of Revelation's transmission or communication in itself. This will be done by initially identifying the difference between his understanding of *Revelatio*, *Theologia* and *Sacra Doctrina*. By doing this we will see that for Thomas it is *Sacra Doctrina* rather than divine Revelation, as such, which is transmitted to successive generations. In considering Thomas's understanding of divine Revelation's transmission one needs to grasp his understanding of tradition. But this poses a certain difficulty, namely, that Thomas never explicitly provided a treatise on this. Consequently, I will present what some of the more prominent modern-day theologians

⁹ Although, to my understanding, Aquinas never actually employs the exact term "Speech-act" in his two *De prophetica* treatises (*De veritate*, q.12; *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.171-174), he does speak of prophecy as it is analogous to human speaking and is thus a speaking of God to man. See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.173, a.2: "Human teaching may be likened to prophetic revelation in the second of these respects [i.e., conferral of species], but not in the first [i.e., conferral of light]. *For a man represents certain things to his disciple by signs of speech, but he cannot enlighten him inwardly as God does.*" [Emphasis added]. In his Commentary on John's Gospel Aquinas speaks more openly of the analogy of divine Revelation with human speech. Quoting Thomas René Latourelle says: "To make known His thinking, a man makes it incarnate in sounds or letters: in the same way, 'God, wanting to make Himself known to men, clothed His Word, conceived from all eternity, in flesh and time.' Through the flesh which He has taken, the Word speaks to us and we hear Him." René Latourelle, *Revelation: Including a Commentary on the Constitution "Dei Verbum" of Vatican II*, trans., unknown (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1966), 167. Then, on page 166, Latourelle also notes that fundamentally, for Aquinas, since Revelation consists in God speaking his Word to man, it can either be external, as when his speech is manifest through sensible signs, or internal, as when it is a "spiritual entity and a manifestation of thought." Latourelle also says: For Thomas, "[t]he signs or likenesses received in the mind are inadequate representations of the divine object, but through them, and thanks to the light which enlightens them, God truly communicates His thinking to us, initiates us into His mysteries: God speak to us" (page 167). See also Arturo Blanco, "Word and Truth in Divine Revelation: A Study of the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on *John 14:6*," in *Studi Tomistici* 37 (1990): 27-48. In this article Blanco shows how Thomas's notion of Revelation cannot be equated merely with an existential experience but, since it is the Word who is spoken in the act of Revelation, for Thomas, divine Revelation is formally an act of speech on God's behalf. For these reasons I have chosen to employ the term 'speech-act' when describing Thomas's fundamental understanding of the act of divine Revelation.

have said on this matter. After this I will detail Thomas's understanding of Scripture's role in this transmission.

The second goal of this thesis, namely, that of unearthing Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation's transmission, will be undertaken in chapter three. There I will begin by providing a summary of Ratzinger's understanding of the essential nature of divine Revelation, especially as a Christocentric dialogical historical event. After this I will also lay the foundations for understanding Ratzinger's theology of Revelation's transmission by presenting Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology as the metaphysical foundation of Ratzinger's Revelation theology. I will then analyse Ratzinger's understanding of tradition following by his understanding of Scripture's role in this transmission.

The third goal, which is the undertaking of the comparative study, will be achieved in the fourth chapter. There I will begin by summarising the findings of chapter two, on Thomas's theology of divine Revelation's transmission, before summarising the findings of Ratzinger's theology of the same, which will place the thesis in the position of being able to compare these two theologians' position on divine Revelation's transmission.

Chapter Two:

Thomas Aquinas's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission

In this second chapter, I will investigate Thomas Aquinas's theology of divine Revelation's transmission with a view to comparing it to that of Joseph Ratzinger's theology of the same in the fourth and final chapter of this thesis. This chapter will therefore be divided into three major sections: firstly, I will offer a summary of what some key commentators have said concerning Thomas's notion of divine Revelation in itself (Section 1.); secondly, I will look at the metaphysical foundation of Thomas's Revelation theology, which resides in his Trinitarian theology (Section 2.). I will then outline Thomas's understanding of how the content of divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations (Section 3.).

I will provide a summary of the findings which will be detailed in this chapter at the beginning of the fourth chapter, along with a summary of the findings concerning Joseph Ratzinger's theology of Revelation's transmission which will have been unearthed in chapter three of this thesis. Both of these summaries will be given with a view to comparing them in the third section of chapter four.

1. Summary of Thomas's Notion of Divine Revelation Theology: Its Historical Dimension, as it Essentially resides in Prophetic Judgment and as it is a Divine 'Speech-act'

Since Thomas Aquinas never wrote a specific treatise on the nature of divine Revelation, principally because it was a 'given' in his day, it is necessary to summarise what a number of his principal modern commentators, and what the principal modern commentators on Revelation theology in general, have said concerning his understanding of this issue. These commentators, such as Victor White (1902-1960), Pierre Maurice Benoit (1906-1987), René Latourelle (1918-?), Avery Dulles (1918-2008) and Aidan Nichols (1948-),¹ have noted that there are indeed three important

¹ See Victor White, "St Thomas's Conception of Revelation," *Dominican Studies* 1.1 (1948): 3-34; Pierre Benoit, *Prophecy and Inspiration: A Commentary on the Summa Theologica* II-II, Questions 171-178, trans., Avery Dulles and Thomas Sheridan (New York: Desclee, 1961); idem., *Inspiration and the Bible*, trans., J. Murphy-O'Connor and Sister M. Keverne (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965); Maurice Benoit and Paul Synave, *La prophétie:*

aspects of Thomas's theology of divine Revelation; all of which will be summarised here. Firstly, that divine Revelation retains a historical dimension, since, for Thomas it is the progressive disclosure of God to man throughout history, with its climax coming with and in the very person of Jesus Christ (Section 1.1.). Secondly, Thomas understands the very act of divine Revelation as consisting in a divine illumination to the intellects of the Old Testament Prophets and the New Testament Apostles through what he calls, the *lumen Propheticum*, conforming their judgment to the divine foreknowledge, and the conforming of Christ's human intellect to the divine foreknowledge through his reception of the Beatific Vision (Section 1.2.). And thirdly, for Thomas, divine Revelation is essentially a dialogical 'speech-act' (Section 1.3.). These three important aspects will now be summarised.

1.1. The Two Stages of Divine Revelation and its Historical Dimension in Thomas's Theology of Divine Revelation

For Thomas, what he calls 'Prophetic Revelation' is not primarily concerned with foretelling the future, as it is with receiving a divine illumination by which a Prophet's judgment is conformed to the divine foreknowledge. Thomas argues that the notion of 'Prophet' is not to be restricted to the classic Prophets of the Old Testament from Isaiah to Malachi, but is rather, anyone who has received such divine illumination, which thereby conveys a truth which was previously unknown to them.²

Somme Théologique. 2a-2ae, Questions 171-178 (Paris: Desclée, 1947); René Latourelle, *Théologie de la Révélation* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963); English translation: *Theology of Revelation: Including a Commentary on the Constitution "Dei Verbum" of Vatican II*, trans. unknown (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1966); Avery Dulles, *Revelation Theology: A History* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969); idem., *Models of Revelation* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983); Nichols, *Discovering Aquinas: An Introduction to His Life, Work and Influence* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002).

² See *Summa theologiæ*, II-II, q.174, a.2 ad 3. For the original Latin of Thomas's works, see *S. Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Opera Omnia, issu impensaue Leonis XIII P.M. edita*, 16 vols., Romae, Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1882-1948. All English translations of Thomas's works used in this thesis are from the following: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans., Vernon J. Bourke. Vols. 1-4. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1975); idem., *Commentary on the Gospel of St John*, trans., James A Weisheipl and Fabian Larcher (Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1980); idem., *Summa Theologica*, trans., Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Vols. I-V (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1981); idem., *Truth: A Translation of Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate*, trans., Robert W. Mulligan (Vol. I), James V. McGlynn (Vol. II), Robert W. Schmidt (Vol. III) (New York: Preserving Christian

In Thomas's theology of divine Revelation, as these commentators note, there are fundamentally two stages: The first stage, which takes place in this life, is the imperfect manifestation of divine truth to the intellect of the above-mentioned Prophets. Its imperfection is on account of the limited understanding the Prophets receive of the divine knowledge in this revelatory act. This limitation is not only due to the limited capabilities of the human intellect for knowledge, but it also arises from the fact that since God has revealed himself in a myriad of ways down through the centuries, there has only ever been a progressive disclosure of God to men (until the coming of Jesus Christ). This is divine Revelation's first historical dimension (while the second historical dimension comes with Christ). Revelation's second stage occurs in the next life when there will be full disclosure of the divine essence to the created intellect in and through the Beatific Vision. It is only in this Vision that the created intellect will have an apprehensive Vision of the divine essence,³ seen as it is in itself, without medium.⁴

Concerning God's intervention throughout human history, in the first of Thomas's two stages of divine Revelation, he notes that there are three principal "moments," stages or eras. According to Thomas, these were respectively inaugurated by Abraham (for the first stage), Moses (for the second), and Jesus Christ (for the third), with the climax coming in this third stage. Thomas also holds that the most perfect Revelation of

Publications, Inc., 1993); idem., *Light of Faith: The Compendium of Theology* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1993).

³ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.12, a.7, for 'Whether Those Who See the Essence of God Comprehend Him?' to which Thomas responds in the negative in the sense that no created or creatable intellect can have a perfect knowledge of the divine essence as would be commensurate with the divine intellect. Nevertheless, through the light of glory, Thomas says, a created intellect can have a knowledge of the divine essence, in itself, which would be commensurate to the created intellect. See also, I-II, q.3, a.8 where Thomas considers, 'Whether Man's Happiness Consists in the Vision of the Divine Essence,' to which he responds in the affirmative, saying, "Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence." On whether or not a created intellect can see the Divine Essence, see, I, q.12, a.2. On how the Divine Essence can be seen by a created intellect, see I, q.12, aa.2-13. See also, *De veritate*, q.8, aa.1-5; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.49.

⁴ See *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q.3, a.8 where Thomas considers, 'Whether Man's Happiness Consists in the Vision of the Divine Essence,' to which he responds in the affirmative, saying, "Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence." On whether or not a created intellect can see the Divine Essence, see, I, q.12, a.2. On how the Divine Essence can be seen by a created intellect, see I, q.12, aa.2-13. See also, *De veritate*, q.8, aa.1-5; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.49.

each stage came with its initial recipient: Abraham, Moses and Christ.⁵ After these recipients nothing further was added to the initial Revelation as each era progressed. Despite this though, although nothing further was added, those who came after these three did further expound what they had received.

I will now summarise what Thomas and his commentators understand as the essential act of divine Revelation in itself, namely, the role of Prophet Judgment arising from the *lumen Propheticum*.

1.2. The Role of Prophetic Judgment in Thomas's Theology of Divine Revelation

According to Thomas, and the above-mentioned commentators, although divine Revelation takes place within these three historical stages it does not *formally* consist in these public events. For Thomas, the public revelatory events occurring in these three stages are not themselves *actually* revelatory, but merely *potentially* revelatory. What Thomas means by this is that although God reveals himself within these three stages in different ways, either acting externally to the Prophet, as with the Revelation given to the Prophet Daniel when he saw the mysterious hand writing on King Baltassar's wall (see Dan 5:13-31); or Moses's encounter with the burning bush on Mount Sinai (see Ex 3:2); or the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration (see Mt 3:17; 17:5); or when God acts immediately upon the Prophet's imagination by infusing phantasms into the Prophet's imagination—as with the Patriarch Joseph and Pharaoh's dreams (see Mt 1:20; 2:13, 19-20; Gen 37:5-11); or even by acting upon the Prophet's intellect by infusing ideas or concepts immediately to the Prophet's intellect,⁶ these historical acts in themselves are not essentially revelatory. For divine Revelation to be had the divine meaning of these events must be gained, something which can only happen via a divine disclosure.

Thomas finds in the examples of the external disclosure, such as occurred with the mysterious hand writing on King Baltassar's wall, or Moses' encounter with the burning bush, or the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, an analogy with

⁵ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.174, a.6 c.

⁶ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.105, a.3.

the way in which a teacher instructs his or her pupils. Though, one must be careful with this analogy, since it can be seen to result in holding divine Revelation to be primarily of a propositional nature. On the other hand, due to Thomas's doctrine of God acting immediately upon the intellect of Revelation's recipient, the teacher-pupil analogy is insufficient for understanding divine Revelation's essential act.⁷

It is for this reason that Thomas sees the *formal* act of divine Revelation occurring, not so much with the actual historical events wherein God intervenes in human history, but with the very conforming of the Prophet's judgment with divine foreknowledge. Revelation, therefore, has not *formally* taken place until the Prophet grasps the divine meaning of any given historical event, a meaning that can only be attained by the Prophet upon the reception of the divine illumination, which, for Thomas, is had through the *lumen Propheticum*. The classic example is when the Patriarch Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. Even though Joseph had not received the divinely infused images into his imagination, as had Pharaoh, he was given the divine meaning or interpretation of these dreams through the infusion of prophetic light—the *lumen Propheticum*.

For this reason, Victor White has given the following definition to Thomas's notion of divine Revelation: It is a "cognitive psychological event which the prophetic utterance [of the Prophet] presupposes and expresses outwardly,"⁸ with the essential revelatory act being the conforming of the Prophet's intellectual judgment with the divine knowledge of the reality being prophetically understood. Thus, Thomas says: "The formal element in prophetic knowledge is the Divine light."⁹

Thomas notes that this prophetic light—the *lumen Propheticum*—is a transient illumination of the Prophet's intellect, and not a stable quality, such as the light of

⁷ In Thomas's theology of the manner by which divine Revelation occurs he teaches that God may either infuse images or phantasms into the Prophet's imagination or ideas/concepts into the Prophet's intellect (see *Summa theologiae*, I, q.111, a.2 ad 2; *De veritate*, q.11, a.3; *De malo*, q.16, a.12). These are ordered to stimulate within the Prophet a conformity of the Prophet's intellective judgment with the divine foreknowledge (see *De veritate*, q.12, a.11; *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.171, a.6; II-II, q.173, a.2). Thomas also held that there is a hierarchical order in the reception of divine Revelation: from God to the highest angels, from them to the lowest angels, from the angels to the Prophets, and from the Prophets to the people (see *Summa theologiae*, III, q.55, a.1; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.154).

⁸ White, "St Thomas's Conception of Revelation," 13. [Emphasis in original].

⁹ *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.171, a.3 ad 3.

reason—*lumen naturale rationalis*. Because of this, the Revelation received is also transient, and thus, although the Prophet's attempt at conveying such a Revelation does spring from the Revelation received, for Thomas, it cannot be equated with the essential revelatory act. When the Prophet receives the *lumen Propheticum* the Prophet is enabled to 'see beyond' what could be naturally known, since it enables the Prophet's intellect to participate (though temporarily) in the knowledge had by the divine intellect. Although this *lumen Propheticum* is what is essentially required for divine Revelation to occur, it may also be accompanied with divinely infused *species*, i.e., either ideas or concepts into the Prophet's intellect, or images into the Prophet's imagination, or even external sensible impressions (as with the writing on King Baltassar's wall). But without a reception of the *lumen Propheticum* the Prophet cannot, properly speaking, be called a Prophet, since without it the divine meaning of the historical event is not received.

Thomas holds that the act whereby the Prophet's intellect is 'raised' by the *lumen Propheticum*, so that his or her intellectual judgment is conformed to the divine foreknowledge, is known as *inspiration*, and it is attributed to the person of the Holy Spirit. *Revelatio*, on the other hand, for Thomas, denotes the consequent effect of such an *inspiratio*. Whenever a divine Revelation is given there is a divine elevation of the created intellect, as its necessary divine antecedent act. Nevertheless, divine Revelation does not always result from *inspiratio*. As Thomas notes, we see an example of this in the hagiographers (i.e., the sacred writers of Scripture), whose intellects, although receptive of the divine *inspiratio* when they authored Scripture, were not always intellectually cognizant of the Revelation which ensued (or at least not cognizant of *all* that was revealed).

Thomas's understanding of the Revelation coming through Christ is different to his understanding of the manner by which the Prophets before him had received divine Revelation. With Christ, Thomas insists, the divine illumination is not had by his human intellect, as it was with the Prophets—through the *lumen Propheticum*—but rather, through the Beatific Vision possessed by his human intellect from the moment of his conception.¹⁰ Through this Vision Christ's human intellect possessed, to the greatest

¹⁰ See *Summa theologiae*, III, q.7, a.3 *responsio*, where Thomas says: "from the first moment of His conception Christ saw God's Essence fully."

possible degree for any creature, the full disclosure of the divine essence.¹¹ Therefore, instead of Christ receiving a transient knowledge of something through the effects of the Beatific Vision, as had been the case with the revelatory experience of the Prophets before him, Christ possesses permanently, in his human intellect, the divine knowledge of the Vision, and thus all of his human actions, his words and his deeds, are conformed to this divine knowledge. In this sense, for Thomas, all of Christ's human activity is *per se* revelatory.¹² This was something not enjoyed by the Prophets (and Apostles) before (or after) him.

Regarding the Incarnation of the Word being made flesh, in his commentary on Saint John's Gospel, Thomas states: "And just like one of us who wants to be known by others by revealing to them the words in his heart, clothes these words with letters or sounds, so God, wanting to be known by us, takes his Word, conceived from eternity, and clothes it with flesh in time."¹³ Thus, for Thomas, the climax of divine Revelation comes with and in the person of Jesus Christ because God has manifested in him all that God is. Thus, unlike the way God progressively manifested himself throughout the centuries through the Prophets, with Christ, God immediately manifests to the man, Jesus Christ, personally, all that he is. With this in mind, we therefore cannot hold that Thomas's Revelation theology is merely propositional, for he also has a personalist aspect, in the sense that he synthesises into his understanding of Prophetic Revelation, all of Christ's words and deeds as essentially revelatory, since they are the words and deeds of the very person of God himself. In this vein, Thomas also notes that, since Christ is the very Word of God he is all that is spoken by the Father. Because of this, upon the advent of the Incarnation no new subsequent Revelation can be made, since, in Christ, God has said all that he is. Despite the fact that Revelation is complete with the coming of Jesus Christ, Thomas's theology of Revelation leaves open the possibility for new discoveries to be made by successive generations, concerning the Revelation that has initially been made in Christ.

¹¹ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.175, a.4 ad 2: "The intellect of Christ's soul was glorified by the habit of the light of glory, whereby He saw the Divine essence much more fully than an angel or a man."

¹² See Richard Schenk, "Omnis Christi action nostra est instructio. *The Deeds and Sayings of Jesus as Revelation in the View of Aquinas*," in *Studi Tomistici* 37 (1990): 104-131.

¹³ *In Jo.*, c.14, lect. 2, n.1874.

Finally, Thomas also notes that since it is the Word Who was made flesh and dwelt among us, divine Revelation is essentially an intellectual 'speech-act.' This aspect of Thomas's Revelation theology will now be summarised.

1.3. Divine Revelation as a 'Speech-Act' in Thomas's Theology of Divine Revelation

In Thomas's commentary on Saint John's Gospel he analyses divine Revelation as a divine 'speech-act.' Since a word is an expression of intellectual knowledge, which is exteriorly manifest through material signs, whether through sounds, letters or gestures of material words (vocal or written), so too, for Thomas, the Incarnation is God's intellectual 'speech-act,' since it was the Word Who was made flesh. From all eternity God the Father has (interiorly) expressed his intellectual knowledge (of himself) by conceiving his divine Word (which is the second divine person of the Trinity: God the Son). With the Incarnation though, as Thomas sees it, this Word was (exteriorly) materialised. As Thomas puts it: "God, wanting to make Himself known to men, clothed His Word, conceived from all eternity, in flesh and time."¹⁴ Through Christ's created human flesh (i.e., his humanity) men and women could literally hear the Word which God the Father has spoken from eternity. This Word, spoken by the Father in the very flesh of Christ, can be heard by us and we can enter into dialogue with it. While the Word is "clothed" in Christ's humanity it is not fully disclosed to us. Herein we gain a further understanding of what Thomas means when he says that the first stage of Revelation, in this life, is imperfect. Although the Word of God is "clothed" in human flesh it is still indeed knowable by us, though in a somewhat obscure manner. Here too, we can also see why Thomas insists that, although no further divine Revelation can take place beyond Christ, there is always the possibility to gain new understandings, and penetrate more deeply into the Revelation offered.

I will now briefly look at Thomas's Trinitarian theology as the metaphysical foundation of his Revelation theology. The importance of this investigation is due to this thesis's goal of identifying the similarities and differences between Aquinas and Ratzinger's theology of Revelation's transmission to successive generations. Without

¹⁴ *In Jo.*, c.14, lect. 2, n.1874. As quoted by Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 167.

identifying the metaphysical foundations of these two theologians' theologies in this regard the thesis would be fundamentally incomplete.

2. Thomas's Trinitarian Theology as the Metaphysical Foundation of his Revelation Theology

Before analysing how Thomas understands the manner by which Revelation is transmitted, I will speak of his Trinitarian theology as the metaphysical foundation of his Revelation theology. The importance of this is twofold: firstly, to show how Thomas's understanding of divine Revelation is ultimately rooted in the Trinitarian actions *ad intra*; and secondly, in order to be able to better compare and contrast Aquinas and Ratzinger's understanding of divine Revelation in the fourth chapter of this thesis. As we will see in the chapter which follows, Ratzinger's Revelation theology not only draws from his work on Bonaventure (1217-1274), but it also has its metaphysical foundations in Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology (see Section 1.2.4. of Chapter Three below). For this reason it is fitting here, as a preparation to the comparative study, to interrogate Thomas's Trinitarian theology as the metaphysical foundation of his Revelation theology.

When considering the *Summa theologiae*'s doctrine of the Trinity in relation to creation, Jean-Pierre Torrell (b.1927), in his two-volume work on Thomas's life, literary opus and doctrine, notes that, "We do not entirely understand the circular scheme of the *Summa* until we see that Thomas also envisions a trinitarian plan in the connection of the world with its creator. This vision of a theologically unified world—which he basically shares with his great contemporaries Albert and Bonaventure—was present at the very start of his theological reflection."¹⁵ Then later, while considering Thomas's treatise on the Trinity in his summary work on Thomas's *Summa theologiae*, Torrell says that, "This treatise on the Trinity, in which Thomas is very attentive to Scripture and the Fathers, is a masterpiece of speculative theology and it was to have profound impact on

¹⁵ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master* (vol.2), trans., Robert Royal (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 58. For a good comparative study of Thomas and Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology, see Edward J. Butterworth, *The Doctrine of the Trinity in Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventure* (PhD diss., New York: Fordham University, 1985).

Western theology after him.”¹⁶ In a similar vein, in the introduction to his work on *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Gilles Emery (1975-) says that “Reflecting on the Trinitarian faith is ... the theologian’s primary task and this is where the heart of St Thomas’ teaching rests.”¹⁷ After this, while opening the first chapter of his discussion of Thomas’s Trinitarian theology, on ‘The Revelation of the Trinity,’ Emery notes: “Trinitarian faith rests on receiving God’s revelation within salvation history. This means that we have to consider what that revelatory action of the Trinity is before we can begin a theological reflection on the Trinitarian mystery.”¹⁸ From these insights, therefore, we can see how these prominent theologians present Thomas’s Trinitarian theology as being at the very heart of all his theological reflections and work.

Emery’s discussion of Thomas’s fundamental reasons behind God’s self-revelation begins by pointing out that a correct Trinitarian theology is needed in order to grasp not only the reasons for “God’s creative activity, and, by extension, the whole of God’s activity in the world,” but also for understanding the Revelation of the salvation which is accomplished through the mystery of the Incarnate Son.¹⁹ Now, since the act of Revelation for Thomas is the manifestation of God’s inner Trinitarian life, the metaphysical foundation of this revelatory act, for Thomas, lies within his Trinitarian theology. Emery notes that in Thomas’s Trinitarian theology there is a distinction between, “the pathway by which we discover the Trinity (the Trinity’s self-revelation by acting in the world),” and “the way in which theological understanding lays out the revealed mystery (the Processions and the eternal properties of the persons).”²⁰

¹⁶ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Aquinas’s Summa: Background, Structure, & Reception*, trans., Benedict M. Guevin (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 23. Torrell’s recognition of the centrality of the Trinity in Thomas’s theology arises from Thomas positing God as the subject of *sacra doctrina*. In the *Summa*’s First Question Thomas says: “All things in *sacra doctrina* are considered from the point of view of God. It is either about God himself, or about things in the measure in which they have God as their source and their end. It follows that God is truly the subject of this science” (*Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.7).

¹⁷ Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans., Francesca A. Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

¹⁸ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 7.

¹⁹ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 8.

²⁰ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 9.

Therefore, for the purposes of discovering the true metaphysical foundation of Thomas's Revelation theology we need to consider both of these pathways.

For Thomas, the pathway of discovering the Trinity in this life is had in a twofold manner: firstly, through God's natural creation and production of creatures (a divine action *ad extra*); and secondly, through the economy of the Divine Missions (also divine actions *ad extra*) which are in turn an imitation and an extension of the Divine Processions (i.e., divine actions *ad intra*). In the first place, when dealing with how Thomas understands the Trinitarian actions *ad intra* and *ad extra*, what is known today as the "Immanent and Economic Trinity,"²¹ Emery tells us that not only is this the first distinction that is to be made in Trinitarian theology, but it is also the foundation for Thomas's doctrine on the gratuity of creation. The necessity of positing this gratuity comes from grasping the infinite plenitude of the Triune God in his own immanent life (*ad intra*). Since there is no deficiency or imperfection in God, his reason for creating can only arise from a free decision, a purely gratuitous act of divine benevolence (an act of the divine will).²² But what God creates he conceives through his wisdom so that in various manners²³ all things imitate the divine wisdom.²⁴ In knowing himself God knows the creatures of which he is the exemplary cause and Creator (an act of the divine intellect).²⁵ Herein we see the root of Thomas's intellectualism.²⁶ This act of the divine

²¹ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 41. See also, idem., "The Personal Mode of Trinitarian Action in St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Trinity, Church, and The Human Person: Thomistic Essays*, trans., Matthew Levering (Florida: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2007), 115-154, especially "Immanent Trinity, Economic Trinity, and Perichoresis," 143. This essay appeared in *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 31-77.

²² See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.19, a.4 'Whether the Will of God is the Cause of Things?'; I, q.20 'On God's Love.'

²³ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.47.

²⁴ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.44, a.3; q.14, a.8.

²⁵ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.14, a.8; q.15 'On the Divine Ideas'; q.44, a.3 'On God as the Exemplar Cause of all Things': "for divine wisdom devised the order of the universe, which order consists in the variety of things"; *De veritate*, q.3 aa.1-3.

²⁶ See James A. Weisheipl, "The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1," *The Thomist* 38 (1974), 73. While commenting on the speculative and practical aspects of Thomas's notion of *sacra doctrina*, Weisheipl says: "for Thomas, as opposed to Bonaventure and others, sacred doctrine is more formally speculative, for divine revelation tells us more of divine things than of human actions. In the intellectualism of Thomas it is the intellectual vision of God in heaven that is more fundamental and radical than the affection that follows upon vision." From both Emery and Weisheipl we see that Thomas's Trinitarian intellectualism plays a very important role in his theology of divine Revelation. This, as we will see in Chapter Three Section 2. of this thesis, is opposed to the metaphysical foundation of Bonaventure's theology of

intellect generates the Word (i.e., God the Son) so that what is known is not only all that God is but also whatever manner in which God can be imitated: i.e., all possible created natures. For this reason, Thomas holds that in all creatures a trace of the Trinity is necessarily found.²⁷ This is because, as Thomas had previously said, “The processions of persons [in the Trinity] are the type [*rationes*] of the productions of creatures inasmuch as they include the essential attributes, knowledge and will.”²⁸ And since every effect in some manner imitates its cause,²⁹ the immanent divine Trinitarian actions (actions *ad intra*) are the foundation for the ‘Economic Trinity’ (i.e., God’s actions *ad extra*—including God’s act of Revelation). This is not to say though that this manner of knowing would entail a clear and distinct knowledge of the Trinity, for it is a very obscure knowledge; indeed, even more obscure than the second aspect of this twofold pathway, which is a knowledge of the Trinity obtained through Revelation and had by faith.

When Thomas comes to consider our knowledge of the Trinity obtained through Revelation and had by faith he is adamant in rejecting any hint of our ability to know of any ‘necessary reasons’ positing the Trinity through natural reason,³⁰ as it had been

divine Revelation, which so heavily influenced Ratzinger. There we will see that Bonaventure’s Trinitarian theology flows from his Franciscan voluntarism which posits the reason for the Processions of the three divine persons of the Trinity in the divine nature’s effulgent goodness, since it is of the nature of goodness to communicate itself (*bonum diffusivum sui*); a point Bonaventure drew from both Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 5/6th Century) and Richard of St Victor (d. 1173). In adopting this theory Bonaventure attempted to elaborate “necessary reasons” for the Processions of the divine persons, and thus for him a sound consideration of God’s unity necessitates the affirmation of the Trinity. Thomas vigorously objected to this by saying that no argument from reason could adequately necessitate the Trinity.

²⁷ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.45, a.7.

²⁸ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.45, a.6: “Et secundum hoc processiones personarum sunt rationes productionis creaturarum, inquantum includunt essentialia attributa, quae sunt scientia et voluntas.”

²⁹ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.45, a.6 c: “every agent produces its like.”

³⁰ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.32, a.1. Where, against these assertions of our ability to know of the Trinity’s necessity, Thomas says: “we must not attempt to prove what is of faith, except by authority alone, to those who receive the authority; while as regards others it suffices to prove that what faith teaches is not impossible.” See also, Torrell, *Aquinas’s Summa*, 24; Gilles Emery, “The Purpose of Trinitarian Theology in St. Thomas Aquinas,” in *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays*, trans., Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Florida: Sapientia Press of Ava Maria University, 2007), 6-7; Robert L. Richard, *The Problem of an Apologetic Perspective in the Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1963).

asserted before him by the likes of Peter Abélard (1079-1142),³¹ Richard of St Victor (d. 1173),³² Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109)³³ and even Bonaventure.³⁴ For Thomas, explicit knowledge of the Trinity in this life rests solely on the faithful reception of Revelation in the history of salvation. Through the Revelation of God's actions *ad extra* in Salvation History we are able to identify the Divine Missions of the Son and Holy Spirit which in turn provide believers with knowledge of the eternal origins and Processions (actions *ad intra*) of the Trinity.³⁵ But, as Thomas insists and as Emery confirms, since the subject of *sacra doctrina* is 'God qua God',³⁶ it is the precise task of speculative theology to see the Divine Missions through the light of the Divine Processions, not vice-versa.³⁷ And therefore in his tripartite treatise on the Trinity in the *Summa*, Thomas first treats the two Processions of divine Persons,³⁸ followed by the divine relations,³⁹ before looking at the divine Persons themselves⁴⁰; and it is only at the conclusion of this third part of the treatise that Thomas deals with the Divine Missions

³¹ See Peter Abélard, 'Theology of the Supreme Good,' I.V (CCCM 13), 98-99. As cited by Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 22 §12.

³² See Richard of St Victor, *De Trinitate*, 1.4. As cited by Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 24. See also, Richard's assertion in Thomas's objection: *Summa theologiae*, I, q.32, a.1 obj 2.

³³ Anselmus Cantuariensis, "De Divinitatis Essentia Monologium," in *Opera omnia S. Anselmi*, PL 158, 141-224. As cited by Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 23. See also, Étienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938, 1963²), 26-27: "Anselm ... we find him proving, by conclusive dialectical arguments, not only the Trinity of the Divine Persons, as he did in both his *Monologium* and his *Proslogium*, but even the very Incarnation of Christ, including all its essential modalities, as he did in his *Cur Deus homo*."

³⁴ Bonaventurae Bagnoregis, I *Sent.* d. 2, a. un., q. 2; I *Sent.* d. 27, p. 1, a. un., q. 2, ad 3; *Questiones disputatae de Mysterio Trinitatis*, qq. 1-8; *Hexaëmeron* XI. 11; *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, ch. 6. As cited by Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 23 §18. In *Summa theologiae*, I, q.32, a.1 obj 2, Thomas puts forward Bonaventure's notion of the Divine Processions arising from God's infinite goodness: "So even to prove the Trinity some have brought forward a reason from the infinite goodness of God, who communicates Himself infinitely in the procession of the divine persons."

³⁵ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 17: "The missions of the Son and Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation provide believers with knowledge of the eternal origin of the persons."

³⁶ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.7: "in sacred science, all things are treated of under the aspect of God: either because they are God Himself or because they refer to God as their beginning and end"; Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 43.

³⁷ See Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 17.

³⁸ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.27.

³⁹ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.28.

⁴⁰ *Summa theologiae*, I, qq.29-43.

in the economy of Salvation History.⁴¹ Consequently, Emery also says: “knowing the eternal processions gives us a better perspective on the foundation (the ‘reason’) of the action of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the world.”⁴² This is because knowing God in himself is more perfect than knowing his external actions or effects.⁴³ And yet, for us, it is only in first knowing the Divine Missions that we can come to know of the eternal Processions⁴⁴; both are mutually illuminative of each other, though in diverse respects. This is why Emery tells us that, “the *spring* of Trinitarian theology is the reception of the revelation of the Trinity in the economic actions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁵ As such, it is more appropriate to consider the Divine Processions before the Divine Missions, which is to consider what we had previously noted that Emery had seen as Thomas’s, “way in which theological understanding lays out the mystery of the Trinity.”⁴⁶

Without going into an extensive elaboration of Thomas’s understanding of the Divine Processions, not only because this has already been undertaken thoroughly by others,⁴⁷ but also because it would take us beyond the limits of this thesis, nevertheless

⁴¹ The two Divine Processions are dealt with by Thomas in I, q.27, while the Divine Missions are in I, q.43.

⁴² Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 17. See also, *In Jo.* c.16, lect. 4, n.2107. This is not to say that Emery believes that our knowledge of the Trinitarian Processions initially precedes our knowledge of the Divine Missions.

⁴³ For example, see *Summa theologiae*, I, q.2, a.2; I, q.12, a.12; I, q.94, a.1; I, q.55, a.3 ad 2.

⁴⁴ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.43, a.7 “God provides for all things according to the nature of each thing. Now the nature of man requires that he be led to the invisible by visible things, as explained above (I, q.12, a.12). Wherefore the invisible things of God must be made manifest to man by the things that are visible. As God, therefore, in a certain way has demonstrated Himself and His eternal processions to men by visible creatures, according to certain signs; so was it fitting that the invisible missions also of the divine persons should be made manifest by some visible creatures.”

⁴⁵ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 17. [Emphasis added].

⁴⁶ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 9.

⁴⁷ See Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 49-77; idem., *Trinity in Aquinas* (Florida: Sapiential Press of Ave Maria University, 2006), 137-142; idem., *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*, ed., Matthew Levering (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2011); idem., “The Purpose of Trinitarian Theology in St. Thomas Aquinas,” 1-32, especially “Procession,” 9-15; Butterworth, *The Doctrine of the Trinity in Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventure*, 63-68; Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 165-196; Bruce L. McCormack, “Processions and Missions: A Point of Convergence between Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth,” in *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: An Unofficial*

it must be said that there are a few essential points concerning Thomas's theology of these Processions which are important to note. Firstly, in his opening question on the Divine Processions, Thomas notes that it is to be understood that these Processions take place in God, "not according to the mode of the lowest creatures, namely bodies, but from the similitude of the highest creatures, the intellectual substances," and therefore, "it is to be understood by way of an intelligible emanation, for example, of the intelligible word which proceeds from the speaker, yet remains in him."⁴⁸ Secondly, concerning the first procession in the Trinity, Thomas notes that it arises from the Father (i.e., the first Person) generating the Son (i.e., the second Person) through an act of intellect, so that it is the Father alone who 'speaks' (*dicere*) or 'pronounces' the Word: "neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit 'speak the Word' any more than they 'engender the Son.'"⁴⁹ And as Thomas says:

to one person alone in God does it belong to be spoken in the same way as a word is spoken [by a man]; whereas in the way whereby a thing is spoken as being understood in the word, it belongs to each Person to be spoken. For the Father, by understanding Himself, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and all other things comprised in this knowledge, conceives the Word; so that thus the whole Trinity is "spoken" in the Word; and likewise also all creatures: as the intellect of a man by the word he conceives in the act of understanding a stone, speaks a stone.⁵⁰

By virtue of the first Divine Procession (the Trinitarian action *ad intra* of Generation) the Word that is 'spoken' by the Father therefore engenders all that the Father is (except his paternity or fatherhood, due to the opposition of relation he has with the Son⁵¹), so that in knowing himself the Father knows all that is 'contained' in his *scientia* which is conceived in his Word. As the Word is consequently the exemplary cause of all creation,⁵² all creation must contain those 'traces' of the Trinity spoken of above.⁵³ This is really the first 'action' of the Word within the world.⁵⁴

Catholic-Protestant Dialogue (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 99-128.

⁴⁸ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.27, a.1 c.

⁴⁹ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 187.

⁵⁰ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.34, a.1 ad 3.

⁵¹ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.28, aa.3-4.

⁵² See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.14, a.5; I, q.34, a.3 ad 3.

⁵³ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.34, a.3: "Word implies relation to creatures. For God by knowing Himself, knows every creature. Now the word conceived in the mind is representative

The second action of the Word within the world, which is over and above this first manner of acting, is where the Word acts by revealing the Father in the plan of what Saint Paul calls, the divine “economy.”⁵⁵ The Revelation of the Father by the Word in human history is done for the sake of our salvation. Just as the Father had created all things through the Word that he utters, it was through the Word again that the Father restores the world from its fallen state. For as Thomas says in the *Summa theologiae*:

Now the Person of the Son, Who is the Word of God, has a certain common agreement with all creatures, because the word of the craftsman, i.e., his concept, is an exemplar likeness of whatever is made by him. Hence the Word of God, Who is His eternal concept, is the exemplar likeness of all creatures. And therefore as creatures are established in their proper species, though movably, by the participation of this likeness, so by the non-participated and personal union of the Word with a creature, it was fitting that the creature should be restored in order to its eternal and unchangeable perfection; for the craftsman by the

of everything that is actually understood. Hence there are in ourselves different words for the different things which we understand. But because God by one act understands Himself and all things, His one only Word is expressive not only of the Father, but of all creatures.

“And as the knowledge of God is only cognitive as regards God, whereas as regards creatures, it is both cognitive and operative, so the Word of God is only expressive of what is in God the Father, but is both expressive and operative of creatures; and therefore it is said (Ps. 32:9): ‘He spake, and they were made’; because in the Word is implied the operative idea of what God makes.” See also, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 4, c.11, n.14: “the Word of God must be referred to the other things understood by God as *exemplar*, and must be referred to God Himself whose Word He is as *image*.”

⁵⁴ The Word is also the Son of the Father since, as Thomas says: “It is also clear that since in every nature that which issues forth and has a likeness to the nature from which it issues is called a son, and since this Word issues forth in a likeness and identity to the nature from which it issues, it is suitably and appropriately called a ‘Son,’ and its production is called a generation” (*In Jo.* c.1, lect. 1, n.29). And elsewhere Thomas also says: “that which proceeds from a living thing in the likeness of species is called Son” (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 4, c.11, n.16). In *Summa theologiae*, I, q.34, a.2 Thomas says: “‘Word,’ said of God in its proper sense, is used personally, and is the proper name of the person of the Son. For it signifies an emanation of the intellect: and the person Who proceeds in God, by way of emanation of the intellect, is called the Son; and this procession is called generation. ... Hence it follows that the Son alone is properly called Word in God.”

⁵⁵ See Eph 3:9, “καὶ φωτίσαι [πάντας] τίς ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ ἀποκεκρυμμένου ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐν τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι”; RSV translation: “and to make all men see what is the plan [or economy] of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.” See also, *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution of Vatican II, 18 November 1965, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), ch.1 § 2: “Haec revelationis oeconomia fit gestis verbisque intrinsece inter se connexis, ita ut opera, in historia salutis a Deo patrata, doctrinam et res verbis significatas manifestent ac corroborent, verba autem opera proclament et mysterium in eis contentum elucident.” English translation taken from: John Paul II, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992), n.1103: “The economy of Revelation is realized by deed and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other. ...[T]he words for their part proclaim the works and bring to light the mystery they contain.”

intelligible form of his art, whereby he fashioned his handiwork, restores it when it has fallen into ruin.⁵⁶

Emery tells us that throughout “the Old Testament it was in the Word that inspired men and women spoke,”⁵⁷ as we have seen (see Section 1.2. of this Chapter above). And the Word, the Only Son of God revealed knowledge of God through these Prophets to the degree that they participated in the eternal Word.⁵⁸ But in the New Testament the Word of God is not merely participated to some varying degree, but with Christ the ‘Word was made flesh’ so that “in his own flesh ... the Word elicits knowledge of God.”⁵⁹ In the very flesh (i.e., the humanity) of Christ the eternal secret of the Father is made known to mankind (i.e., to humanity). And what is communicated to the humanity of Christ is all that the Word (spoken by the Father) is. Thomas encapsulates this most beautifully in his commentary on Saint John’s Gospel:

A person reveals what is hidden within by his words, and it is only by the words of a person that we can know what is hidden within. Now “no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:11), therefore, no one can acquire a knowledge of the Father except by his Word, which is his Son: “No one knows the Father except the Son” (Mt 11:27). And just like one of us who wants to be known by others by revealing to them the words in his heart, clothes these words with letters or sounds, so God, wanting to be known by us, takes his Word, conceived from eternity, and clothes it with flesh in time. And so no one can arrive at a knowledge of the Father except through the Son.⁶⁰

Now, since the Word (which was made flesh) is the very *scientia* of the Father, “it follows that the doctrine of the Father is the Son himself,” as Thomas says.⁶¹ Christ,

⁵⁶ *Summa theologiae*, III, q.3, a.8.

⁵⁷ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 202.

⁵⁸ See *In Jo.* c.1, lect. 11, n.221: “For in the past, the Only Begotten Son revealed knowledge of God through the prophets, who made him known to the extent that they shared in the eternal Word. Hence they said things like, ‘The Word of the Lord came to me.’ But now the Only Begotten Son has made him known to the faithful: ‘It is I who spoke; here I am’ (Is 52:6); ‘God, who in many and varied ways, spoke to the fathers in past times through the prophets, has spoken to us in these days in his Son’ (Heb 1:1).”

⁵⁹ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 202.

⁶⁰ *In Jo.* c.14, lect. 2, n.1874.

⁶¹ *In Jo.* c.7, lect. 2, n.1037: “As if to say: ‘You are wondering where I gained my knowledge; but I say, My doctrine is not mine.’ If he had said: ‘The doctrine that I am presenting to you is not mine,’ there would be no problem. But he says: ‘My doctrine is not mine’; and this seems to be a contradiction. However, this can be explained, for this statement can be understood in several ways. Our Lord’s doctrine can in some sense be called his own,

being the Word made flesh, is all that the Father utters and is, therefore, all that the Father knows. He is the very doctrine of the Father himself. We can see from this that at its root the Thomistic doctrine of Revelation is anything but propositional in its foundation. Rather, it is rooted in the very Processions of the inner Trinitarian life of God. As the Word of God, Christ is the foundation and climax of divine Revelation because he is all that the Father knows (i.e., all that God knows and is). As Emery says: "Sonship implies *commonality of action* between the Son and the Father, because the Father eternally communicates his power of action to the Son: the Father achieves all things through his Son, through his Word."⁶² And thus it is God the Father's presence in Christ that accounts for the revelatory value of his words and actions.⁶³ All else that we know through faith flows from Christ as the fount of eternal Wisdom because he is Truth itself. And this too is why the saints in glory know the Father through the vision of the Word which discloses the Father to them.⁶⁴ Again, we can see here too Thomas's reason for positing that ultimately there are two stages of Revelation: firstly, where God reveals his word to man in this life, and man accepts it through faith; and secondly, in the next life, the same word is perfectly revealed to man through the Beatific Vision, the acceptance of which does not require an act of faith from the recipient of that Revelation (see Section 1.1. of this Chapter above).⁶⁵

Since the Word is what proceeds from the Father through his interior intellectual utterance or generation of all that he is (and knows), and since the Word is that through

and in some sense not his own. First, we can understand Christ as the Son of God. Then, since the doctrine of anyone is nothing else than his word, and the Son of God is the Word of God, it follows that the doctrine of the Father is the Son himself. But this same Word belongs to himself through an identity of substance. 'What does belong to you, if not you yourself?' However, he does not belong to himself through his origin."

⁶² Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 190.

⁶³ See *In Jo.*, c.14, lect. 3, n.1893. In commenting on John 14:8-10, which reads: "[8] Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied.' [9] Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? [Philip], he who has seen me has seen the Father [also]; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? [10] Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority [of myself]; but the Father who dwells in me does his [the] works.'" Thomas says: "The belief that Christ was God could be known from two things: from his teaching and from his miracles."

⁶⁴ See *In Jo.* c. lect. n.2150; See also, Mt 11:27, which reads: "No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

⁶⁵ See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 4, c.1.

which he restores fallen creation, in Thomas's mind, the Word holds a certain 'pole-position,' or centrality.⁶⁶ This too follows the widely recognised synthesis of Thomas's overall view of theology in God's *exitus* and *reditus*.⁶⁷ The Word is the one through whom God the Father 'goes out' to creatures, so to speak, in the act of creation; since it is through the Word that all things are made. And it is through the Word that the Father draws all of creation back to himself by revealing himself through the Word in the divine act of Redemption. In this vein, Emery notes that "by unifying creation, revelation, and salvation within a single knot, the theology of the Word shows *the unity of the divine plan of creation and salvation*."⁶⁸

Now, just as this Mission of the Word is to draw all creation back to the Father, so too, the Mission of the Holy Spirit is to lead the faithful to the Word. Since the Word is the very doctrine of the Father, the role of the Holy Spirit in Thomas's understanding of divine Revelation is to move us to grasp this doctrine, this Word. As Emery points out, Thomas recognises that according to the witness of the Apostles, God's self-Revelation ultimately comes through the words and actions of Christ along with the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ So, according to Thomas, what is the role of the Holy Spirit in his understanding of divine Revelation?

Although the Holy Spirit's action or role in the act of Revelation has a different modality to that of the Word (or Son), the Holy Spirit does not accomplish something

⁶⁶ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.27, a.3 ad 3: "although in God the will and the intellect are the same, still, inasmuch as love requires by its very nature that it proceed only from the concept of the intellect, there is a distinction of order between the procession of love and the procession of the Word in God."

⁶⁷ See for instance, Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa*, 27-29: "At the very beginning, Thomas tells us that he wants to speak of God as the source and end of all creatures. This fundamental fact, which governs the entire organization of the *Summa*, is like a subterranean current that unifies, by tying together, the three parts and their multiple treatises. There is a structure underlying this multiplicity: the work is in fact constructed according to a circular plan that draws the reader into the 'going-out-from-returning-to' [*exitus-reditus*] movement which is that of the entire universe, coming from God its creator and returning to him as its final end." See also, Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, trans., Albert M. Landry and Dominic Hughes (Chicago: Regnery Publishing, 1964); idem., *The Scope of the Summa*, trans., Robert E. Brennan and Albert M. Landry (Washington: The Thomist Press, 1958), 16-20; idem., "The Plan of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*," *Cross Currents* (New York: Cross Currents, 1950): 67-79. Translated by Ellen Bremner from "La plan de la Somme," *Revue Thomiste* 35 (1939): 93-107.

⁶⁸ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 204.

⁶⁹ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 9.

different from what the Word (or Son) accomplishes but does so in a different way. In Thomas's notion of Revelation as dialogue (see Section 1.3. of this Chapter above) the role of the Holy Spirit in the 'speech-act' of Revelation is one of a "moving medium."⁷⁰ It is by this "moving medium" that the very flesh of Christ, which is the visible manifestation of the eternal Word of God, the secret eternally spoken by the Father, was breathed forth into this world: visibly manifesting the Father who utters this Word.⁷¹ The Holy Spirit is the "moving medium" in the divine dialogical act of Revelation not just because he draws the faithful to accept the Word Who is revealed, but more foundationally because he is the common love of the Father and the Word (or Son). In virtue of the common love of the Father and the Son (which is due to the second divine Procession—the Trinitarian action *ad intra* of love, or Spiration) the Holy Spirit is firstly a "moving medium"⁷² within the Trinity, since, as Thomas says, he "proceeds from them [i.e., the Father and the Son] as the unitive love of both,"⁷³ before he is a "moving medium" which draws the faithful to the Word.

From the preceding we can see how the interior Trinitarian Processions hold the metaphysical foundation of Thomas's theology of divine Revelation. Through the first procession, where the Word is generated by the Father, the Word encapsulates all that the Father is through the divine act of knowledge. This act of knowledge is partially participated by the Prophets (and Apostles) of the Old Testament (and New Testament) when God made his Revelation to them, and fully participated by the man Jesus Christ, by being hypostatically united to the Word in the Incarnation. But for Thomas, divine Revelation is not merely the imparting of a divine (propositional) doctrine. Revelation is given for the sake of our salvation and therefore it is imparted via the "moving medium" of the Holy Spirit who draws the faithful recipient of Revelation to the Word, who in turn ultimately manifests the Father. We find this in the opening question of the *Summa* concerning the nature of *sacra doctrina*, when Thomas speaks of the necessity of

⁷⁰ See *Summa theologiae*, III, q.6, a.6 ad 3, where Thomas says: "Our word is united to our speech, by means of breathing (*spiritus*), not as a formal medium, but as a *moving medium*. For from the word conceived within, the breathing proceeds, from which the speech is formed. And similarly from the eternal Word proceeds the Holy Spirit, Who formed the body of Christ." [Emphasis added].

⁷¹ See Jn 14:9: "He who has seen me has seen the Father."

⁷² See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.27, a.3.

⁷³ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.36, a.4 ad 1. See also, I, q.37, a.2.

Revelation, so that man will be able to know his ultimate (supernatural) last end and be drawn to this end—thus the manifestation of the Word in Revelation followed by the drawing of the faithful to this end by the “moving medium” of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁴

Now that Thomas’s conception of the very act of divine Revelation in itself, and its metaphysical foundation have been adequately outlined, I will turn my attention to see how Thomas understands the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted or communicated to successive generations.

3. Thomas’s Understanding of Revelation’s Transmission or Communication

In this section, I will demonstrate how Thomas understands the way divine Revelation is transmitted or communicated to successive generations. I will begin this task by first highlighting the distinction within Thomas’s thought between *Revelatio*, *Theologia* and *Sacra Doctrina*, a distinction alluded to by René Latourelle.⁷⁵ This is important since although it is essential that these three terms not be confused or identified with one another, it is also necessary that a clear knowledge of how Thomas understands them comes to the fore in order for us to specify our understanding of Thomas’s notion of Tradition and Scripture’s role in conveying divine Revelation. Therefore, the distinction between *Revelatio*, *Theologia* and *Sacra Doctrina* in Thomas’s thought will be outlined first (Section 3.1.). After this I will consider how Thomas understands the manner in which Revelation is transmitted (Section 3.2.). This will be undertaken by first considering Thomas’s understanding of how the Prophets and Apostles (and Christ) communicated the Revelation they had received (Section

⁷⁴ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.1: “It was necessary for man’s salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason. ... But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors. Whereas man’s whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth. Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and more surely, it was necessary that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was therefore necessary that besides philosophical science built up by reason, there should be a sacred science learned through revelation.”

⁷⁵ See Latourelle, *The Theology of Revelation*, 167-169.

3.2.1.), after which I will turn my attention to Thomas's views on the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations (Section 3.2.2.). This will finally lead me a consideration of the role Scripture plays in Thomas's understanding of how divine Revelation is transmitted or communicated to successive generations (Section 3.2.3.).

3.1. Thomas's Understanding of *Revelatio*, *Theologia* and *Sacra Doctrina*

Before looking at Thomas's understanding of how divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations, I would like to outline Thomas's understanding of the terms: *Revelatio*, *Theologia* and *Sacra Doctrina*. The distinction of these terms from each other is necessary because it not only shows that there is a difference between what Thomas understands by Revelation (*Revelatio*) and what is commonly understood today by the term, 'theology',⁷⁶ but it also distinguishes *Revelatio* from what the ancients, and the medieval theologians, in general, understood by the term, *theologia*.⁷⁷ In undertaking this task we will also see that Thomas does not equate *Revelatio* with *sacra doctrina* but holds that *Revelatio* precedes *sacra doctrina* as the act of God manifesting *sacra doctrina*. By identifying the distinction between these three in Thomas's thought we will be in a better position to grasp how Thomas understands divine Revelation's transmission and therefore his notions of Tradition and Scripture. I will begin with Thomas's notions of *sacra doctrina* and *theologia*, and their distinction from each other, before identifying their relation to *Revelatio*, the notion of which has been sufficiently summarised previously in this chapter (see Section 1. above).

In the twentieth-century numerous studies, having diverse motivations, were undertaken by theologians attempting to accurately identify Thomas's understanding of *sacra doctrina*.⁷⁸ Among them though, as Joseph Thaddeus Merkt has shown, "it is

⁷⁶ See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, 1 §2.

⁷⁷ See Joseph Ratzinger, "Questions about the Structure of Theology," in *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, trans. Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987): 315-331.

⁷⁸ See for instance, Yves Congar, "Comptes Rendu," *Bulletin Thomiste* 5 (1937-1939): 490-505; René Draguet, « Méthodes théologiques d'heir et d'aujuord'hui, » *Le Reveue catholique des Idées et des Faits* (1936): 1-7; Jean-François Bonnefoy, « La théologie comme science et l'explication de la foi selon saint Thomas d'Aquin, » *Ephemerides theologicae Louvaniensis* 14 (1937): 421-446, 600-631 and 15 (1938): 491-516; Marie-Rosaire Gagnebet,

generally agreed that Thomas believes *sacra doctrina ut scientia* should be at the service of revelation as expressed in scripture and guarded by the Church.”⁷⁹ As such, therefore, the debate has clearly recognised that Thomas understood *Revelatio* to be equated neither with *sacra doctrina* nor *theologia*.

In his analysis of Thomas’s thought regarding the terms *theologia* and *sacra doctrina*, Merkt notes that when Thomas uses the term *theologia*, which is rarer than his employment of the term *sacra doctrina*, although he sometimes uses it equivalently to

« La nature de la théologie spéculative, » *Revue Thomiste* 44 (1938): 1-39, 213-255, 645-674; Marie-Dominique Chenu, “The Plan of St. Thomas’ *Summa theologiae*,” *Cross Currents* (New York : Cross Currents, 1950): 67-79. Trans., Ellen Bremner from “La plan de la Somme,” *Revue Thomiste* 35 (1939): 93-107; idem., *La théologie comme science au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1943); idem., *Towards Understanding St. Thomas*, trans., by A.M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago : Henry Regery, 1964. The original French work was *Introduction à l’étude de Saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1950); Gerald F. Van Ackeren, *Sacra Doctrina: The Subject of the First Question of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas* (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1952); idem., “Reflections on the Relation between Philosophy and Theology,” in *Theological Studies* 14 (1953): 557-550; Per Erik Persson, *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*, trans., Ross Mackenzie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970); Marie-Dominique Chenu, « Théologie, » *Bulletin Thomiste* 10 (1957-1959): 470; Victor White, *Holy Teaching: The Idea of Theology According to St. Thomas Aquinas, a Paper Read to the Aquinas Society of London*. Aquinas Paper No. 33 (London: Blackfriars, 1958); Yves Congar, “Le Moment ‘économique’ et le Moment ‘ontologique’ dans la *sacra doctrina* (Révélation, théologie, somme théologique),” *Mélanges Offerts à M.-D. Chenu, O.P.*, Bibliothèque Thomiste, 37 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1967): 135-187; idem., *A History of Theology*, trans., and ed., Hunter Guthrie (New York: Doubleday, 1968); James A. Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 49-80; Cornelius Ernst, “Metaphor and Ontology in *Sacra Doctrina*,” *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 403-425; Thomas C. O’Brien, “‘*Sacra Doctrina*’ Revisited: The Context of Medieval Education,” *The Thomist* 41 (1977): 475-509. These citations were taken from Joseph Thaddeus Merkt, *‘Sacra Doctrina’ and Christian Eschatology: A Test Case for a Study of Method and Content in the Writings of Thomas Aquinas* (PhD diss., Washington: Catholic University of America, 1982), 14-16 footnotes 30-50. In footnote 4 of chapter II Merkt identifies two phases of the debate concerning Thomas’s notion of *sacra doctrina*: The first among Thomas’s commentators such as Tommaso de Vio Cajetan (1469-1534) Domingo Báñez (1528-1681), John of St Thomas (1587-1644), Francis Sylvius (1581-1649), Charles Billuart (1685-1757), Enrico Buonpensiere (1853-1929) and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964). For a good brief explanation of these theologians’ acceptance of *Sacra Doctrina* in I, q.1 of Thomas’s *Summa* see Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 56-61. The second phase was among the twentieth-century theologians mentioned above. For a good modern exposé of Thomas’s understanding of *sacra doctrina*, see Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, 1-4.

⁷⁹ Merkt, *‘Sacra Doctrina’ and Christian Eschatology*, 17; See also, Ernst, “Metaphor and Ontology in *Sacra Doctrina*,” 404: Where Ernst has shown that since, “theology is the rational exploration and declaration of the unified self-disclosure of God in himself and in the world, mediated by Scripture (cf. [prima pars] art.8). There are then three modes of determining the basis of theology: the infallible truth of God himself, *Veritas Prima*; the *articuli fidei*; and the canonical Scriptures; these three are modes of a single revelation.”

the way 'theology' is used in modern times—as it is a rational reflection on God and his divine Revelation as known by faith—with the majority of instances, it should be understood in its etymological sense as the “discourse about God” (*sermo de Deo*).⁸⁰ And, sometimes (though rarely) it is also used in its more ancient philosophical sense, meaning natural philosophical theology.⁸¹ In Thomas's day, as Merkt notes, the term *theologia* was in transition from the way it was employed by the ancients to the way Peter Abélard (1079-1142) was beginning to use it, which was more akin to the way it is usually accepted today. Merkt's analysis also shows that the same must be said regarding Thomas's use of the term *sacra doctrina*, for it too cannot be equated with the modern understanding of 'theology.'⁸² And so, for Thomas, *theologia* is simply the rational reflection upon *sacra doctrina*.

In his 1990 article on *Sacra Doctrina*, Brian Davies begins by reiterating what Merkt had said earlier, that with a correct reading of Thomas one should not confuse

⁸⁰ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.7 *sed contra*: “Sed in hac scientia fit sermo de Deo, dicitur enim theologia, quasi sermo de Deo”; “this science ... is called theology, a kind of talk about God.”

⁸¹ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.1 ad 2: “Unde theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur”; “Hence theology included in sacred doctrine differs in kind from that theology which is part of philosophy.” See also, Congar, *A History of Theology*, 32-34.

⁸² See William J. Hill, “Theology,” in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed., Joseph A. Komonchak et al. (Ireland: Gill and Macmillan, 1988), 1011. In Greek antiquity, the term *theologia* (*θεολογία*) referred to the “discourse of the gods”; see Plato, *Republic*, trans., R.E. Allen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), Lib. II, c.18. For Aristotle, *θεολογία* was a branch of metaphysics or ‘first philosophy’ or ‘the study of being *qua* being’ (see Aristotle, “Metaphysics,” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed., Jonathan Barnes [New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984], Lib. VI, cap.1, 1026a 15; Lib. XI, cap.7, 1064b). Early Church Fathers, such as Tertullian and Augustine (see Tertullian, “*Ad Nationes* [To the Nations],” in *The Anti-Nicene Fathers: Volume III*, ed., Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and Arthur Cleveland Coxe [New York: Cosmo Classics, 2007], Lib.II, cap.1; Augustine *De Civ. Dei.*, Lib.VI., cap.5), following Varro's usage of the term, show that there is the *Fabulous*, *Natural* and *Civil* theology. For Augustine therefore, theology simply meant a “reasoning or a discussion concerning the deity.” By the medieval period the term *theology* referred simply to the divine discourse of the Scriptures (see Hugh of St Victor, *Commentariorum in Hierarchiam Coelestem*, Expositio to Book 9: “*theologia, id est, divina Scriptura.*” PL 175:1091). With the Scholastics of the medieval period and beyond, the term *theologia* denoted the rational study of the teachings of the Christian Revelation. This investigation attempted to systematise the ‘discourse’ of divine Revelation and the implications of the Scriptures. Peter Abélard (1079-1142) was probably the first to use the term in this modern inference, with the titles of his works, ‘*Theologia Christiana*,’ ‘*Theologia Scholarium*’ and ‘*Introductio ad Theologiam*,’ written between 1120 and 1140. The classical summary of this rational synthesis of Christian doctrine in the medieval period was the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (1100-1160), which was later superseded by Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*.

sacra doctrina with *theologia*. “‘Theology,’” Davies says, “does not translate *sacra doctrina*. The proper translation is ‘holy teaching’ or ‘sacred doctrine.’ In Latin there is a readily available word to translate into English as ‘theology’, viz. *theologia*.”⁸³ Davies notes that in the First Question of the *Summa* Thomas does not so much speak of *theologia* as he does of *sacra doctrina*.⁸⁴ In fact, in this question the term *theologia* only appears four times as opposed to the fifty-nine times that *sacra doctrina* appears.⁸⁵ Like Merkt, Davies says that for Thomas *sacra doctrina* roughly means ‘discourse about God.’ And as Ratzinger notes in an article on the nature of theology, the distinction that Aristotle saw between θεολογία, theology or the divine discourse, and θεολογική, which is the study of theology or a study of the divine discourse, which was taken up by pseudo-Dionysius (c. 5/6th Century), was later appropriated by Thomas himself.⁸⁶ For Thomas therefore, *sacra doctrina* cannot be equated with *theologia*. In his attempt to highlight what this distinction is, between Thomas’s understanding of *sacra doctrina* and *theologia*, Davies delineates four qualities that Thomas’s *sacra doctrina* has: (1) it is revealed; (2) it is a science (*scientia*) more noble (*dignior*) than the other sciences and especially to be called wisdom (*sapientia*); (3) it is a science whose subject is God; and (4) it is a matter in which proof can be said to be involved.⁸⁷ Davies later summarises this by saying, that “[a]ccording to Aquinas, *sacra doctrina* is the body of truths which is the revealed content of Christian faith.”⁸⁸ This again, along with what Thomas himself says in the first article of the *Summa*’s First Question, implies that *sacra doctrina* is not only unidentifiable with *theologia* but is also unidentifiable with

⁸³ Brian Davies, “Is *Sacra Doctrina* Theology?” *New Blackfriars* 71 (1990), 141.

⁸⁴ See also, White, *Holy Teaching*, 4.

⁸⁵ According to the Index Thomisticus, the term *sacra doctrina* appears a total of 59 times in I, qq.1-10. But according to Congar, *A History of Theology*, 33, if the relative *haec doctrina* is counted every time that it occurs as a substitute for *sacra doctrina*, then *sacra doctrina* occurs about 80 times in these first ten articles. On the other hand, according to the Index Thomisticus the term *theologia* is employed a total of eighty-five times throughout all of Thomas’s writings, but it only appears four times in I, qq.1-10. Accessed March, 3, 2014: <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/it/index.age>

⁸⁶ Ratzinger, “Questions about the Structure of Theology,” 320-321. For Aristotle, following the tradition of Hesiod, *theologia* bespoke the divine speech of the deity while *theologichē* bespoke the human words used in order to understand and explain the divine discourse. See also, Scott Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2009), 87-88.

⁸⁷ Davies, “Is *Sacra Doctrina* Theology?” 142.

⁸⁸ Davies, “Is *Sacra Doctrina* Theology?” 142.

Revelatio. As it could be said, therefore, that since *theologia* is for Thomas the rational reflection upon *sacra doctrina*, and *sacra doctrina* is itself the result of *Revelatio*, it must be asked: How does Thomas understand *sacra doctrina*, and in what sense is it *scientia*?⁸⁹

Noting that Thomas's most formal treatment of *sacra doctrina* is found in his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (*In Prol.*, *Sent.* 1, 1-5) and in his First Question of the *Summa theologiae*'s *Prima Pars* (I, q.1, aa.1-10)—entitled: “*De ipsa sacra doctrina*”⁹⁰—Merkt demonstrates that according to Thomas *sacra doctrina* is truly a *scientia*, though according to the Aristotelian usage of this term⁹¹ it can only be considered as a *scientia* in the widest possible genus.⁹² This is not to say though that *sacra doctrina* should be confused with the esoteric mentality of the theological science held by the Scholastic theologian (i.e., with the acquired intellectual habit of Scholastic theology), especially since *sacra doctrina* is also held by the humblest Christian who has the theological virtue of faith.

The three key places where Thomas asks whether the Aristotelian sense of science can be applied to *sacra doctrina* are: *In Prol.*, *Sent.* 3, 2; *In De Trinitate*, q.2, a.2, and

⁸⁹ It must also be noted, now that Thomas's understanding of *theologia* has been adequately identified—as it is the rational reflection upon *sacra doctrina*—and that we can see that *theologia* is, so to speak, ‘twice removed’ from *Revelatio*—i.e., its ‘contact’ with *Revelatio* is via the medium of *sacra doctrina*—in order for the thesis to more adequately identify Thomas's understanding of the manner by which Revelation is communicated, it is more important to now focus more on Thomas's notions of *sacra doctrina* and *Revelatio*.

⁹⁰ See also, Congar, *A History of Theology*, 91-92. Congar notes a number of other places where Thomas treats the basic principles essential to *sacra doctrina*. Congar says, “St. Thomas explicitly treated the question of theological method three times: in the prologue to his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1254), in his commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, q.II, and finally in the *Summa Theologic*, I^a, q.1 (about 1265). To these major texts others are sometimes added, in particular the *Contra Gentiles* 1. I, c.III-IX; 1. II, c.II-IV; 1. IV, c.1 (1259); *Sum Theol.*, 1^a, q.XXXII, a.1, ad 2^{um}; IIa-IIae, q.1, a.5, ad 2^{um}; *Quodl.* IV, a.18 (1270 or 1271).” (*sic*).

⁹¹ See Bruce D. Marshall, “*Quod Scit Una Uetula*: Aquinas on the Nature of Theology,” in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed., Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 7: “His [i.e., Thomas's] idea of ‘science’ does not come from the modern experimental and mathematically rigorous study of the nature, or course, but from Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*.”

⁹² See also, Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, 7-9; Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 71: “Thomas's choice of the term ‘science’ to designate *sacra doctrina* in the second article [of the *Summa theologiae*] is to classify this doctrine in the widest possible genus of some relevance.”

Summa theologiae, I, q.1, a.2. In order for Thomas to hold *sacra doctrina* as *scientia* in the Aristotelian sense he had to overcome two major difficulties⁹³: Firstly, he had to reconcile *sacra doctrina*, which proceeds from (in-evident) principles known only by faith, with Aristotelian science which proceeds from principles evidently known (i.e., through *per se nota* causes).⁹⁴ And secondly, he had to show how *sacra doctrina*, which studies the concrete singular facts of historical biblical Revelation, could be reconciled with the universality of Aristotelian science; this universality arises from Aristotelian science being a demonstration of necessarily deducible conclusions from universally certain truths (i.e., from certain principles).⁹⁵ Thomas overcame these two difficulties by positing *sacra doctrina* as a sub-alternated science (*scientia subalterna*). Although they upheld *sacra doctrina* as *scientia* in the Aristotelian sense, the notion of it being *scientia subalterna* was rejected by some who came before Thomas, such as William of Auxerre (1150-1231) and Alexander of Hales (1185-1245).⁹⁶ Thomas's argument is best presented in his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate* (c.1257-1259⁹⁷), where he asks whether there can be science of divine realities.⁹⁸ To which he answers:

⁹³ For an outline of the importance of these two difficulties, see Weisheipl, "The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1," 69; See also, Marshall, "*Quod Scit Una Uetula*," 8-10, where he also outlines Thomas's understanding of the nature of sub-alternate science.

⁹⁴ See *In De Trinitate*, q.2, a.2 obj. 5: "Every science proceeds from self-evident principles which everyone accepts on hearing, or from principles that are trustworthy because of them. But the articles of faith, which are the first principles in matters of faith, are not of this sort. As has been said, they are neither self-evident nor can they be resolved by demonstration to self-evident principles. Consequently there can be no science about the divine realities held on faith." See also, *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2 obj. 1: "It seems that sacred doctrine is not a science. For every science proceeds from self-evident principles. But sacred doctrine proceeds from articles of faith which are not self-evident, since their truth is not admitted by all: 'For all men have not faith' (2 Thess. 3:2). Therefore sacred doctrine is not a science." See also, Aquinas's *Expositio libri Posteriorum Analyticorum* I, 2-4.

⁹⁵ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2 obj. 2: "Further, no science deals with individual facts. But this sacred science treats of individual facts, such as the deeds of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and such like. Therefore sacred doctrine is not a science."

⁹⁶ See Chenu, *La théologie comme science au XIIe siècle*, 33-42; Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 364: "even before Thomas Aquinas, William of Auxerre had posited the articles of faith as the principles from which theological conclusions should be deduced."

⁹⁷ For dating of Thomas's text, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work* (vol.1). trans., Robert Royal (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 345.

⁹⁸ *In De Trinitate*, q.2, a.2.

The nature of science consists in this, that from things already known conclusions about other matters follow of necessity. Seeing that this is possible in the case of divine realities, clearly there can be a science about them. Now the knowledge of divine things can be interpreted in two ways. First, from our standpoint, and then they are knowable to us only through creatures, the knowledge of which we derive from the senses. Second, from the nature of divine realities themselves. In this way they are eminently knowable of themselves, and although we do not know them in their own way, this is how they are known by God and the blessed.

Accordingly there are two kinds of science concerning the divine. One follows our way of knowing, which uses the principles of sensible things in order to make the Godhead known. This is the way the philosophers handed down a science of the divine, calling the primary science "divine science." The other follows the mode of divine realities themselves so that they are apprehended in themselves. We cannot perfectly possess this way of knowing in the present life, but there arises here and now in us a certain sharing in, and a likeness to, the divine knowledge, to the extent that through the faith implanted in us we firmly grasp the primary Truth itself for its own sake. And as God, by the very fact that he knows himself, knows all other things as well in his way, namely, by simple intuition without any reasoning process, so may we, from the things we accept by faith in our firm grasping of the primary Truth, come to know other things in our way, namely by drawing conclusions from principles. Thus the truths we hold on faith are, as it were, our principles in this science, and the others become, as it were, conclusions. From this, it is evident that this science is nobler than the divine science taught by the philosophers, proceeding as it does from more sublime principles.⁹⁹

From this, we can see that Thomas sub-alternates *sacra doctrina* to the perfect *scientia* that God has of himself, and that the blessed have of God in heaven. This is reinforced latter in the *Summa*'s second article when Thomas confirms this distinction in his discussion of *sacra doctrina* as a science. Thomas says: "sacred doctrine is a science because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed so sacred science is established on principles revealed by God."¹⁰⁰ As such it is therefore not just *scientia* but also *sapientia*

⁹⁹ *In De Trinitate*, q.2, a.2c. This English translation is taken from: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Faith, Reason and Theology*, trans., of *Expositio super Librum Boethii De Trinitate* Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987).

¹⁰⁰ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2. See also, Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa*, 20: "if one does not want to be entirely mistaken, it is best to clarify two things about this particular kind of knowledge right away. First, sacred doctrine is not really 'science' because of its total subordination by faith to the knowledge that it receives from God (Thomas here speaks of 'subalternation'). ... Second, more than 'science,' which is merely knowledge by proximate causes, sacred doctrine is 'wisdom,' that is, knowledge by the supreme cause."

or wisdom, not only because it grasps the ultimate cause of all reality (God himself—*prima veritas*), but also because of its capacity to order and judge all things.¹⁰¹

By positing *sacra doctrina* as *scientia subalterna* to the *scientia* of God and the blessed, Thomas allayed the two major difficulties mentioned above.¹⁰² In the first instance, concerning the Aristotelian insistence that science proceeds from principles evidently known, Thomas shows that his notion of *sacra doctrina* abides by this insistence most eminently since it borrows its principles from “what is self-evident in the knowledge of God.”¹⁰³ While in the second instance, regarding the Aristotelian insistence that *scientia* deals with universals, Thomas showed that *sacra doctrina* treats the singular facts of historical biblical Revelation as presenting examples of universally applicable moral conduct.¹⁰⁴ From this it can also be concluded that Thomas implies an important distinction between *sacra doctrina* and *Revelatio*. Clearly, for Thomas, *sacra doctrina* is not identified with Revelation but is derived from it, since Revelation is an act which ontologically precedes *sacra doctrina*. It also clearly shows us the reason why Thomas held that Revelation had two stages: firstly, where God reveals his Word to

¹⁰¹ See Marshall, “*Quod Scit Una Uetula*, 15: “sacred doctrine is a participated likeness of God’s own knowledge. It not only receives from God an apprehension of the ultimate divine cause of all things—of the persons of the Trinity, without knowledge of whom we can understand neither the coming forth of creatures from God nor their return to him, neither creation nor salvation. Sacred doctrine is an *impressio* of God’s *scientia* just because it can understand and judge all things in the light of their causes in God, and so emulate in human knowledge God’s own ordering of things.”

¹⁰² For a good explanation of how Thomas answered these two difficulties, see Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 71-72.

¹⁰³ In *De Trinitate*, q.2, a.2 reply 5: “Even some of the sciences taught on the purely human level use principles that are not known to everyone, but they must be presupposed as established by higher sciences. Thus sub-alternate sciences employ principles that are presupposed and believed on the authority of higher sciences, and these principles are self-evident only to the higher sciences. It is in this way that the articles of faith, which are the principles of this science, are related to God’s knowledge, because what is self-evident in the knowledge God has of himself is presupposed in our science, and they are believed on the word of him who reveals them to us through his witnesses, in much the same way as a physician accepts the testimony of a scientist when he says that there are four elements.” See also, *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2 ad 1: “The principles of any science are either in themselves self-evident, or reducible to the conclusions of a higher science; and such, as we have said, are the principles of sacred doctrine.”

¹⁰⁴ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2 ad 2: “Individual facts are treated of in sacred doctrine, not because it is concerned with them principally, but they are introduced rather both as examples to be followed in our lives (as in moral sciences) and in order to establish the authority of those men through whom the divine revelation, on which this sacred Scripture or doctrine is based, has come down to us.”

man in this life, who accepts it through faith; and secondly, in the next life, where the same Word is perfectly revealed to man through the Beatific Vision (see Section 1.1. of this Chapter above).¹⁰⁵ This is because Revelation made to man in this life is an imperfect participation of the knowledge God has of himself, and of what the blessed have of God in heaven (*scientia beatorum*).¹⁰⁶

In his 1977 article, “‘*Sacra Doctrina*’ Revisited: The Context of Medieval Education,” Thomas C. O’Brien has well established the assertion that for Thomas *sacra doctrina* as a human teaching is consequent upon *Revelatio*.¹⁰⁷ *Sacra doctrina* is therefore not identified with *Revelatio* but is really distinct from it, which is why Thomas never calls *sacra doctrina*, “*Revelatio*.” The truths revealed by God to the Prophets are the principles from which *sacra doctrina* is developed, and this development eventuates into the articles of faith which are to be believed by the Church. The dogmas of the Church are therefore not themselves Revelation but are the result of, or the formulation of, the Revelation received. This has important ramifications for the theology of the development of dogma. Such development can be viewed as the progressive human understanding of the Revelation prophetically received, and not the assertion of any new revelatory activity.¹⁰⁸ And thus, Thomas’s notion of *sacra doctrina*, as understood by Davies, O’Brien and Merkt, is summarised in the words of the latter: “The source and norm of ‘*Scientia Sacrae Doctrinae*’ is God’s Revelation of Himself accepted in Faith, expressed in Sacred Scripture, summarized in the articles of faith (creed), commented on by the Fathers, and safeguarded, interpreted and expounded by the Church under the direction of the Pope.”¹⁰⁹

In his second reply for *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2, which I referred to above when highlighting how Thomas reconciled the *scientia* of *sacra doctrina* with Aristotelian science, Thomas also implicitly makes the distinction between Scripture

¹⁰⁵ See also, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 4, c.1.

¹⁰⁶ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.171, a.4 ad 2: “Prophecy is by way of being something imperfect in the genus of Divine revelation.”

¹⁰⁷ See Thomas C. O’Brien, “‘*Sacra Doctrina*’ Revisited: The Context of Medieval Education,” *The Thomist* 41 (1977): 475-509.

¹⁰⁸ See Christopher Kaczor, “Thomas Aquinas on the Development of Doctrine,” *Theological Studies* 62 (2001): 283-302. In this article Kaczor argues for “Thomas’s teaching on development as logical deduction, organic assimilation, and historically situated.”

¹⁰⁹ Merkt, ‘*Sacra Doctrina*’ and *Christian Eschatology*, 40.

and Revelation. In the second objection of this article, while citing the deeds of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the like, Thomas says that it seems *sacra doctrina* cannot be a science since it deals with individual facts. In his reply to this objection Thomas insists that divine Revelation came “through” those men, and that “sacred Scripture or doctrine (*sacra doctrina*) is based” on this Revelation, and has come down to us.¹¹⁰ For Thomas therefore, divine Revelation (*Revelatio*) is not only distinct from *sacra doctrina* and *theologia*, but it is also distinct from *sacra scriptura* (see also Section 3.2.3. of this Chapter below). Scripture contains and communicates the divine truth given in and through the actual historical events of Prophetic Revelation, but it is not identified with them. When the divine illumination of the Prophet’s intellect takes place divine Revelation is given, but then when the Prophet attempts to articulate and subsequently enunciate this Revelation, it is known as *sacra doctrina*.

I will now turn my attention to consider Thomas’s notion of how divine Revelations’ *sacra doctrina* is transmitted to successive generations.

3.2. Thomas’s Understanding of how Divine Revelation’s *Sacra Doctrina* is Transmitted to Successive Generations

Now that we have presented Thomas’s distinction between *Revelatio*, *Theologia* and *Sacra Doctrina*, we can investigate his account of divine Revelation’s transmission. Since, as shown above (Section 3.1. of this Chapter), Thomas held that the act of divine Revelation (*Revelatio*) ontologically precedes *Sacra Doctrina*, strictly-speaking we must say that for Thomas it is not so much “Revelation” which is transmitted from the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles to successive generations, but rather *Sacra Doctrina*—which is the very content of what God has revealed—in other words, for Thomas, Revelation *per se* is not transmitted down through the ages but revealed knowledge is; especially since Thomas understands the act of Revelation essentially as consisting in a cognitive psychological event (i.e., formally a ‘speech-act’ from God to the mind of the Prophet—see Section 1.2. of this Chapter above). This is important to grasp as it directly relates to Thomas’s understanding of Tradition and the role Scripture plays in this transmission.

¹¹⁰ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2 ad 2: “divine revelation, on which this sacred Scripture or doctrine is based, has come down to us.”

In order to identify how Thomas understands the transmission of *Sacra Doctrina* down through the ages, I will first outline his understanding of how the Prophets and Christ's Apostles communicated what they themselves had received (Section 3.2.1.). After this, I will consider Thomas's understanding of the nature of Tradition and its role in the transmission of divine Revelation's *Sacra Doctrina* (Section 3.2.2.). I will conclude this chapter by an analysis of the role Scripture plays in Thomas's understanding of this transmission (Section 3.2.3.).

3.2.1. Thomas's Understanding of Revelation's Communication by the Prophets and Christ's Apostles

Previously in this thesis (see Section 1.1. of this Chapter above) we saw how Thomas held that divine Revelation has two stages: the first, in this life through the Prophets and Apostles receiving an impression of God's own knowledge divinely bestowed upon them through the grace of a divine illumination of their intellect—the *lumen Propheticum*—conforming their judgment to God's own knowledge; and secondly, in the next life, as given to the blessed in heaven through the Beatific Vision of the divine essence itself. We also saw that for Thomas divine Revelation in this first stage culminated in the person of Jesus Christ, not in the sense that Christ was 'told' more things about God than were the Prophets and Apostles, but in the sense that because Christ is the Word uttered by the Father, in which is spoken all that God is, nothing more can be revealed to man than what is said, uttered or revealed in Christ to his humanity (see Sections 1.1. and 1.2. of this Chapter above). For Thomas, the act of divine Revelation is formally a 'speech-act' on God's behalf, since what is communicated to the Prophet's judgment (and hypostatically to Christ's humanity) is the divine Word. Spoken by the Father the Word is a divine intellectual communication to its recipient. This, on God's behalf, is therefore formally a 'speech-act.' To the Prophets of Old what was spoken to them in the act of Revelation was the Word of God, though they did not and could not receive *all* that the Word is, since they cannot receive the divine essence in its entirety. But to Christ, to his humanity is spoken all that the Word is, since in Christ this divine Word was made flesh (see Jn 1:14).

Now, since Thomas's reason for why divine Revelation is given to humanity is for man's salvation,¹¹¹ since without man having a knowledge of the supernatural end to which he is ultimately called he cannot pursue it, and since the knowledge of this supernatural end of the Beatific Vision infinitely surpasses man's natural intellectual capabilities, for man to know of it he must have it divinely revealed to him. When this Revelation was given to the Prophets it took on the character of being akin to human teaching (*doctrina*), whereby the pupil must first believe the teacher (akin to the first stage of Revelation—in this life), before arriving at the perfect knowledge had by the teacher (akin to the second stage of Revelation—in the next life with the Beatific Vision).¹¹² Now, since this Revelation, first given to the Prophets then ultimately through Christ (which he gave to his Apostles), is for the sake of our salvation, it must be communicated from these first recipients to others, for which reason Christ commissioned his Apostles with the task of teaching all nations (see Mt 28:20). In order for the Prophets and Apostles to communicate this Revelation to others Thomas notes that two things were essentially required. Firstly, their proclamation of the content of this Revelation, since what they proclaimed had to be the knowledge of the supernatural realities which exceed what can be naturally known by any man (realities which are conducive to the supernatural end of the Beatific Vision); and secondly, as Thomas insists, a gratuitous grace, to not only interiorly move those who encounter the Word once proclaimed,¹¹³ in order to accept it, but also so that the Prophets and Apostles

¹¹¹ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.1: "It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God besides philosophical science built up by human reason."

¹¹² See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.171, a.6: "prophecy is a kind of knowledge impressed under the form of teaching on the prophet's intellect, by Divine revelation. Now the truth of knowledge is the same in disciple and teacher since the knowledge of the disciple is a likeness of the knowledge of the teacher ... Jerome speaks in this sense when he says [Comment. in Daniel ii, 10] that 'prophecy is the seal of the Divine foreknowledge.' Consequently the same truth must needs be in prophetic knowledge and utterances, as in the Divine knowledge." See also, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.2, a.3 c: "in order that a man arrive at the perfect vision of heavenly happiness, he must first of all believe God, as a disciple believes the master who is teaching him." See also, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.173, a.2: "Human teaching may be likened to prophetic revelation in the second of these respects [i.e., conferral of species], but not in the first [i.e., conferral of light]. For a man represents certain things to his disciple by signs of speech, but he cannot enlighten him inwardly as God does."

¹¹³ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.6, a.1: "Two things are requisite for faith. First, that the things which are of faith should be proposed to man: this is necessary in order that man believe anything explicitly. The second thing requisite for faith is the assent of the believer to the things

themselves would be interiorly moved in a manner enabling them to exteriorly teach and persuade people; such a gratuitous grace was needed so that their message might be fittingly presented to their hearers in a way that would be accepted.¹¹⁴

For this reason Thomas held that divine Revelation was initially conveyed by God to the Prophets and Apostles through the mediation of angels, from the ontologically highest rank down through the lowest and eventually to the Prophets and Apostles themselves as a momentary transient experience (see Section 1.2. of this Chapter above), the result of which was a firm and abiding acceptance of this Revelation by these Prophets and Apostles in faith.¹¹⁵ Therefore, just as the Revelation ultimately given by God comes down through the hierarchy of angels to the Prophets and Apostles who are the foundations of God's household (or the Church),¹¹⁶ and who are the greatest of men, since, as Saint Paul says, divine Revelation "was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets

which are proposed to him. Accordingly, as regards the first of these, faith must needs be from God. Because those things which are of faith surpass human reason, hence they do not come to man's knowledge, unless God reveal them. To some, indeed, they are revealed by God immediately, as those things which were revealed to the apostles and prophets, while to some they are proposed by God in sending preachers of the faith, according to Rm. 10:15: 'How shall they preach, unless they be sent?'

"As regards the second, viz. man's assent to the things which are of faith, we may observe a twofold cause, one of external inducement, such as seeing a miracle, or being persuaded by someone to embrace the faith: neither of which is a sufficient cause, since of those who see the same miracle, or who hear the same sermon, some believe, and some do not. Hence we must assert another internal cause, which moves man inwardly to assent to matters of faith.

"The Pelagians held that this cause was nothing else than man's free-will: and consequently they said that the beginning of faith is from ourselves, inasmuch as, to wit, it is in our power to be ready to assent to things which are of faith, but that the consummation of faith is from God, Who proposes to us the things we have to believe. But this is false, for, since man, by assenting to matters of faith, is raised above his nature, this must needs accrue to him from some supernatural principle moving him inwardly; and this is God. Therefore faith, as regards the assent which is the chief act of faith, is from God moving man inwardly by grace."

¹¹⁴ See *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q.111, a.4: "gratuitous grace is ordained to this, viz. that a man may help another to be led to God. Now no man can help in this by moving interiorly (for this belongs to God alone), but only exteriorly by teaching or persuading. Hence gratuitous grace embraces whatever a man needs in order to instruct another in Divine things which are above reason."

¹¹⁵ See *De veritate*, q.12, a.8; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.154, n.2; *Summa theologiae*, I, q.111, a.1; II-II, q.172, a.2; See also, Sections 1.1. and 1.4. of Chapter One above.

¹¹⁶ See Eph 2:19-20 "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone."

by the Spirit,”¹¹⁷ so it continues to be transmitted hierarchically through the ministry of the Church, from the Prophets and Apostles right down to the simplest believer.¹¹⁸

So, as Aidan Nichols asks, “how are the later theologians, or any later members of the Church for that matter, to encounter the message of the apostles?”¹¹⁹ How is the Revelation given to the Prophets and Apostles to be communicated down through the ages to successive generations? I will now turn my attention to see how the Thomistic synthesis addresses this important question.

3.2.2. Thomas’s Understanding of how Divine Revelation is transmitted to Successive Generations: Modern Theologian’s Views of how Thomas conceives this Transmission

In the first major section of this chapter I offered a summary of how Thomas and a number of principal modern commentators on Thomas’s theology (see Section 1. of this Chapter above), identified that, as with the common practice among medieval theologians, Thomas did not develop an explicit treatise on divine Revelation, *per se*. As a consequence, he also did not explicitly develop a theology of how this Revelation is transmitted to successive generations. Despite this, as with his understanding of Revelation, his notion of the manner by which Revelation (or *Sacra Doctrina*) is transmitted to successive generations can be found at least implicitly in his corpus. For this reason very little has been written concerning Thomas’s understanding of Revelation’s transmission.¹²⁰ Contrary to certain tendencies of theology in the modern

¹¹⁷ Eph 3:5.

¹¹⁸ In his consideration of ‘Whether Christ’s Resurrection Ought to Have Been Manifested to All?’ (*Summa theologiae*, III, q.55, a.1), Thomas says that God ordained it so that things known by a “special favour of grace ... [are] revealed immediately by God to higher persons, through whom they impart to others, as is evident in the ordering of heavenly spirits.” Divine Revelation therefore, Thomas goes on to say, since it pertains to future glory, “was not manifest to everyone, but to some [namely the Prophets and Apostles], by whose testimony it could be brought to the knowledge of others.” See also, Persson, *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*, 81: “Within this hierarchical order, the apostles stand at the highest point attainable by man. It follows from this that they also have an understanding of revealed truth which cannot be surpassed.”

¹¹⁹ Nichols, *Discovering Aquinas*, 29.

¹²⁰ See for example: Gottfried Geenen, “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas,” *The Thomist* 15 (1952): 110-135; Per Erik Persson, “The Communication of Revelation,” in *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*, trans., Ross Mackenzie (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970): 41-70.

era, medieval theologians like Thomas were more committed to expounding what had been revealed rather than to questions concerning whether or not God had actually made a Revelation and whether or not it could be known by us. As a medieval theologian and university professor Thomas was expected to be a *Magister in Sacra Pagina*, i.e., to read and comment on Scripture, rather than be a fundamental theologian in the modern sense of the term.¹²¹

Consequently, in order to find an adequate response to Nichols' above-mentioned question concerning Thomas's understanding of how the Revelation intellectually received by the Prophets and Apostles is conveyed to successive generations, I will take a fourfold approach. I will begin by looking at Garrigou-Lagrange's (1877-1964) neo-Thomistic doctrine (1945) of 'Mediate Revelation.' In this, I will demonstrate how he presents the way in which Thomas tackles the inevitable difficulties concerning his theory of *sacra doctrina* being mediated to successive generations. By undertaking this study of Garrigou-Lagrange's insights on this issue, I not only hope to show how this prominent Thomistic theologian of the twentieth-century viewed Thomas's response to this important question, but, as a secondary reason, by investigating Garrigou-Lagrange's understanding here I also hope to gain a working knowledge of how the notion of Tradition would have been commonly understood and taught at the time of Ratzinger's early seminary formation.¹²² I will then consider Gottfried Geenen's 1952 article: "The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas," in which I will be able to more precisely identify Thomas's notion of Tradition. I will investigate Per-Erik Persson's (1923-) study of Thomas's understanding concerning "The Communication of Revelation," in his 1970 work: *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*. There I will show how Thomas tackles the important question of how the deposit of Revelation, *sacra doctrina*, is preserved in its communication to successive generations. I will then conclude by looking at a most recent study by Matthew Levering in which he

¹²¹ See Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, 234-263; Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 110ff; Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, 54-74.

¹²² We know from Ratzinger's autobiography that his seminary professor was Arnold Wilmsen (see Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 44). Fergus Kerr also tells us that Wilmsen received his education from Rome, "had gone to imbibe the *philosophia thomistica* imparted in the Roman universities. He seems to have been an exponent of the neoscholastic Thomism espoused by the enemies of *la Nouvelle Théologie*," the principal of which was Garrigou-Lagrange. (See Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 184.

presents his analysis of how Thomas understood Revelation's transmission as rooted in Thomas's notion of the divine Processions (i.e., in the divine actions *ad intra*).

3.2.2.1. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange's (1945) Neo-Thomistic Doctrine of *Revelationis Mediatae* and Thomas's Understanding of Tradition

Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange's, *De Revelatione Per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita*,¹²³ utilising *Summa theologiae*, III, q.55, a.1, provides us with a distinction in Thomas's understanding of Revelation, between what Garrigou-Lagrange calls '*Revelationis Immediatae*' and '*Revelationis Mediatae*.'¹²⁴ In Garrigou-Lagrange's *De Revelatione* treatise Tradition is not explicitly mentioned. Therefore it can be argued that what he terms '*Revelationis Mediatae*' expresses his notion of how Thomas understands the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations.

Garrigou-Lagrange holds that 'Immediate Revelation' is when God immediately manifests a truth to a man without the mediation of a human spokesman, as he did with the Prophets and Apostles; while 'Mediate Revelation' is had when a human spokesman is employed by God to communicate to others the truths he has revealed. This latter, for Garrigou-Lagrange, is his reception of how Thomas understands divine Revelation communication to successive generations—from the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles to us through the medium of human spokesmen (i.e., the preaching of the Church). By employing a number of key articles from Thomas's *Summa theologiae* Garrigou-Lagrange points out the possibility and befittingness of God conveying his Revelation to successive generations through this *Revelationis Mediatae*. He first notes that in the Thomistic synthesis there is the view that even in the natural order, divine providence (generally-speaking) governs inferiors through superiors:

Two things belong to providence—namely, the type of the order of things foreordained towards an end; and the execution of this order, which is called

¹²³ See Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione Per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita* (Romae: Liberia Editrice Religiosa, 1950). This work had a total of five publications, the first in 1918, then 1921, 1935, 1945 and 1950.

¹²⁴ See Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione Per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita*, Vol.I (1945 edition), 301-314.

government. As regards the first of these, God has immediate providence over everything, because He has in His intellect the types of everything, even the smallest; and whatsoever causes He assigns to certain effects, He gives them the power to produce those effects. ... As to the second, there are certain intermediaries of God's providence; *for He governs things inferior by superior*, not on account of any defect in His power, but by reason of the abundance of His goodness; so that the dignity of causality is imparted even to creatures.¹²⁵

And since, as Garrigou-Lagrange notes, divine Revelation is fittingly made according to the general dispositions of divine providence whereby "the order of things consists in this, that things are led to God by other things,"¹²⁶ and therefore that "gratuitous grace [such as Prophetic Revelation] is ordered to this, viz., that a man may help another to be led to God," not by moving another man interiorly but exteriorly through teaching and persuading,¹²⁷ it is possible and befitting that divine Revelation be immediately given to a few (i.e., through *Revelationis Immediatæ*), and via the mediacy of these few ministers (i.e., the Prophets and Apostles) to all (i.e., through *Revelationis Mediatæ*). For these reasons Garrigou-Lagrange quotes Thomas in saying:

Now Divine revelation reaches those of lower degree through those who are over them, in a certain order; to men, for instance, through the angels, and to the lower angels through the higher, as Dionysius explains (Coel. Hier. iv, vii). In like manner therefore the unfolding of faith must needs reach men of lower degree through those of higher degree. Consequently, just as the higher angels, who enlighten those who are below them, have a fuller knowledge of Divine things than the lower angels, as Dionysius states (Coel. Hier. xii), so too, men of higher degree, whose business it is to teach others, are under obligation to have fuller knowledge of matters of faith, and to believe them more explicitly.¹²⁸

Despite this, though, the Revelation transmitted through the Prophets and Apostles (and for that matter through the angels as well) is still God's word and not their own, since (the angels,) the Prophets, Apostles, and teachers of the faith are merely ministers and instruments of the Revelation received. To this doctrine of divine Revelation's angelic mediation Thomas posits the following objection, with its corresponding reply:

¹²⁵ *Summa theologiæ*, I, q.22, a.3. [Emphasis added].

¹²⁶ *Summa theologiæ*, I-II, q.111, a.1.

¹²⁷ *Summa theologiæ*, I-II, q.111, a.4.

¹²⁸ *Summa theologiæ*, II-II, q.2, a.6.

Objection: Further, Cassiodorus [Prol. in Psalt. i] says that prophecy is a “Divine revelation”: whereas if it were conveyed by the angels, it would be called an angelic revelation. Therefore prophecy is not bestowed by means of the angels.

Reply: The work of the instrument is ascribed to the principal agent by whose power the instrument acts. And since a minister is like an instrument, prophetic revelation, which is conveyed by the ministry of the angels, is said to be Divine.¹²⁹

To this theory of *Revelationis Mediatae* Garrigou-Lagrange identifies nine objections.¹³⁰ These objections raise obvious difficulties for this theory, though they are not insurmountable. Summarising Garrigou-Lagrange’s responses to some of the more important objections, we see that although divine Revelation is ultimately for all men, God does not need to provide an immediate Revelation to all men as he does to the Prophets. Through Immediate Revelation (i.e., Prophetic Revelation) God moves the Prophets interiorly but others can be moved exteriorly by the Prophets and those who have accepted the Revelation given to the Prophets. Despite this, for the interior acceptance of Revelation on the part of the believer the gratuitous grace of theological faith is required.¹³¹ Also, regarding the conveyor’s transmission of Revelation, Garrigou-Lagrange raises the common objection that such a conveyor could at least unwittingly change or misrepresent the Revelation he or she has received.¹³² To which Garrigou-Lagrange replies: “Motio divina specialiter impedit hanc mutationem, eius virtute *infallibiliter* transmittuntur verba Dei, sicut scriptor movet calamus, ita ut scriptura sit vera expression suae cogitationis. Unde psalista dicit: ‘Lingua mea calamus scribae velociter scribentis’ Ps 44.”¹³³ Then, to the objection that such a divine intervention, moving the Prophet and any subsequent conveyor of the received

¹²⁹ *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.172, a.2 ad 3.

¹³⁰ See Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione Per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita*, Vol.I (1945 edition), 312-314.

¹³¹ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.172, a.2 ad 1.

¹³² Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione Per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita*, 313: 4.a. *obj.*: “Sed minister potest conscienter vel inconscienter mutare verba Dei”; “It is possible that the minister wither wittingly or unwittingly change the words of God.” (My translation).

¹³³ Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione Per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita*, 313: 4.a. *Rep.*: “The divine motion specially impedes such change; for by virtue of the divine motion the words of God are infallibly transmitted, somewhat as the writer moves his pen so that the writing be a true expression of the writer’s thought. Thus the psalmist says: ‘My tongue is the pen of a writer rapidly writing.’ Ps. 44.” (My translation).

Revelation, removes freedom in the said recipients, Garrigou-Lagrange responds by quoting Thomas:

Liberum arbitrium est causa sui motus. ... non tamen prima causa sui. Deus igitur est prima causa movens et naturales causas et voluntarias, et sicut naturalibus causis movendo eas non aufert quin actus earum sint naturales; ita movendo causas voluntarias, non aufert quin actiones earum sint voluntariae, sed potius hoc in eis facit, operatur enim in unoquoque secundum eius proprietatem.¹³⁴

And thus, Garrigou-Lagrange concludes that for Thomas Mediate Revelation is a most fitting mode whereby the (Immediate) divine Revelation given to the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles is conveyed to successive generations.

I will now turn my attention to an important contribution to this discussion made by Gottfried Geenen, shortly after that of Garrigou-Lagrange. In Geenen's contribution we find a more focused attempt to identify the notion and place that Tradition holds in Thomas's thought.

3.2.2.2. Gottfried Geenen's (1952) "The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas"

In his 1952 article, "The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas,"¹³⁵ Gottfried Geenen attempts to investigate the role that Tradition plays in Thomas's theology. In this regard, Geenen divides his article in two: He begins by considering Thomas's attitude towards the problem of Tradition as a source of theology, after which he looks at Thomas's notion of Tradition and what use Thomas made of it.¹³⁶

Upon concluding the first part of his article, based upon a number of texts from Thomas's corpus, Geenen provides us with eleven summary points outlining Thomas's teaching concerning the role of Tradition in his theology:

¹³⁴ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.83, a.1 ad 3. "Free-will is the cause of its own movement ... not of necessity belong to liberty that what is free should be the first cause of itself, as neither for one thing to be cause of another need it be the first cause. God, therefore, is the first cause, Who moves causes both natural and voluntary. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature."

¹³⁵ Gottfried Geenen, "The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas," *The Thomist* 15 (1952): 110-135.

¹³⁶ See Geenen, "The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas," 112.

1. Together with sacred Scripture there does exist an authoritative oral Tradition;
2. This Tradition is a source of Revelation as it ultimately comes from Christ;
3. This Tradition dates back to and is linked to the Apostles (*Traditio Apostolorum*);
4. This Tradition has for its Author the Holy Spirit;
5. This Tradition is maintained and taught by the Church;
6. This Tradition is as much a source of dogmas as of Christian practices founded upon Catholic dogma;
7. This Tradition teaches certain truths of the Catholic Faith which are at least not explicitly taught in Scripture (e.g., the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary);
8. “This Tradition has its place in the exposition of the problems of ‘sacred doctrine’ that is, in Theology”;
9. The formula for designating this source of Revelation in and taught by the Church is sometimes in the plural (traditions) sometimes in the singular (tradition);
10. “This formula is presented with variations (Tradition of the Church, Tradition of the Catholic faith, observance of the Church)”;
11. “The Church possesses this Tradition ‘through the succession of the faithful’.”¹³⁷

Citing a number of passages from Thomas¹³⁸ Geenen notes that for Thomas the authority of Scripture and that of the Patristic interpreters are not of equal weight. The

¹³⁷ Geenen, “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas,” 125-126.

¹³⁸ For example: *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.8 ad 2: “Nevertheless, sacred doctrine (*sacra doctrina*) makes use of these authorities as extrinsic and probable arguments; but properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable. For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors.” And, *Exp. De Div. Nom.*, Cap.2, Lect.1: “Since, while we look to the manifestation of God from sacred scripture, it is necessary for us to guard those things which are stated in sacred scripture as a certain optimum

authority of the Fathers and doctors in their interpretation of Scripture provide only probable arguments for theological science, but theology properly uses the authority of Scripture. Geenen also argues that in his understanding of the sources of theology Thomas does not explicitly mention Tradition. Geenen suggests that this is not because Thomas identifies Tradition with what we today call the Teaching Authority of the Church (i.e., the Magisterium). As with today's consensus, for Thomas the Magisterium is not a source of Revelation, though it is its guardian and interpreter. And yet, thus, for Thomas the Magisterium is intimately and indissolubly linked to divine Revelation. Geenen also notes that Thomas never identified Tradition with the teachings of the Church Fathers; this is evidenced in his prerogative to critic the Fathers' doctrines. Thomas does not make this identity because he does not identify the Fathers' teachings with divine Revelation itself. Although they are 'authorities' in teaching (or interpreting) Revelation (and can, therefore, be used authoritatively in theological disputation), they do not have the same authority as does divine Revelation (or its content, *sacra doctrina*). As Geenen states: "For St. Thomas, revealed truth is found in the Scriptures and the 'Tradition of the Apostles,' and it is taught to us by the Universal Church, i.e., the Pope, as head of the Universal Church, and by the Ecumenical Councils under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff."¹³⁹ For this reason Thomas says: "the very doctrine of catholic doctors derives its authority from the Church."¹⁴⁰ But what is Geenen understanding of Thomas's notion of Tradition?

After attempting to identify the role Tradition plays in Thomas's theology Geenen proceeds to identify Thomas's notion of Tradition itself. According to his own confession, though, Geenen's assessment is only a sketch of the principal aspects of Thomas's thought. In typical neo-Thomistic fashion, Geenen argues that for Thomas Tradition is a source of Revelation paralleled with Scripture. He does say though that it is an "*indirect*" source of Revelation; and this, "because, of itself *it is not a written text*,

rule of truth, so that neither should we multiply them by adding, nor diminish them by subtracting, nor pervert them by expounding them evilly, since while we keep holy things we are kept by them and by them we are confirmed in order to keep those who keep holy things. For it is necessary not only to conserve those things which are handed down in sacred scripture, but also those things which were said by the holy doctors, who preserved sacred scripture unspotted."

¹³⁹ Geenen, "The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas," 120-121.

¹⁴⁰ *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.10, a.12.

that is, an ‘authority’ (*auctoritas*).¹⁴¹ Geenen claims that for Thomas, Tradition “enters in the form and the manner of a text (*auctoritas*) namely, by the statements (*dicta*), i.e., the written documents (*scripta*) (*auctoritas*) of the Teaching Authority of the Church (Pope, Councils) and likewise by the statements of the doctors and the saints (*dicta doctorum et sanctorum*) who have repeated and taught us the doctrine of this *Magisterium*.”¹⁴²

We can tell from Geenen’s assessment that for Thomas there are three essentially important authorities when it comes to considering the sources of our knowledge of Revelation: Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium. Although they are all essential, they do not have the same level of authority, nor role in conveying divine Revelation (or *sacra doctrina* for Thomas). Geenen sees that for Thomas “the ‘text’ of Scripture is already an expression of Tradition, since the meaning of the Scripture—the truth expressed—is the very one which Tradition gives to it through the expression of the Teaching Authority of the Church.”¹⁴³

To conclude, Geenen argues that although “Tradition contains Revelation” it is not in itself an authority, “such as was demanded by the medieval technique,” but it does “assume the quality of a ‘written text’ when we consider it in the inspired text [i.e., Scripture] or in the texts of the Popes and the Councils.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, Tradition’s authority is realised when textualised in the inspired word of Scripture and the authoritative declarations of the Church’s Teaching Authority (i.e., the Magisterium).

I will now turn my attention to one of the late twentieth-century’s major assessments of Thomas’s thought in this field, Per-Erik Persson’s study of Thomas’s understanding concerning, “The Communication of Revelation,” in his 1970 work: *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*. This study is superior to Geenen’s in that it more accurately distinguishes Thomas’s notions of *sacra doctrina* from divine Revelation and this latter from both Scripture and Tradition. Persson also well shows the relation of the Church’s teaching authority and her Creeds to the transmission of divine Revelation, in the Thomistic synthesis.

¹⁴¹ Geenen, “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas,” 130-131.

¹⁴² Geenen, “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas,” 131.

¹⁴³ Geenen, “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas,” 132.

¹⁴⁴ Geenen, “The Place of Tradition in the Theology of St Thomas,” 132.

3.2.2.3. 'The Communication of Revelation' in Per-Erik Persson's 1970

Study: *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*

After presenting Thomas's concept of Revelation in his study, *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*, Per-Erik Persson looks at Thomas's understanding of 'The Communication of Revelation.'¹⁴⁵ Identifying Thomas's understanding of Revelation as fundamentally consisting in "a knowledge essential for salvation but inaccessible to man, and therefore communicated through a divine act. ... a knowledge which conveys within the soul of the recipient of revelation an impression of God's own knowledge of himself,"¹⁴⁶ Persson notes that for Thomas, because this Revelation is a *gratia gratis data* it is intended to be communicated from the original recipient(s) to others. And therefore an essential aspect of the Thomistic synthesis concerning the theology of divine Revelation consists in its communication to others down through the centuries.

Because Thomas sees divine Revelation essentially as the disclosure of supernatural realities to man, knowledge of which is required by him in order that he attain his salvation (the possession of the supernatural ultimate end of the Beatific Vision), for Thomas, divine Revelation is a teaching or an instruction in the truth of these supernatural realities (i.e., *sacra doctrina*). This *sacra doctrina* was initially given to the Prophets and Apostles—climaxing with Christ—and is to be passed on to successive generations. As we had previously observed (see Section 1.2 of this Chapter above), Persson also notes that divine Revelation is transmitted in a hierarchical order along a scale of declining perfection,¹⁴⁷ from God as *prima veritas* to the angels, firstly to those of highest rank and through them down to the lowest—in accordance with their ontological perfection.¹⁴⁸ From the angels, Revelation is then mediated to men, to the

¹⁴⁵ Per Erik Persson, "The Communication of Revelation," in *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*, trans., Ross Mackenzie (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970): 41-70.

¹⁴⁶ Persson, "The Communication of Revelation," 41.

¹⁴⁷ See also, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.154.

¹⁴⁸ See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.79: "superior intellectual substances receive the influence of divine wisdom into themselves more perfectly, because each being receives something according to the being's own mode." See also, *De veritate*, q.8, a.9; q.9, a.2. In answer to the first difficulty of this article Thomas says: "God's illuminations descend from Him to the lowest angels by means of the angels standing at the top and middle of the hierarchy."

Prophets (and Apostles)—in the form of a momentary passing experience (*passio transiens*)—and then with Christ, from whom all men would receive the divine teaching of Revelation, proposed for their belief.

Since Revelation for Thomas is essentially a cognitive act, and since it is a knowledge required for man's salvation, it also consists in a secondary expression which is the communication of this revealed knowledge. As Thomas says: "it follows that prophecy consists secondarily in speech, in so far as the prophets declare for the instruction of others, the things they know through being taught of God"¹⁴⁹ For Thomas therefore, Persson notes, "What is communicated in this process is not the objects about which the teacher speaks [i.e., either God the Revealer or the Prophets and Apostles when conveying the Revelation they have received]. Rather, he imparts his knowledge by addressing to the pupil words and concepts which signify the objects."¹⁵⁰ The knowledge, Persson says, received by Revelation's recipients is received through a *locutio interior* and passed on to others through a *locutio exterior*,¹⁵¹ by which Thomas means an oral rather than a written teaching. This latter is because, as Thomas explains, the teaching of divine Revelation is more fittingly communicated orally than it is through writing. For as we find, when Thomas deals with whether Christ actually wrote anything—remembering that for Thomas Christ's teaching represents the highest form of divine Revelation in this life—he says that oral teaching is more perfect than written.¹⁵² Indeed, when explaining why the committing of Christ's doctrine to writing would have been less perfect, Thomas notes that Christ did not commit his doctrine to writing so that it could reach all people in an orderly way: "Himself teaching His disciples immediately, and they subsequently teaching others, by preaching and writing: whereas if He Himself had written, His doctrine would have reached all

¹⁴⁹ *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.171, a.1.

¹⁵⁰ Persson, "The Communication of Revelation," 42-43.

¹⁵¹ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.3, a.1: "For the outward utterance is intended to signify the inward thought."

¹⁵² See *Summa theologiae*, III, q.42, a.4, where Thomas notes that it was not fitting for Christ to have committed his doctrine to writing for three reasons: firstly, because of the dignity of Christ as a teacher, and since the ultimate aim of all teachers is to have their doctrine imprinted on their hearers' hearts, for oral communication is more superior than writing; secondly, because of the excellence of Christ's doctrine itself, which by nature cannot be fully expressed in writing; and thirdly, so that His doctrine might reach all in a more orderly way. See also, *Summa theologiae*, III, q.25, a.3 ad 4; *In 2 ad Thess.* 2, 3 (n.60).

immediately”¹⁵³; and reaching them immediately through the written text it would have been without further explanation. From this we can see that for Thomas Revelation which was once given by God through the mediation of the angels to the Prophets and Apostles after the manner of teaching (*sacra doctrina*), is handed on to those who came after them in the Church in continuity with what came before. Therefore, for Thomas, Christ is the first and principal teacher of the deposit of divine Revelation, and he himself taught the Apostles, and through them Christ's teaching was passed on in both oral and written form.

Thomas therefore sees that the divine teaching (*sacra doctrina*) handed down by Christ to the Apostles, and through them to the Church, is the same because it is a continuation of the teaching of God imparted through his Revelation. This oral teaching, which the Apostles were commissioned by Christ to hand on,¹⁵⁴ is first imparted to their successors, who Thomas holds are the Church's bishops, for he says: “to teach, i.e., to expound the Gospel, is the proper office of a bishop, whose action is ‘to perfect,’ as Dionysius teaches (Eccl. Hier. v); and ‘to perfect’ is the same as ‘to teach.’”¹⁵⁵ Others too share in this apostolic mission insofar as they pass on what was imparted to the Apostles and their successors, the bishops.¹⁵⁶ With this command of Christ's to his Apostles to “teach all that I have commanded” (Mt 28:20), the Apostles also primarily conveyed divine Revelation orally. After their departure from this life all that we have of the teaching they communicated is what they left behind, either through oral tradition handed down through their legitimate successors or any writings they may have left behind¹⁵⁷—and these writings Thomas recognises are the canonical Scriptures.¹⁵⁸

Through the Scriptures, a knowledge of the supernatural truth necessary for salvation

¹⁵³ *Summa theologiae*, III, q.42, a.4.

¹⁵⁴ See Mt 28:20.

¹⁵⁵ *Summa theologiae*, III, q.67, a.1 ad 1.

¹⁵⁶ See *In 1 Cor.* 12:3, n.755: “Although the office of teaching belongs primarily to the apostles, to whom it was said in Matt (28:10): ‘Going, teach all nations,’ yet others are allowed to communicate in this office, some of whom receive revelations of God directly and are called prophets; but others instruct the people in matters revealed to others and are called teachers.”

¹⁵⁷ See *Summa theologiae*, III, q.42, a.4.

¹⁵⁸ So that it is not thought from the quotation from Thomas given at the start of this section that Thomas did not hold that the Apostles wrote anything concerning Christ's Revelation, see *Summa theologiae*, III, q.43, a.4 ad 3, where Thomas says: “Those who were unwilling to believe what the apostles wrote of Christ would have refused to believe the writings of Christ, whom they deemed to work miracles by the magic art.”

has been committed by the Apostles and their successors and transmitted by the Church to each successive generation. Consequently, according to the Thomistic synthesis, the written Scriptures serve the oral word, and yet the Scriptures are not a parallel ‘source’ of Revelation with Tradition, since Thomas includes Scripture within his notion of Tradition, as we previously noted with Geenen’s exposition. Although he does not explicitly speak of Tradition in the post-Tridentine Catholic theological sense, what he understands by divine Tradition is the continual line of teaching (*doctrina*) coming ultimately from God as mediated by the angels to the Prophets and Apostles, to the Church and to all men.

Persson therefore argues that, although the word *traditio* rarely occurs in Thomas’s theological corpus, his notion of Tradition consists in the mediation of the teaching of divine Revelation (i.e., *sacra doctrina*) imparted principally by Christ to his Apostles and handed on via the Apostles’ successors (i.e., the bishops) to the rest of humanity. This teaching was commissioned by Christ to the Apostles in oral form and from the Apostles to their successors both in writing and orally. This teaching of the Apostles, as it is found in written form, is now found in the canonical Scriptures. Consequent upon the fact that the Apostles bequeathed their teaching in both written and oral form, for Thomas the written form (i.e., the Scriptures) now serves the spoken word. Thus, for Thomas, there are three categories of men in the Church’s history: firstly, the recipients of Revelation’s *locutio interior* (i.e., Christ, the Prophets and Apostles), who, as Thomas says, have “received revelation from God not only for their own time, but also for the instruction of all men that are to come,” and thus “it was necessary that the things revealed to them not only be recounted orally to their contemporaries, but also that they be written down for the instruction of men to come”¹⁵⁹; secondly, those whose task it is to expound and interpret the Revelation given; and thirdly, the vast majority of believers who believe the Revelation given to the first category and interpreted by the second.

Now, since as Persson says, “for Thomas holy scripture does not coincide with revelation, since he does not understand revelation as a spoken or written word but

¹⁵⁹ *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.154.

regards it primarily as an event which takes place in the depths of the soul,”¹⁶⁰ both Scripture and Tradition are not identifiable with divine Revelation. Despite its inability to be identified with Revelation, for Thomas Scripture does contain Revelation, *secundum quid*, in the sense that it contains something of the *sacra doctrina* which is communicated to the Prophets in the cognitive act of divine Revelation.¹⁶¹ And thus, although he does not ever explicitly say it, though it is indeed inferred, for Thomas Scripture is not so much a source of Revelation as it is a source *of our knowledge* of Revelation; and indeed an inspired source of our knowledge. On the other hand, due to the inability of Tradition too to be identified with Revelation it should not be thought of primarily as a *traditio credenda* but as a *traditio servanda*. Thomas conceives Tradition as the medium through which the *sacra doctrina*, resulting from the cognitive act of divine Revelation, is passed on to successive generations down through the ages. Thus, divine Revelation is the basis of both Scripture and Tradition but not identifiable with either of them. Nevertheless, since the substance of knowledge given in divine Revelation is found primarily in Scripture, Thomas sometimes synonymously uses the terms, *sacra scriptura* and *divina revelatio*.¹⁶²

Since the ground and object of faith is the truth which the Prophets and Apostles have received and communicated in their writings, we must now consider how subsequent generations are able to know this revealed doctrine without fear of error. In this regard Persson cites an objection Thomas raises to his own doctrine, found early in his career (1256-1259) in *De veritate*, q.14, a.10 obj 11:

When something is proved by means of many middle terms, the whole proof is ineffective if one of the middle terms is weak. This is evident in syllogistic deductions, where the existence of one false or doubtful proposition makes the whole proof ineffectual. But the truths of the faith reach us through many intermediaries. Now, it is not certain that there was infallible truth in all of these intermediaries. For, since they were men, they could deceive and be deceived. Therefore, we can have no certainty about matters of faith, and so it seems foolish to assent to them.

¹⁶⁰ Persson, “The Communication of Revelation,” 49.

¹⁶¹ See *In De div. Nom.* 1, 1: “nothing can truly be spoken of God or even though except to the degree that it is revealed by God; which divine revelation is contained in holy scripture.”

¹⁶² See for example, *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.8, or I-II, q.62, a.1.

To this same difficulty, previously raised herein by Garrigou-Lagrange,¹⁶³ Thomas provides the following reply:

All the intermediaries through which faith comes to us are above suspicion. We believe the prophets and apostles because the Lord has been their witness by performing miracles, as Mark (16:20) says: ‘and confirming the word with signs that followed.’ And we believe the successors of the apostles and prophets only in so far as they tell us those things which the apostles and prophets have left in their writings.

Later in his career (1271-1273), in his reply to *Summa theologiæ*, III, q.25, a.3 obj. 4, Thomas answers:

The Apostles, led by the inward instinct of the Holy Ghost, handed down to the churches certain instructions which they did not put in writing, but which have been ordained, in accordance with the observance of the Church as practiced by the faithful as time went on. Wherefore the Apostle says (2 Thess. 2:14): ‘*Stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word*’—that is by word of mouth—‘*or by our epistle*’—that is by word put into writing.¹⁶⁴

From these two replies, we can see how Thomas reconciles the two important aspects of his doctrine concerning Revelation and its transmission, of: (1) that Revelation is essentially a historical cognitive psychological event whereby, in virtue of a divine illumination (i.e., the *lumen Propheticum*), the Prophet’s intellective judgment is conformed to the divine knowledge; and (2) that the knowledge imparted through this divine Revelation is made accessible to successive generations without the contamination and distortion of error. These are reconciled in the following two ways:

Firstly, Thomas acknowledges that we have the surety that the Revelation given to the initial recipients (i.e., the Prophets and Apostles), is without contamination because it was verified by our Lord’s performance of miracles in witness to their credibility. And in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Thomas identifies two other qualities possessed by the Prophets and Apostles confirming the veracity of the Revelation they received: (1) Because they have the gift of prophecy they could “speak truly about hidden events which could be made evident later” and could “know and reveal to others, through God’s revelation, future events and things generally concealed from men.”¹⁶⁵ The

¹⁶³ See footnote § 130 in Section 3.2.2.1. of this chapter above.

¹⁶⁴ *Summa theologiæ*, III, q.25, a.3 ad 4.

¹⁶⁵ *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 3, c.154.

hidden events of which they could speak were concerned with things that only God can know (e.g., the secrets of hearts), just as miracles are of such a nature that only God can work them; and (2) that the effect of love was made manifest along with the gift of prophecy. For although faith and hope (and things pertaining to these) can be present in sinners, who are not in God's good graces, a sure sign of the veracity of divine Revelation is its fruit of love in its recipients.

Secondly, we see here Thomas insisting on the role of the Church in our knowledge of revealed teaching (*sacra doctrina*). Although for Thomas Scripture is normative and in itself clear and sufficient, that does not mean that all the revealed truth contained in Scripture is readily accessible. Rather than seeing this as a deficiency, Thomas notes that it is warranted and desirable for a number of reasons: it prevents idleness, instigates zeal and curbs presumption (which Thomas says is the mother of error).¹⁶⁶ For these and other reasons, we see Thomas's insistence on the need of the Church's creedal declarations.¹⁶⁷ The Church's Creeds are an official declaration in which the content of Scripture is summarised making the truths necessary for salvation plainly available to all. The articles of the Church's Creeds do not add to Scripture but are taken from it.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, it is false to contend that the Creeds have a certain authority over Scripture. As the Church's interpretation of Scripture, the articles of faith found in the Creed are identical to Scripture's content. In this sense too, both the Church's Creeds and the Scripture are viewed by Thomas as the *regula fidei*.¹⁶⁹ Over the centuries, the Church has proposed many Creeds, not because it is adding to the *regula fidei*, but because it is merely making a further clarification of the meaning of previously existing dogma.¹⁷⁰ These clarifications, Thomas notes, usually arise upon the occasion of heretical misunderstandings and attacks on the faith.¹⁷¹ Since false doctrine is expressed through false expositions of the faith, the Church has a responsibility to clarify her teaching down through ages; which she does through the explication of her

¹⁶⁶ See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 1, c.5.

¹⁶⁷ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.1, a.9: 'Whether it is Suitable for the Articles of Faith to be Embodied in a Symbol?'

¹⁶⁸ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.1, a.9 ad 1.

¹⁶⁹ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.1, a.9 objs. 1 & 6.

¹⁷⁰ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.1, a.9 ad 2.

¹⁷¹ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.11, a.1.

doctrine with the reformulation of her dogma in her creedal statements. In this, following Augustine, Thomas sees the necessity for the Church to zealously devote herself to the study of Scripture.¹⁷² Hence Thomas discusses the role of the Pope and the Magisterium.¹⁷³ The Pope, as the successor of Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles, possesses the office by which he has the final decision in determining matters of faith, so that the faith is preserved in the Church.¹⁷⁴ He does so, not due to any personal charism he may possess, but because of Christ's promise that he would send the Spirit

¹⁷² See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.11, a.3 ad 2. "The profit that ensues from heresy is besides the intention of heretics, for it consists in the constancy of the faithful being put to the test, and makes us shake off our sluggishness, and search the Scriptures more carefully." See also, Augustine, *De Gen. Cont. Manich.*, Lib. 1, c.1. (PL 34:215-217).

¹⁷³ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.1, a.10. "a new edition of the symbol becomes necessary in order to set aside the errors that may arise. Consequently to publish a new edition of the symbol belongs to that authority which is empowered to decide matters of faith finally, so that they may be held by all with unshaken faith. Now this belongs to the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, 'to whom the more important and more difficult questions that arise in the Church are referred,' as stated in the Decretals [Dist. xvii, Can. 5]. Hence our Lord said to Peter whom he made Sovereign Pontiff (Lk. 22:32): 'I have prayed for thee,' Peter, 'that thy faith fail not, and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.' The reason of this is that there should be but one faith of the whole Church, according to 1 Cor. 1:10: 'That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you': and this could not be secured unless any question of faith that may arise be decided by him who presides over the whole Church, so that the whole Church may hold firmly to his decision. Consequently it belongs to the sole authority of the Sovereign Pontiff to publish a new edition of the symbol, as do all other matters which concern the whole Church, such as to convoke a general council and so forth." See also, Yves Congar, "Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Infallibility of the Papal Magisterium," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 81-105.

¹⁷⁴ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.1, a.10 (footnote § 173 above); See also, II-II, q.2, a.6 ad 3; q.11, a.2 ad 3: "As Augustine says (Ep. xliii) and we find it stated in the Decretals (xxiv, qu. 3, can. Dixit Apostolus): 'By no means should we accuse of heresy those who, however false and perverse their opinion may be, defend it without obstinate fervor, and seek the truth with careful anxiety, ready to mend their opinion, when they have found the truth,' because, to wit, they do not make a choice in contradiction to the doctrine of the Church. Accordingly, certain doctors seem to have differed either in matters the holding of which in this or that way is of no consequence, so far as faith is concerned, or even in matters of faith, which were not as yet defined by the Church; although if anyone were obstinately to deny them after they had been defined by the authority of the universal Church, he would be deemed a heretic. This authority resides chiefly in the Sovereign Pontiff. For we read [Decret. xxiv, qu. 1, can. Quoties]: 'Whenever a question of faith is in dispute, I think, that all our brethren and fellow bishops ought to refer the matter to none other than Peter, as being the source of their name and honor, against whose authority neither Jerome nor Augustine nor any of the holy doctors defended their opinion.' Hence Jerome says (Exposit. Symbol [Among the supposititious works of St. Jerome]): 'This, most blessed Pope, is the faith that we have been taught in the Catholic Church. If anything therein has been incorrectly or carelessly expressed, we beg that it may be set aright by you who hold the faith and see of Peter. If however this, our profession, be approved by the judgment of your apostleship, whoever may blame me, will prove that he himself is ignorant, or malicious, or even not a catholic but a heretic'"; *Suppl.*, q.40, a.6.

of Truth and that Peter's faith may not fail (see Luke 22:32).¹⁷⁵ It must also be noted here that unlike more modern Catholic theological apologetic Thomas does not cite Matthew 16:18 in defence of Peter's infallibility. When he does cite this scriptural reference, though, Thomas recognises that although Peter is the one named *Rock* (Cephas¹⁷⁶) by Christ, Christ himself is the foundation stone of the Church. Thomas also notes that Jesus names Peter the *Rock* because of Peter's confession of Christ.¹⁷⁷ Following Augustine, for Thomas, the *Rock* on which Christ builds his Church is not so much Peter, as it is Peter's confession of faith. Therefore, as Thomas sees, what constitutes the Church's foundation is the teaching of the Prophets and Apostles and their witness to Christ.¹⁷⁸

For Thomas, the Church's teaching office is not a *regula fidei*, but it is a necessary means by which we come to know divine Revelation's *sacra doctrina* as it is found in Scripture and the Church's Creeds, for as Thomas says: "our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets, who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors."¹⁷⁹ Thomas sees that the Church's teaching office, the Magisterium, is essentially subordinate to Scripture, since

¹⁷⁵ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.2, a.6 ad 3. "the faith of the universal Church ... cannot err, since Our Lord said (Luke 22:32): *I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not.*"

¹⁷⁶ Képhas (Cephas) in Aramaic and Πέτρος (Petros) in Greek. See Jn 1:42 which reads: "Σὺ εἶ Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου: σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς {ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος}." RSV translation: "Jesus looked at him, and said, 'So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter)"; and Mt 16:18 which reads: "κάγω δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν." RSV translation: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church."

¹⁷⁷ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.174, a.6; See also, *In Matt.*, 16:18, where Thomas says: "Are both Christ and Peter the foundation? It must be answered that Christ, in and of Himself, is the foundation, but Peter is the foundation insofar as he confesses Christ, and insofar as he is His vicar ... Christ, in and of Himself, is the foundation; but the Apostles, not in and of themselves, but through Christ's declaration, and through the authority given them by Christ, are foundations as well." English translation taken from St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, trans. Paul M. Kimball (Camillus, NY: Dolorosa Press, 2011), 565.

¹⁷⁸ A most important article in this regard is: *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Lib. 4, c.76. In this article Thomas outlines the fittingness of Christ establishing the Church with one supreme visible head, who cannot be Christ himself but can only be the Supreme Pontiff. See also, *In Eph.*, ch. 2, Lect., 6 (nn.127-131). Commenting here on Eph 2:20, "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone," Thomas says: "In this regard he [i.e., St Paul] states that they [i.e., the Ephesians] are not strangers but fellow citizens who belong already to the spiritual edifice which is 'built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets,' that is, upon the teaching of the Apostles and Prophets."

¹⁷⁹ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.8.

its function is to safeguard, interpret and expound Scripture. And finally, this teaching office, as with the Pope, has no authority to add to the deposit of faith as found in Scripture.

I will now turn my attention to a recent study conducted by Matthew Levering (b. 1971) on divine Revelation wherein he analyses Thomas's understanding of Revelation's communication. Levering argues that for Thomas, Revelation's communication is tied into the divine Missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, which are the temporal effects or terminations of the divine Processions (actions *ad intra*).

3.2.2.4. 'Thomas Aquinas: Revelation and the Mission of the Son and Holy Spirit' in Matthew Levering's 2014 Study

In Levering's recent study of Revelation, *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation: The Mediation of the Gospel through Church and Scripture*, he devotes a short, but very important section, to Aquinas's understanding of the Missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁰ From my reading of Levering's study, he views Aquinas's doctrine of Revelation as rooted in Aquinas's doctrine of the divine Processions and Missions. Concerning this, Levering states that "[t]he procession of the Son coming forth from the Father is not combined with a second procession in which the Father sends the Son into the world."¹⁸¹ Although, for Thomas, there is only one divine Procession constitutive of the Son, this Procession has two terms: one eternal, constituting the Son's eternal subsistence; the other temporal, whereby as Jesus Christ, the eternal Word made flesh, the Son is "sent" by the Father into the world.¹⁸² The Missions of the Son and Holy Spirit, being the temporal terminations of the two divine Processions, do not change the divine persons. The change that does occur due to these Missions is found on the side of the creature, the temporal termination of the divine Mission: i.e., in the Mission of the

¹⁸⁰ Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation: The Mediation of the Gospel through Church and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2014), 37-43.

¹⁸¹ Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation*, 40.

¹⁸² See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.43, a.2 ad 3: "Mission signifies not only procession from the principle, but also determines the temporal term of the procession. Hence mission is only temporal. Or we may say that it includes the eternal procession, with the addition of a temporal effect. For the relation of a divine person to His principle must be eternal. Hence the procession may be called a twin procession, eternal and temporal, not that there is a double relation to the principle, but a double term, temporal and eternal."

Son the change occurs in the humanity of Christ; and for the Mission of the Holy Spirit the change which occurs is in the creatures who are sanctified.

Levering also notes that for Thomas not only are the divine Missions of the Son and Holy Spirit inseparable from the divine Processions, since they are a temporal termination of these Processions, but that Thomas also holds that the visible Missions of the Son and Holy Spirit are not only inseparable from each other but are also inseparable from the invisible Missions. In fact, for Levering, “one can see how divine revelation requires the unity of the visible mission of the Son and the invisible mission of the Spirit.”¹⁸³ This, Levering argues, is why Thomas cites John 7:39¹⁸⁴ as his most illuminating passage from Scripture for his reference point for this position in his treatise on the Missions of the Divine Persons (*Summa theologiae*, I, q.43). The Revelation found or made in Jesus, as the temporal termination of the eternal divine Procession of the Son from the Father can only be received through the invisible Missions of the Son and the Spirit illuminating and sanctifying the Just in their perception of divine Revelation. Thus, although the mystery of God is fully revealed in Christ it cannot be received without the Spirit moving Revelation's recipients through faith: they need the Spirit in order to fully receive Jesus' words and deeds as divine Revelation. Thus, the visible Mission of the Son in Christ is manifested to us interiorly by the corresponding invisible Missions of the Son and the Spirit. And thus Levering says:

Aquinas's theology of the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit emphasizes that the revelation of God in the mission of the Son is inseparable from the mission of the Holy Spirit. It is in the visible mission of the incarnate Word that God fully reveals the truth of salvation, the truth about himself and about us. This visible mission [of the Son] is received as revelation through the visible mission of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and through the invisible missions of the Word inspiring faith and of the Holy Spirit healing and sanctifying us in charity.¹⁸⁵

Finally, the two divine Missions of the Son and the Spirit, both of which are visible and invisible, although distinct, are yet united. These two Missions are distinct in that their origins are distinct: Christ the Son's Mission originates from the Son

¹⁸³ Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation*, 41.

¹⁸⁴ Jn 7:39 reads: “Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believe in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

¹⁸⁵ Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation*, 40.

proceeding from the eternal (intellectual) generation of the Father alone; the Spirit's originates from the Spirit proceeding from the mutual (volitional) love between the Father and the Son. They are also distinct in that they differ according to their termination (or effect). Because he is the 'Word' made flesh, both the visible and invisible Mission of Christ the Son is ordered to illuminating the intellect of divine Revelation's recipient, "not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which breaks forth into the affection of love"¹⁸⁶; while the Spirit's visible and invisible Mission is ordered toward the fructification of the will of divine Revelation's recipient through charity. On the other hand, the two Missions are united in both their origin and their effect: According to origin, the Missions are united in that they are an effect of Grace in Revelation's recipient; they are also united in their effect by both being ordered towards the sanctification of Revelation's recipient.¹⁸⁷

I will now move to investigate Thomas's understanding of the role that Scripture plays in his theology of divine Revelation's transmission.

3.2.3. Thomas's Understanding of Scripture's Role in the Transmission of Revelation

To begin with, it must be remembered that Saint Thomas's professional title was not, as we would call it, "theologian," but *Magister in Sacra Pagina*—Master of the Sacred Page—for his professional life consisted primarily in the exposition of Scripture. And as his best modern-day biographer, Jean-Pierre Torrell, puts it: "'To read' Scripture was the first task for the master in theology, and therefore also for Thomas. ... Though long overlooked in favour of the *Sentences* or the *Summa*, this kind of biblical teaching was nevertheless Thomas's ordinary labour."¹⁸⁸ The medievals did not recognise the distinctions we commonly make today, between systematic and historical theology, or dogmatics and exegesis. For the mediaeval professor of theology, his task was to teach the faith as it had been passed down through tradition, and as James A. Weisheipl (1923-1984) says, "In the Middle Ages the Bible alone served as the official text of the

¹⁸⁶ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.43, a.5 ad 2.

¹⁸⁷ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.43, a.5 ad 3.

¹⁸⁸ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, 55.

Master.”¹⁸⁹ The teaching of *sacra doctrina* was seen to be the process of transmitting saving knowledge, which had its origin in God and was made known through divine Revelation, to humanity through the Church's doctrine.

In this section, to more accurately identify Thomas's understanding of Scripture's role in the transmission of divine Revelation's *sacra doctrina*, I will first look at an article by Weisheipl, who, by looking at the meaning of *sacra doctrina* in Thomas's first question of his *Summa theologiae*, accurately outlines Thomas's understanding of Scripture's necessity, given the occasion of man's elevation to his supernatural end and the ensuing divine Revelation thereupon, and the difference between *sacra doctrina* and *sacra scriptura*. I will then return to Per-Erik Persson's *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*, where he analyses Thomas's understanding of Scripture's different senses, and I will conclude by looking at certain aspects of an article by Leo Elders (b.1926), who dives more deeply into Thomas's understanding of these scriptural senses.

3.2.3.1. James A. Weisheipl's 'The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae* I, q.1,': Thomas's Distinction between *Sacra Doctrina* and *Sacra Scriptura* and the Necessity of Scripture for Thomas given the Occasion of Divine Revelation

In his 1974 article on “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae* I, q.1,” James A. Weisheipl clearly outlines Thomas's understanding of the relationship between *sacra doctrina* and *sacra scriptura*.¹⁹⁰ He begins by saying that the *Summa*'s first question (entitled, ‘*De ipsa Sacra Doctrina*’) “is an introduction to the whole of *sacra doctrina*, or *Christiana religio* ... [s]trictly speaking ... this first question is not an introduction to the *Summa* or to scholastic theology; it is rather an introduction to the subject matter, the doctrine possessed by every Christian and studied by every theologian.”¹⁹¹ Weisheipl notes that in this first question the term *sacra doctrina* is used by Thomas in different senses: sometimes, Weisheipl believes, it refers to the deposit of

¹⁸⁹ James A. Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” *The Thomist* 38 (1974), 49.

¹⁹⁰ See Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 49-79.

¹⁹¹ Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 54.

what Revelation offers for “Christian faith,” sometimes it refers to *Theologia* or “theology,” and sometimes it refers to “Sacred Scripture,” as this is the material vessel in which Revelation is found or conveyed. In this regard, Weisheipl notes that for Cajetan (1469-1534), the first prominent commentator on Thomas’s *Summa*, *sacra doctrina* is not used equivocally by Thomas throughout this first question, but merely in a contracted manner, as a genus is contracted to its diverse species. In the ten articles of this first question, the last two deal with *sacra scriptura*, or at least with *sacra doctrina* as it is *sacra scriptura*. This is because, for Thomas “*sacra doctrina* is simply the revealed doctrine found in Sacred Scripture, which employs metaphors on occasion, and which contain truth under various senses.”¹⁹²

Although at times Thomas employs the terms *sacra doctrina* and *sacra scriptura* interchangeably,¹⁹³ since *sacra doctrina* is presented in *sacra scriptura*, strictly speaking they are not identifiable. In his article, after inductively arriving at his understanding of Thomas’s notion of *sacra doctrina*, from the way various Thomistic commentators over the centuries have understood it, Weisheipl identifies why Thomas’s ninth and tenth articles of this question are concerned with Scripture. He lays bare the intrinsic logic of Thomas’s ten questions, which inevitably lead him to positing Scripture’s necessity, upon the occasion of both man’s elevation to the supernatural end and the divine Revelation required by man for him to know of such elevation. Weisheipl notes that after arriving at a satisfactory definition of *sacra doctrina* (consider I, q.1 a.1), Thomas turns his attention to its intrinsic modality: “Since sacred doctrine is a science (art.2), its intrinsic modality must be probative (art.8); since it is a wisdom beyond our grasp (art.6), it must employ metaphorical and symbolic language (art.9); because it is about God (art.7), *it must be scriptural* (art.10).”¹⁹⁴ Weisheipl continues, “Since sacred doctrine is derived from God through revelation, its entire character will have the imprint of God speaking to man in the words of men. ... the last two articles [aa.9-10] are essential to the modality of *sacra doctrina*. God’s way of speaking to men is imprinted in the Sacred Scripture; and the Scriptures are imprinted in the minds of

¹⁹² Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 57.

¹⁹³ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.2 ad 2, where Thomas identifies *sacra scriptura* with *doctrina*.

¹⁹⁴ Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 75-76. [Emphasis added].

men through faith, which is itself a *quaedam impressio deitatis*.¹⁹⁵ Since *sacra doctrina* is identified with the content of Revelation which every believer has, the human words of Scripture, which contain and convey the divine Word, must be the easiest words for man to understand: “the sublimity of this doctrine requires that wisdom clothe herself in metaphors and symbolic language.”¹⁹⁶

Now, since, as Weisheipl argues, “metaphorical language is the most accessible to most people, and at the same time there is less danger of confusing symbol with reality,”¹⁹⁷ Scripture contains metaphoric and symbolic language (see art.9). As a consequence of Scripture’s metaphoric and symbolic language, in article ten Thomas looks at Scripture’s various senses. Here Thomas makes three distinctions: Firstly, that God is the (principal) author of Scripture and therefore all Scripture is inspired; secondly, that the literal sense is what both God and the human authors intend by the words of Scripture and is the only sense that can be employed in theological argumentation; and thirdly, only God can appropriate to the persons and events narrated in Scripture a spiritual sense (either the typological or allegorical, the moral or tropological, or the anagogical or eschatological sense). This is because, as God is the author of Scripture, due to his divine power, not only do the words of Scripture signify meanings but the things too, spoken of in Scripture, signify further things (unlike human authors in their scribing profane literature, whose words alone can contain meaning). Only a text inspired by God can have a spiritual sense since no human author can preordain persons or events of one generation to prefigure persons or events of future generations.

Since Weisheipl concludes his article before commenting on Thomas’s understanding of how Scripture conveys divine Revelation, and especially without divulging how Thomas sees *sacra doctrina* mediated by the diverse senses of Scripture, I will now turn my attention to Persson’s previously mentioned study and an article by Leo Elders to further investigate Thomas’s thought in this regard.

¹⁹⁵ Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 76.

¹⁹⁶ Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 77.

¹⁹⁷ Weisheipl, “The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1,” 77.

3.2.3.2. Thomas's Distinction between the *Sensus Litteralis* and the *Sensus Mysticus* in Per-Erik Persson's 1970 *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas*

In his previously cited study of Thomas's concept of 'The Communication of Revelation' (see Section 3.2.2.3. of this Chapter above), Persson says that "for Thomas scripture is to be interpreted in a twofold rather than a fourfold 'sense.'"¹⁹⁸ Thomas speaks of the distinction between the *signification per voces* and the *signification per res*, or the historical or literal sense (*Sensus Litteralis*) on the one hand and the mystical or spiritual sense (*Sensus Mysticus*) on the other. For Thomas, the *sensus allegoricus*, *sensus moralis* and the *sensus anagogicus* are merely special instances of Scripture's spiritual sense. Distinct from Elders' study, which penetrates more deeply into Thomas's understanding of the senses of Scripture as mediating divine Revelation, and which will be investigated next, Persson's study focuses on Thomas's understanding of the relation between the literal and the spiritual sense.

Persson insists that a close study of Thomas's biblical commentaries reveal that for him the *sensus litteralis* is by far the more important of the various senses. This is because, as Thomas tells us in the first question of the *Summa theologiae*, the spiritual sense is based on the literal, and this is because the literal sense is what the human author of Scripture intends. Nevertheless, for Thomas, since the (principal) author of Scripture is God, who comprehends all things by his intellect, "even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Writ should have several senses."¹⁹⁹ Consequently, because in Thomas's view the literal sense holds primacy,²⁰⁰ the spiritual sense cannot be held separately from or independent of the literal sense. In fact, as Thomas says in the reply to the first objection of article ten, "nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward by Scripture in its literal sense." Citing a study by Beryl Smalley (1905-1984), Persson says that this characteristic, of Thomas's insistence on the superiority of the literal sense over the spiritual, arises from his Aristotelian intellectualism, and specifically through his

¹⁹⁸ Persson, "The Communication of Revelation," 54.

¹⁹⁹ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.10.

²⁰⁰ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.10 ad 1: "all the senses are founded on one—the literal [sense]."

doctrine of knowledge which posits that all intellectual knowledge has its beginning in sense, a consequence of his doctrine of the body-soul composit.²⁰¹ For Thomas, Persson argues, the 'body' of Scripture are the words of the text and the literal sense, while the 'soul' of the text is the spiritual sense. And yet, in this, just as Thomas had moved away from the previously held Platonic theories of the body as a hindrance to the soul, in his understanding of Scripture too, Thomas saw that the true meaning of Scripture was not to be discovered as something beyond the literal sense but precisely in the very letter of Scripture; the spiritual sense cannot be had without the literal, but is gained with and through the literal.

Thomas's reason for holding to the priority of the *sensus litteralis* is due to Scripture's metaphoric language. In his question on whether *sacra doctrina* ought to use metaphors Thomas notes that since such metaphoric language can somewhat obscure the truth, it is important to seek the text's literal sense.²⁰² Along this vein, Thomas also holds that the literal sense not only ought to be sought, in order that the truth not be obscured, but that "things that are taught metaphorically in one part of Scripture, in other parts are taught more openly."²⁰³ By attempting to avoid the obscurity of the truth occasioned by Scripture's metaphoric language, and the possibility of *confusion* and *multiplicitas* which can thus arise, Thomas insists that the spiritual sense must be found in the literal. And thus, for Thomas, no valid theological argument can be derived purely from Scripture's *sensus mysticus*.²⁰⁴

Lastly, as Persson notes, Thomas sees that the cause of obscurities and uncertainties do not arise from Scripture itself, since Scripture is in itself clear and sufficient, but from man's inability to comprehend its clarity and profundity. If this

²⁰¹ See Persson, "The Communication of Revelation," 56; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989). In his work Persson cites the 1941 edition.

²⁰² *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.9 obj 2: "Further, this doctrine seems to be intended to make truth clear. . . . But by such similitudes truth is obscured. Therefore, to put forward divine truths by likening them to corporeal things does not befit this science."

²⁰³ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.9 ad 2. See also, *Quodlibet*, 7, a.14 ad 3.

²⁰⁴ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.10 ad 1: "Thus in Holy Writ no confusion results, for all the senses are founded on one—the literal—from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory."

were not so, then Scripture could be said to bring about man's deception rather than his illumination.

Since Persson does not fully divulge Thomas's understanding of Scripture's spiritual sense and how Scripture mediates divine Revelation, I will now turn to an article by Leo Elders who thoroughly details Thomas's thought on this matter.

3.2.3.3. Leo Elders' 1990 article "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation" and Thomas's Understanding of the Senses of Scripture as Conveying Divine Revelation

In his 1990 article, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation,"²⁰⁵ Leo Elders begins by outlining Thomas's understanding of divine inspiration. Here, Elders finds in Thomas's thought a distinction between divine inspiration (*inspiratio*) and divine Revelation (*Revelatio*). The *inspiratio* of Scripture's authors (i.e., the hagiographers, and for that matter, the Prophets who received divine Revelation) consists in God elevating their mind via the *lumen Propheticum*, which results in the conformity of their intellectual judgment to the divine foreknowledge, so that they write all that he wants written. This elevation (or *inspiratio*) of the hagiographer's intellect (and the Prophet's intellect) is a divine act prior to, and pre-required for, the act of divine Revelation (which consists in Revelation's receiver having his or her intellectual judgment conformed to the divine foreknowledge). Revelation takes place when the inspired mind of Scripture's authors (and/or the Prophets) is conformed to the divine knowledge, even when it conveys a meaning beyond the comprehension of the authors (and Prophets). Thus, for Thomas, *inspiratio* precedes *Revelatio* as a dispositive divine act, disposing the hagiographers and Prophets to receive *Revelatio* (see also Section 3.1. of this Chapter above). "Revelation follows and works in the judgment which the [Prophet's] mind forms when it has been elevated in this way."²⁰⁶ With this in mind Elders attempts to answer the difficult question of how Scripture is a vessel of divine Revelation.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Leo Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," in *Studi Tomistici* 37 (1990): 132-152.

²⁰⁶ Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," 134.

²⁰⁷ See Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," 139f.

Although, as Thomas insists, Scripture's authors were inspired to write the canonical books, the question which needs to be answered, following upon Thomas's distinction between *inspiratio* and *Revelatio*, is, how is Revelation, or more accurately, the *sacra doctrina* which results from Revelation, conveyed through Scripture? Or, wherein, for Thomas, is to be found Scripture's divine meaning? To which Elders insists, we must understand Thomas's theology of the various senses of Scripture and their inter-relatedness. He identifies three places in Thomas's corpus where his mind is disclosed on this matter; all of which, Elders says, are "almost identical."²⁰⁸ At the heart of Thomas's argument for the existence of the spiritual senses, he cites that the truth necessary for salvation can be conveyed either through words or through things. As the creator, God not only employs words to convey truth but also things, so that one thing may be symbolic of another. As author of the world God can direct things in the course of their existence in such a manner that they not only have meaning in themselves but have symbolic meaning for other (future) things.²⁰⁹ Herein lies Scripture's *sensus mysticus*, a sense only found in Scripture and not found in any other (profane) literature, since man (as a human author) has no such control over things.²¹⁰ Because the spiritual sense is not always immediately obvious it can be difficult to detect. For this reason, and because there are numerous spiritual senses offering numerous meanings, for Thomas, Scripture's spiritual sense alone can never be employed for strict theological argumentation.²¹¹ This is because the literal sense can have many spiritual senses—

²⁰⁸ Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," 141; Although Elders says there are three places in Thomas's corpus where he explains his mind in this regard, Elders only cites: *Quodlibet*, 7, q.6, aa. 1 & 3. The other two places are: *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.10 and *In Galatians*, Cap.4, Lect. 7 (commenting on Gal 4:24). See also, Berly Smalley, "Use of the 'Spiritual' Senses of Scripture in Persuasion and Arguments by Scholars in the Middle Ages," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, Louvain 52 (1985): 44-63.

²⁰⁹ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.10: "that first signification whereby words signify things belongs to the first sense, the historical or literal sense. That signification whereby things signified by words have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based on the literal, and presupposes it." See also, the reply to the first objection.

²¹⁰ See *Quodlibet*, 7, q.6, a.3 ad 2: "...quod fictiones poeticae non sunt ad aliud ordinatae nisi ad significandum; unde talis significatio non supergreditur modum litteralis sensus"; "the fictions of poetry only signify that they are not subordinate to something else; hence, such a mode of expression is not beyond the literal sense." (My translation).

²¹¹ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.10 ad 1: "all the senses are founded on one—the literal—from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory."

which can be mutually exclusive—and determining which spiritual sense is intended for argumentative purposes can also prove difficult.

Following Augustine, Thomas holds there to be three particular instances of Scripture's spiritual sense: the allegorical, the moral and the anagogical.²¹² This is because, by means of symbols, Scripture expresses the truth for a twofold purpose: to convey right faith and right living. Right living is conveyed through the moral or tropological sense, whereas right faith is conveyed through the allegorical and anagogical senses. Since the state of the Church in the current economy of salvation is mid-way between the Old Testament and heavenly realities, Scripture presents the Old Testament as foreshadowing the New (thus the allegorical sense) and the Old and New as symbolic of heavenly realities (which is the anagogical sense).

Regarding the attribution of these four senses to each scriptural text, Thomas argues that for *some* passages all four senses can be applied—but this is definitely not necessarily the case for all, since in some passages only one sense is applicable.²¹³ Since the earlier events related in Scripture foreshadow later events, something said in the literal sense of an early text can be understood in the spiritual sense by a later text, and “those things that are taught metaphorically in one part of Scripture, in other parts are taught more openly.”²¹⁴ The basis of the spiritual sense on the literal is the foundation for excluding multiplicity of meanings. To explain Thomas's understanding of the interplay between the four senses, Elders notes:

Among all that is said in Sacred Scripture, there are in the first place things which belong to the Old Testament. Therefore, those texts which in their literal sense refer to events of the Old Testament may be explained according to four senses. In the second place come things which pertain to the present state of the Church, in which those things which apply to the Head are prior than those which pertain to the members. The true body of Christ and that which happened to it are symbols of the Mystical Body of Christ. Hence what is said literally of Christ, our head, may be explained both allegorically (referring to his Mystical Body), morally (referring to our actions which must conform to the example of Christ) and

See also, Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, 58: “This priority of the literal sense signifies in the first place that it alone is suited to the necessities of the theological arguments, but also that all spiritual interpretations should be confirmed by a literal interpretation of sacred Scripture in order to avoid all risk of error.”

²¹² See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.10; see also, Augustini, *Epistola* 48 (PL 33:187-189).

²¹³ See Elders, 144; *Quodlibet*, 7, q.6, a.2 ad 5.

²¹⁴ *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.9 ad 2.

anagogically insofar as Christ has been shown to be our way to glory in heaven. When something is said literally of the Church, it cannot be explained allegorically, unless perhaps things said of the primitive Church, which are taken to indicate the future state of the Church on earth. But it can be explained in a moral and anagogical sense. Those things which according to their literal sense concern morals, are not explained in another way, except allegorically. Those things which in their literal meaning pertain to the state of heavenly glory, are not explained in any other sense, because they are not symbols of other things, but are symbolised by all other things.²¹⁵

For Thomas therefore, Scripture's conveyance of divine Revelation consists not only in relating the literal historical events of God's intervention in past human history, especially the conveyance of the historical events (this is 'Revelation' taken in the wide sense) wherein a Prophet's intellect was divinely illumined through the *lumen Propheticum*, but also in its employment of the spiritual sense (which is 'Revelation' taken in the strict sense). The unique character of Scripture's spiritual sense is that it shows how in virtue of divine providence God has connected things in their historical context to convey further meanings to man, beyond themselves. It is for this reason that Thomas finishes his first question of the *Summa theologiae*, on *sacra doctrina*, with a treatment of Scripture's senses. This was understood by Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469-1534), as Weisheipl had well observed in his previously mentioned article while looking at the understanding of *sacra doctrina* in this first question as held by Thomas's major commentators. Cajetan had held, Weisheipl notes, that Thomas employed the term *sacra doctrina* here, not as referring to "faith" or "theology," but as referring to the content of divine Revelation. In this, Weisheipl says, Cajetan was followed by Enrico Buonpensiere (1853-1929), who insisted also that this first article's notion of *sacra doctrina* is "the certain knowledge [*certo cognitio*] of truths possessed by the supernatural light of revelation."²¹⁶ Holding a contrary view, as Weisheipl points out, were the likes of John of St. Thomas (1589-1644), Charles Billuart (1685-1757), Domingo Báñez (1528-1604) and Francis Sylvius (1581-1649). John of St. Thomas, the first to hold Thomas's employment of the term *sacra doctrina* in this question as an analogous term rather than an equivocal term, was followed by Billuart in saying that

²¹⁵ Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," 144 (*sic*).

²¹⁶ Enrico Buonpensiere, *Commentaria in I.P. Summa Theologiae (De Deo Uno)* (Rome, 1902), 13. As cited in Weisheipl, *The Meaning of Sacra Doctrina in Summa theologiae*, I, q.1," 60 footnote § 20.

Thomas's tenth article concerned Scripture as the source of theology instead of it being a medium of divine Revelation, as such. Báñez, as Weisheipl notes, held that the final two articles referred mainly to the scholastic theologian's role of interpreting Scripture, whereas, because Sylvius saw *sacra doctrina* as the habit of theology, for him Thomas's last two articles were merely concerned with the sources of this habit.²¹⁷

Finally, not only is Tradition for Thomas mediated down through the ages by the Church, as Garrigou-Lagrange, Geenen and Persson had well observed (see Sections 3.2.2.1., 3.2.2.2., and 3.2.2.3. of this Chapter above), but both Scripture's literal and spiritual senses are also to be understood in the context of the Church's teaching. This is because, for Thomas, as Elders argues, "Scripture is the book of the Church and must be read *in medio Ecclesiae*, the Church, animated and guided by the Holy Spirit, cannot be mistaken in the way it understands the message contained in God's Word [i.e., in Scripture]."²¹⁸ As a consequence of this, Elders also notes that, "in reality the Church moves with a never failing instinct, discovering in the course of history the full depth of the treasures stored in the Sacred Text."²¹⁹ With this in mind, we would have to say that for Thomas, although addition cannot be made to the canon of Scripture subsequent to the death of the last Apostle, the fullness of Scripture's conveyance of Revelation's content can never be exhausted, and therefore divine Revelation possesses a certain perpetuity, in that through the Church the spiritual meanings contained in Scripture, or mediated by Scripture, will never be fully disclosed in this life. This is because the ultimate meaning of Scripture is deeper and richer than what the human authors could ever have intended or understood.

Since a summary of the essential aspects of Thomas's understanding of how divine Revelation is communicated down through the ages will be forthcoming at the beginning of this thesis's fourth chapter, in preparation for comparing them with Ratzinger's theology on this issue, it will not be provided here. I will therefore now turn my attention to consider how Ratzinger understands the manner by which divine Revelation is communicated or transmitted to successive generations.

²¹⁷ See Weisheipl, "The Meaning of *Sacra Doctrina* in *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1," 56-60.

²¹⁸ Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," 150 *sic*.

²¹⁹ Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," 150.

Chapter Three:

Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission

In this third chapter, I will consider the fundamental tenets of Joseph Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation's transmission, the findings of which will be compared in chapter four, with those of Thomas Aquinas's theology concerning this matter.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter will be divided into three major sections: firstly, I will offer a summary of Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation in itself (Section 1.); secondly, as with the previous chapter on Aquinas, wherein I investigated the metaphysical foundation of his Revelation theology, so too, here I will look at the metaphysical foundation of Ratzinger's Revelation theology, which draws from Saint Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology (Section 2.). Thirdly, I will outline Ratzinger's notion of Tradition, where he analyses how divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations (Section 3.).

I will provide a summary of the findings which will be unearthed in this chapter in the fourth chapter of this thesis, for the sake of comparing these findings with those of the previous chapter.

1. Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation as It is in Itself

From a cursory reading of a number of Ratzinger's key texts, wherein he presents his account of divine Revelation in itself,¹ and from the recent doctoral work of

¹ See Joseph Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des heiligen Bonaventura* (München: Schnell & Steiner, 1959); English translation, from which all subsequent English quotes will be taken: Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., 2nd. ed., (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989); idem., *Offenbarung und Überlieferung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1965); English translation, from which all subsequent English quotes will be taken: Joseph Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," in *Revelation and Tradition* (London: Burns and Oats, 1966); idem., *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, trans., Henry Traub, (Part I), Gerard C. Thormann (Parts II & III), Werner Barzel (Part IV) (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1966); idem., "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Origin and Background," trans. William Glen-Doepel, in Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.) *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*. Vol. III (London: Burns and Oats, 1968); idem., *Aus Meinem Leben: Erinnerungen (1927-1977)* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1998); English translation, from which all subsequent English quotes will be taken: Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs: 1927-1977*, trans., Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998); Jared Wicks, "Six texts by Professor Joseph Ratzinger as *peritus* before and during Vatican II," *Gregorianum*, 89/2 (2008): 233-311.

Christopher S. Collins, *The Word Made Love: The Dialogical Theology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI*,² which, among other things, tackles Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation, I will offer here a brief summary of Ratzinger's understanding of divine Revelation.

I will therefore begin by summarising how Ratzinger understands divine Revelation as essentially a dialogue between God and man (Section 1.1.); and then I will summarise his notion of the Christocentricity of history, within this dialogical understanding of divine Revelation (Section 1.2.). This summary will better position this thesis in presenting Ratzinger's understanding of the way in which Revelation is transmitted to successive generations.

1.1. Ratzinger's Understanding of the Essential Act of Divine Revelation: a Dialogical Historical Event

Early in his theological career, Joseph Ratzinger wanted to provide an ecumenical bridge between the two prominent positions on divine Revelation in the twentieth-century, the Metaphysical approach, commonly held and taught by Catholic theologians, and the Salvation-Historical approach, commonly expounded by Lutheran and Protestant scholars. In his autobiographical work, Ratzinger tells us that his key finding in offering a reconciliation between these two approaches was that Revelation refers to the *act* (and indeed a speech-act), whereby God manifests himself to man, and that it only secondarily refers to the objectified result of this speech-act. Summarising the efforts of his reconciliation project (i.e., his *Habilitationsschrift*), Ratzinger says:

“Revelation” [in the High Middle Ages] is always a concept denoting an act. The word refers to the act in which God shows himself, not to the objectified result of this act. And because this is so, the receiving subject is always also a part of the concept of “revelation.” Where there is no one to perceive “revelation”, no *re-vel-*ation has occurred, because no *veil* has been removed. By definition, revelation requires a someone who apprehends it ... if Bonaventure is right, then revelation precedes Scripture and becomes deposited in Scripture but is not identical with it. This in turn means that revelation is always something greater than what is written down. And this again means that there can be no such thing as pure *Sola Scriptura* (“by Scripture alone”), because an essential element of Scripture is the Church as

² Christopher S. Collins, *The Word Made Love: The Dialogical Theology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI* (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2013).

understanding subject, and with this the fundamental sense of tradition is already given.³

In his attempts to ecumenically reconcile these two approaches, Ratzinger could see that for a correct understanding of Revelation one must insist on Revelation's historical character. Revelation is indeed a historical event wherein the Word of God actively intervenes or is injected into human history. Ratzinger discovered while studying the work of Saint Bonaventure in an attempt to find appropriate grounds for ecumenical reconciliation, that the revelatory actions throughout history are merely expressions of the one same Word of God, whose definitive expression dawned with the Incarnation, i.e., the coming of the Word in the very flesh (i.e., the humanity) of Christ. This multiform manifestation of the Word of God throughout history, Ratzinger could claim, holds the character of a dialogue between God and man. This is summarised by Christopher S. Collins as follows: "Central to this new way of conceiving of revelation was that it is properly understood as essentially a *dialogue that unfolds in history* between God and humanity."⁴

It can be seen from this, therefore, that for Ratzinger, divine Revelation cannot merely consist in God depositing a body of static truths with mankind, for his acceptance or belief. Again, as Collins says, for Ratzinger, divine Revelation is "the dynamic of an *unfolding event*, in turn giving it a narrative texture rather than a propositional one."⁵ Ratzinger identifies that Revelation's 'narrative texture' is what the Lutherans referred to as 'Salvation History,' which climaxed with the coming of Jesus Christ, and in particular, his passion, death and resurrection. This 'narrative texture' of divine Revelation eliminates the notion that divine Revelation can be *merely* propositional. Despite this, and in accordance with his reconciliatory motives, Ratzinger did not dispense with the need for Revelation to have a propositional aspect. Thus, divine Revelation is not devoid of intellectual content, and its intellectual content is due to Revelation being a divine dialogue of the eternal Word or *Logos*—which is essentially intellectual—with humanity.

³ Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 108-109.

⁴ Collins, *The Word Made Love*, 24.

⁵ Collins, *The Word Made Love*, 27.

Although the Word, which is disclosed in Revelation's divine dialogue with man, is always the very substance of every revelatory act throughout history, this Word is only gradually unveiled. This does not mean though that what is disclosed at a later point in time can contravene or supersede what was revealed in a previous time. Such gradual Revelation does mean though that the progressive disclosure of the Word makes it possible for a development of doctrine, or at least a development in our understanding of the Word which has been revealed.

Similarly, as can be seen in the extensive quotation from Ratzinger's *Milestones*, provided above, Ratzinger also discovered in his study of Bonaventure, that an essential aspect of Revelation's dialogue is for Revelation to become a reality it must be received.⁶ In other words, essential to the divine dialogue of Revelation is that there must be a historical dialogue partner. The eternal 'I' of the Word is in dialogue with the historical 'Thou' of Revelation's receiving subject. In this regard, according to Michael Schmaus (1897-1993), Ratzinger's *Habilitationsschrift* examiner, this theses initially seemed to smack of modernist tendencies.⁷ Ratzinger escaped this charge by affirming, in accordance with medieval theology, that the historical dialogue partner was in fact the Church. And that the individual believer entered the dialogue of divine Revelation by entering into and accepting the faith of the Church.⁸

Another important aspect of Ratzinger's theology of Revelation is its Trinitarian character. This is because, although it is the Word Who is revealed in Revelation's dialogical 'speech-act,' it is the Word Who is necessarily uttered by the Father, and in this, the Word leads one back to the Father. And, as Ratzinger argues, since the Word is uttered by the Father with the 'breath' of the Holy Spirit, one cannot encounter the Word without the movement of the Holy Spirit. One's revelatory encounter with the Word is therefore an intimate encounter with, and participation in, the intimate dialogue

⁶ See Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 127

⁷ See Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 109f.

⁸ See Joseph Lam Cong Quy, *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Retractions: Pope Benedict XVI on Revelation, Christology and Ecclesiology* (Zurich—New York—Oxford: Peter Lang Publishers, 2013), 31-34, where Lam has convincingly shown that Schmaus's rejection of Ratzinger's *Habilitationsschrift* was motivated more by personal and political resentment toward Söhngen, Ratzinger's *Doktorvater*, and driven by rumours arising from Freising concerning an alleged modernity in Ratzinger's theology, than by any substantial scholarly deficiency on Ratzinger's behalf.

which takes place in the Trinity itself. Here again, Ratzinger grasps the necessity of denying the possibility of divine Revelation being *merely* propositional in nature, and, in this, he also knows that neither can it be merely monological. As Collins notes, Revelation for Ratzinger is, “the Eternal ‘I’ speaking to the historical ‘Thou’ of humanity and the historical ‘I’ of humanity responding to the Eternal ‘Thou.’”⁹ As a consequence, since Ratzinger’s notion of the essential act of divine Revelation consists in it being dialogical, this notion also affects his understanding of Revelation’s transmission, which will be considered later (see Section 3. of this Chapter below).

This understanding, gained from his research into Bonaventure with the intention of reconciling the Metaphysical and Salvation Historical approaches to Revelation theology, Ratzinger took into the debates of the Second Vatican Council. The most notable point of Ratzinger’s assessment of the Council’s Preparatory Committee’s Draft Schema on Revelation, *De fontibus Revelationis*, was that, as opposed to what this schema posited, Scripture and Tradition cannot be said to be *the sources of Revelation*, but rather the *sources of our knowledge of divine Revelation*. In his assessment of this draft schema Ratzinger states:

Scripture and tradition are *for us* sources from which we know revelation, but they are not *in themselves* its sources, for revelation is itself the source of Scripture and tradition. Accordingly, it was traditional in the Middle Ages to call Scripture *fons scientiae* [the source of science or knowledge], but never *fons revelationis* [the source of revelation].¹⁰

In identifying this key flaw of *De fontibus Revelationis* Ratzinger also emphasised that, as it is a historical act, divine Revelation precedes both Scripture and Tradition; and that Scripture and Tradition merely testify to divine Revelation.

Then, in his essay entitled, “Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition”, Ratzinger notes that, due to the inability to identify Revelation with Scripture, one can be had without the other—a point to which I will later return (see Section 3.1.2.1. of this Chapter below). In this document too, Ratzinger identifies the revelatory act as the ‘Christ-event’ or the ‘Christ-reality’—another point I will return to later (see Sections 3.1.2.2., 3.1.2.3., 3.1.2.4., and 3.2 below). We grasp here how

⁹ Collins, *The Word Made Love*, 22.

¹⁰ Wicks, “Six texts,” 270.

Ratzinger conveys the concept that Revelation is not a purely static event of the past but a continuing, on-going reality—a *dialogue that unfolds in history*—and thus he denies that Revelation ceased with the death of the last Apostle.

Having now briefly summarised Ratzinger's notion of what divine Revelation is in itself, I will consider Ratzinger's conception of the Christocentricity of the dialogical historical event which is divine Revelation.

1.2. Ratzinger's Understanding of the Christocentricity of Revelation's Dialogical Historical Event

In his attempts to reconcile the Metaphysical and Salvation Historical approaches to divine Revelation Ratzinger studied the works of Saint Bonaventure (1217-1274) because he could see that Bonaventure had to contend with similar issues to his own, back in the thirteenth-century. It was to the controversies raised by Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) and his contemporary Franciscan Spirituals that Bonaventure was called to provide a solution. Derived from convoluted interpretations of certain passages of the Book of Revelation, Joachim had introduced a new interpretation of history. This interpretation, especially as adopted by the Franciscan Spirituals, threatened at least the existence of Francis' Order, if not, the Church. This new interpretation overthrew the long-established and long-accepted Augustinian interpretation of history, which placed Christ at history's culminating end. The theology of history proposed by Joachim and promoted by the Franciscan Spirituals held that human history is to be divided into three eras; each of which was in honour of one of the three persons of the Trinity. The third era, in honour of the Holy Spirit, the Franciscan Spirituals believed, had been ushered in by Saint Francis of Assisi (1181 or 1182-1226) and Saint Dominic de Guzmán (1170-1221), and was to be a purely spiritual age, an age which was to supersede the previous two. Along this vein, therefore, they held that this purely spiritual age would mean the dissolution of the institutional structures of the Church and the flourishing of the new mendicant Orders, living 'purely spiritual' lives. This spelt chaos for Bonaventure. And, upon becoming the Minister General of the Franciscan Order, succeeding John of Parma (1209-1257), himself a Spiritual and devotee of Joachim, Bonaventure needed to find a solution to this dilemma, an important aspect of which was to place Christ, not at the

Augustinian end of history, but at its centre. Thus was born the view of history being Christocentric.

In adopting this Bonaventurian view of history, with Christ at its centre, Ratzinger identified many necessary corollaries. He grasped the necessity of positing the impossibility of there being any further Revelation after Christ—in the sense that since Christ is the very Word of God, God cannot 'say' anything more to humanity that what is 'said' in the very person of Christ, but not in the sense that would lead to Ratzinger denying the possibility of future generations having further insights into the Word which is revealed in Christ; that with the coming of Christ divine Revelation could not have 'ended' with the death of the last Apostle; that the activity of the Holy Spirit in the revelatory act cannot be at odds with the mission of Jesus Christ, as it was in Joachim and the Franciscan Spirituals' understanding of things, but that the role of the Holy Spirit was in complete conformity with Christ's activity and, indeed, had to be weaved into the theology of Revelation, as a necessary and integral aspect thereof. This Christocentricity of history also offered Ratzinger a further reason for how new insights may be gained by successive generations from the Revelation already given. These notions have an essential impact on Ratzinger's understanding of how divine Revelation is communicated to successive generations.

Now, having grasped the essential aspects of Ratzinger's notion of divine Revelation in itself, as it is a dialogical event which unfolds between God and man (i.e., in particular, the Church) throughout history (because of history's Christocentricity), and before turning to investigate his understanding of how this Revelation is transmitted to successive generations, I will briefly look at the metaphysical foundation of Ratzinger's notion of Revelation, which resides in Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology.

2. Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology as the Metaphysical Foundation of Ratzinger's Theology of Revelation

In her 2001 study of Saint Bonaventure, *Simply Bonaventure*, Ilia Delio says that, "It is not unreasonable to say that, on the foundation of the Trinity, Bonaventure constructed his entire theological vision."¹¹ Therefore, we must look for the

¹¹ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 40.

metaphysical foundation of his theology of Revelation within his Trinitarian theology, as we had done with Thomas's theology of Revelation (see Section 2. of Chapter Two above).

In his recent study of Ratzinger's theology, Joseph Lam Cong Quy says that "the Christological events are not isolated accomplishments. They are always integral parts of the *Trinitarian communication* ('operationes Trinitatis')." ¹² Further, Bonaventure's notion of "revelation has its basis in the immanence of the *Trinitarian communication* which ... is always a mystery." ¹³ In line with Augustine, Bonaventure "describes the Incarnation as the work of the Trinity insofar as the entire Trinity is focused in the Word who takes on our humanity." ¹⁴ As we have seen, Bonaventure places Christ at the centre of history (see Section 1.2. of this Chapter above). Ultimately, this is not merely in response to or in reaction against Joachim of Fiore and the Franciscan Spirituals, or as an arbitrary alteration of Augustine's theology of history. It is because Bonaventure locates the Word as the centre or *medium* within the Trinity itself. Within the internal or immanent *communications* of the Trinity, the Word mediates between the Father who generates, and the Spirit who is spirated by both the Father and the Son. His mediatory role within the Trinity entails that, although all three persons are of the same substance, the Word proceeds from the Father as does the Holy Spirit, and the Word is a co-Spirator of the Holy Spirit, with the Father, inasmuch as the Spirit is spirated by both the Father and the Son. ¹⁵

In Bonaventure's conception of the Trinity he stresses the relational aspect of the Trinity and the predominance of the communion of love between the persons. Influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 5/6th Century) and Richard of St Victor, Bonaventure was impressed by Pseudo-Dionysius's doctrine that God is self-diffusive goodness and Richard's insight that the plurality of divine persons arises from

¹² Lam, *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Retractiones*, 40 [emphasis added].

¹³ Lam, *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Retractiones*, 42.

¹⁴ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 86.

¹⁵ See Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, I, 14 (V. 331-332); See also, Ewert Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites in the Christology of St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 28 (1968): 27-46.

that highest aspect of goodness, namely *caritas*.¹⁶ The Scriptural root for Pseudo-Dionysius's insight was gained not from the Old Testament's pinnacle revelation of God's name to Moses on Sinai: "I am Who am" (Ex 3:14), suggestive of the Aristotelian *Pure Act*, but from the New Testament's revelation of God as all good: "No one is Good but God alone" (Lk 18:19), while Richard's Scriptural influence is simply: "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8, 16). For charity to be charity it entails a plurality of persons since charity is the mutual donation of self to other. Richard goes on to say that for charity to be perfect it cannot be held merely between two lovers, it must be shared with a third. And therefore there must be three divine persons in God: one who is totally gratuitous in love (the Father), one totally receptive of love (the Holy Spirit), and one who is both gratuitous and receptive of love (the Son)¹⁷—herein we see Richard's Rationalist position, finding necessary reasons for the Trinity, which lays the foundations of Franciscan Voluntarism.

Since the Father is the fountain-head of goodness and since goodness is self-diffusive as Pseudo-Dionysius says, out of his infinitely fecund goodness the Father generates the Son. And thus the Father is nothing more than self-diffusive goodness. But since, for Bonaventure following Richard, the highest good is love or *caritas*, the Father's self-diffusive goodness is not directed arbitrarily but personally and relationally, which is to another person: i.e., to the Son. The Son, therefore, is everything that the Father is, other than the Father himself. Thus the Father and the Son are identical (according to divine nature) but distinct (according to persons). In this regard, Delio says that, "The relationship between the Father and the Son, in Bonaventure's thought, is the very ground of all other relationships. An understanding of this relationship allows us to understand the deeper meaning of creation, and within creation, the centrality of Jesus Christ."¹⁸

In Bonaventure's theology, the Son receives many titles, but the most favoured, because it encompassed the most relationships, is "Word." All that the Father "thinks" is the Word: the divine Wisdom. And as the divine ideas are exemplars of created (and

¹⁶ See Richard of St Victor, *De Trinitate*, 3.2 (PL 196:926-927); See also, Zachary Hayes, "Introduction," to *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, vol. 3, *Works of Saint Bonaventure* (St Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1979), 3-40.

¹⁷ See Richard of St Victor, *De Trinitate*, 3.14 (PL 196:924-925, 927).

¹⁸ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 45.

creatable) realities, they too are mere expressions of the one divine Word. All created realities, therefore, acquire their ultimate truthfulness from their conformity to the Word. In this sense we are to understand that God (the Father) creates through the Word, and creation is a certain ‘sacrament’ of the Word. Creation is therefore a means of God’s self-Revelation. Fundamentally, the Word is related to the Father as to the divine person who utters the Word; he is related to the humanity of Christ, as the ‘sound’ with which the Word is ‘clothed’; to the knowledge effected in others through the Word’s mediation in Scripture; and he is related to creation, as creation is merely a finite external expression of the inner Word, and therefore all creation flows from the relationship of the Word with the Father. Through the Incarnation the Word is united with creation through Christ’s humanity, and “the mystery of the Father is uttered in history and time.”¹⁹

When the Word becomes flesh in the Incarnation, “the centre of the Trinity in whom the truth of all reality exists, appears at the centre of creation; thus the truth of creation is revealed.”²⁰ Creation, therefore, since its exemplar is the Word, is fundamentally intelligible. But due to sin and its darkening effects on the human mind, it has become somewhat unintelligible to us. And thus, “When sin rendered this book [of creation] incomprehensible, Wisdom herself, the Word, became flesh, so that the book written within (the divine Word) became written without, in the humanity of Jesus Christ.”²¹ For Bonaventure, therefore, it is only through one knowing Jesus Christ that one can truly come to know the truth of all reality. He saw this Christocentricity lived out in the life of Francis of Assisi, who ultimately saw not the truth of God through created realities, but the truth of created realities through God the Word, made flesh. So that ultimately, as Delio says, “every aspect of creation spoke to Francis of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.”²² Therefore, “the truth of one’s self in God, is found in relationship to Jesus Christ.”²³

¹⁹ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 48.

²⁰ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 60.

²¹ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 62.

²² Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 63.

²³ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 73.

Bonaventure's ultimate reason for the Incarnation though is more profound than merely the reversal of sin. Indeed, Christ assumed a human body and soul to expel the darkness of Original Sin and its consequences and to also reunite humanity to God. But Bonaventure recognises that this reparation of sin's damage could have been affected by God in other ways. It could have been achieved by the Incarnation of the Father or of the Spirit, and yet Bonaventure insists that it was the *Word* who became flesh. For Bonaventure, the Incarnation is not only related to sin but also to the free loving goodness of God. Bonaventure's first reason for the Incarnation was to manifest God's infinite power, wisdom and goodness in time and in history. In this, the Incarnation was a work of the whole Trinity because the power of God is the Father, the wisdom the Son, and the goodness the Holy Spirit. The Second reason is for the perfection of the universe.²⁴ Since the entire created (material) universe exists for humanity and has the Word as its external exemplary cause, and finds its fulfilment in the perfect glorification of humanity, the Incarnation is the summit of creation. The Incarnation, therefore, completes creation as creation's first principle (the Word) is united with its last (humanity). As Delio says, "If the order of creation reaches its highpoint in humanity which has the potential for union with God, that potential is fully realized in the Word incarnate."²⁵

Bonaventure understood the climatic and final stage of *Revelatio* to be, what he called, the *sapientia nulliformis*, or the fourth stage of wisdom. This pinnacle of wisdom is when the mystic approaches the mystery of God, so to speak, in silence, so that the 'light' of his intellect is somewhat 'extinguished.' This extinction is the wisdom of the Perfect or the Elect, and it can only be attained through sanctity. As Ratzinger says, it is

²⁴ See Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of Arts to Theology*, Vol. 1 *The Works of St Bonaventure*. ed., F. Edward Coughlin, trans. Zachary Hayes (St Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1996), 20 (V, 324): "Per simile igitur rationem potest argui, quod summa perfectio et nobilissima in universe esse non possit, nisi natura in qua sunt rationes seminales, et natura, in qua sunt rationes intellectuales, et natura, in qua sunt rationes ideales, simul concurrant in unitatem personae, quod factum est in Filii Dei incarnation"; "For a similar reason, therefore, it can be argued that the highest and most noble thing in the universe is unable to exist, unless the seminal reasons are in that nature, and the intellectual reasons are in that nature, and the ideal reasons are in that nature, coming together in the unity of the person, which has occurred in the incarnation of the Son of God." [My translation].

²⁵ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 91; See also, Eph 1:10, which reads: "All things were created through him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed ... and he holds all things in unity."

“that imageless unveiling of the divine reality which takes place in the mystical ascent.”²⁶ With the light of the intellect ‘extinguished,’ this wisdom is born from love. This *sapientia nulliformis*, the highest climax of *Revelatio* to man, takes place most perfectly through the Incarnation, in the person of the man Jesus Christ. It occurs because he is the very person of the Word, the Wisdom of the Father, who is generated purely from gratuitous love or *caritas*; a generation which takes place from the Father in the man Jesus Christ.

Thus the primary reason for the Incarnation is not sin, but love; and ultimately by the love of God exhibited in Jesus Christ on the Cross. The love of God for creation is merely a mirror reflection of the love (*caritas*) that the Father has for the Word. Christ is therefore truly the *Alpha* and the *Omega*: He is the beginning of all creation (the exemplary cause) and the goal, and climax of creation.

With the overall thrust of Ratzinger’s understanding of divine Revelation, which he gained from his study of Bonaventure, and its metaphysical foundation as found in Bonaventure’s Trinitarian theology, now presented, I will turn my attention to an important work by Ratzinger which appeared around the time of the Second Vatican Council. In this document, *Revelation and Tradition*, Ratzinger details his understanding of the nature of Tradition and how he understands the transmission of divine Revelation to successive generations.

3. Ratzinger’s “Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition and his Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition” (1965)

During the Second Vatican Council’s final year (1965), together with Karl Rahner, Ratzinger published *Offenbarung und Überlieferung* (*Revelation and Tradition*), in volume 25 of the *Quaestiones Disputatae* series.²⁷ He initially delivered chapters two and three of this paper at the meeting of the J.A. Möhler Institute (for

²⁶ Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 59.

²⁷ Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger, *Offenbarung und Überlieferung*, *Quaestiones Disputatae* Series 25 (Freiburg: Herder, 1965); English translation, from which all subsequent English quotes will be taken: Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” in *Revelation and Tradition*, trans., W.J. O’Hara. *Quaestiones Disputatae* Series 17 (Freiburg: Herder, 1966). This work was recently republished: Joseph Ratzinger, “Question of the Concept of Tradition: A Provisional Response,” in *God’s Word: Scripture—Tradition—Office*, trans., Henry Taylor. 41-90 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008).

ecumenical studies) in Paderborn on 28 March 1963. Upon the reception of suggestions arising from this meeting, especially from Hubert Jedin (1900-1980) and Heinrich Schlier (1900-1978), Ratzinger rewrote his original text and used it again on 28 June 1963 for his inaugural lecture upon taking the Chair of Dogmatic Theology and History of Dogma at the University of Münster.²⁸

In chapter two of this work (entitled “Revelation and Tradition”) Ratzinger tackles “The question of the way in which the word of revelation uttered in Christ remains present in history and reaches men.”²⁹ From the outset, he recognises that this was the question which split Christendom in the sixteenth-century Reformation. In order to discover the correct notion of Tradition, Ratzinger begins by revisiting the Reformation debates regarding this issue, before setting out the notion of Tradition. Here Ratzinger advocates that Scripture and Tradition are not Revelation but are the ‘positive’ sources of Revelation which must be brought into relation with their ‘internal source’ (i.e., Revelation itself).³⁰ Then in chapter three (entitled “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition”) Ratzinger provides us with an account of, among other things, the pneumatological aspect of Tradition that is not as thoroughly analysed in the previous chapter. As there are a number of issues which overlap both essays the main concentration here will be on his “Revelation and Tradition,” though I will conclude this final section of this chapter by briefly looking at Ratzinger’s understanding of Tradition’s pneumatological aspect.

3.1. Ratzinger’s “Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition”

The account of Ratzinger’s notion of Tradition which will be undertaken here through a study of his essay, “Revelation and Tradition,” begins by considering what Ratzinger identified as the focal point of discussion and debate concerning the notion of Tradition during the Reformation (Section 3.1.1.). I will then analyse how he understands the relation between Revelation, Tradition and Scripture in this document

²⁸ See Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 7.

²⁹ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 26.

³⁰ See also, Lieven Boeve, “Theological Foundations: Revelation, Tradition and Hermeneutics,” in *The Ratzinger Reader: Mapping a Theological Journey*, ed., Gerard Mannion and Lieven Boeve (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), 14.

(Section 3.1.2.). In this section I will present his views not only on the distinction between these three, but also on how the notion of Scripture differs between the Old and New Covenants, and that, due to Revelation's Christocentricity, on how the question of the 'material sufficiency' of Scripture actually becomes obsolete.

3.1.1. Ratzinger's Consideration of Important Background Questions to the Concept of Tradition

At the time of the Reformation, the Reformers argued that the Catholic concept of Tradition was an attempt to identify a form of transmission of Revelation additional to Scripture. The Reformers raised two significant objections: (1) Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560) mistakenly believed that the Catholics had equated the term 'Tradition' (*traditio*) with the so-called *consuetudines ecclesiae* (i.e., ecclesiastical customs), such as Sunday observance, facing East for prayer, customs of fasting, blessings, feast days, and so on. This, Luther believed, was a forsaking of the Gospel and a reversion to the Law, giving certain human (ecclesiastical) enactments precedence over and above God's word. Luther held that this was something Saint Paul had strenuously fought against, while Melanchthon's Augsburg Confession also rejected such regulations.³¹ This 'Tradition,' they believed, had deteriorated into *abusus* by practically insisting that man take his salvation into his own hands rather than hope for it from God; and (2) Luther believed that by discovering the 'gospel within the gospel' he had been able to liberate the Word of God from the Church's authoritative clutches. For a true realisation of the Gospel message, Luther believed that the Scriptures needed to speak for themselves and not be bound by ecclesiastical statements and the Church's authoritative offices. In doing so, Luther saw the need to sever the Scriptures from the Church and her teaching office, which he believed was merely possessed *iure humano* (through the 'law of man'). Likewise, the Augsburg Confession argued that the Church was essentially determined by only two things: pure doctrine and right administration of

³¹ Philipp Melanchthon, *The Augsburg Confession*, trans., William Henry Teale (London: Rivingtons, Burns and Houlston and Stoneman, 1842), 77 (Article 28 § 42: Ecclesiastical Power): "Whence have the bishops the power and authority to impose these traditions upon the church, to ensnare consciences?"

the sacraments.³² Luther's denial of a valid connection between the Scriptures and the Church's teaching office, and the Augsburg Confession's silence on the necessity of ministry in relation to dispensing 'pure doctrine' and the sacraments, is antithetical to the Catholic understanding of the Church, which, as Ratzinger argues, is defined by three elements: *fides* (corresponding to *pure doctrine*), *communio* (corresponding to *the sacraments*) and *auctoritas* (corresponding to the Church's authoritative teaching office).³³ Without the Church's authoritative teaching office and ministry the word of God is inaccessible. For the Reformers, though, as Ratzinger notes, it is the other way around. For them, the word is the criterion of the ministry. The word becomes independent, standing on its own as a reality superior to ministry. In this regard, he says:

Perhaps in this reversal of the relations between word and ministry lies the real opposition between the views of the Church held by Catholics and Reformers. At the same time it coincided with the contrast in their views of tradition. For rejection of the ministry as the criterion of the word logically meant the reduction of the word to scripture as its own interpreter, and scripture now remained as the only authentic form of the word and tolerated no independent reality, 'tradition', beside it.³⁴

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) attempted to answer these two objections. It also attempted to address the legitimately described *abusus* of the day by calling for a legitimate *reformatio*. With the Lutheran confusion of *traditio* as *abusus*, Trent was confronted with the dilemma of whether Luther's notion of Tradition should be addressed first, or to begin by addressing the abuses by calling for a *reformatio*. Doctrinally, Trent rejected the two above-mentioned approaches. It held that the word cannot stand independently of the Church and her teaching office, but that it is delivered to the Church by the Lord.³⁵ And yet, it is not exposed to arbitrary human intervention

³² Melancthon, *The Augsburg Confession*, 38 (Article 7 § 1: Of the Church): "That the Church is a congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught, and the Sacraments rightly administered."

³³ See Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 29.

³⁴ Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 29.

³⁵ See Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, ed., Peter Hünermann. 43rd Edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 1501 (from now abbreviated as ES.): "orthodoxorum Patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, nec no traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tam quam vel oretenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas et continua succession in Ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affect ac reverential suscipit et venerator"; "Following, then, the example of orthodox Fathers, it receives

and alteration, for it remains in the Lord's hands. This is because the Fathers at Trent held as certain that the Church was instituted by Christ as his own body, who is able to preserve the word through the Church.³⁶

This debate over the relation of the word with the Church still lingers today. As Ratzinger sees it, the debate revolves around two essential questions: (1) The Protestant question of whether or not the word can be "given over to the Church without fear that it will forfeit its own power and vitality under the shears of the Magisterium or in rank growth of the *sensus fidelium*"; and (2) The counter-question from the Catholics: "Can the word be posited as independent without thereby delivering it up to the caprice of exegetes, evacuating it of meaning in the controversies of historians and so robbing it entirely of binding force?"³⁷ In this regard, the Catholic would not query whether or not we ought to subject the word of God to the Church since he already insists that Christ *has* committed the word to the Church. He would also not hold that preservation of the word's purity is fulfilled merely by appealing to the Church's infallible teaching office, but that such a grave duty belongs to the *whole* Church. Obviously, a more precise notion of Tradition and its relation to Revelation is required.

In the twentieth-century, Josef Rupert Geiselmann (1890-1970) attempted to clarify the notion of Tradition by returning to Trent's formulation. He concluded that since Trent had abandoned the formulation of the draft text (which stated that truth is contained *partim in libris scriptis partim in sine scripto traditionibus*) and was satisfied with simply positing that revealed truth is found in both Scripture "*et*" Tradition, Trent withdrew from the idea of a division of revealed truth into two separate sources, or at least left the question open by not defining it. Geiselmann, therefore, drew the conclusion that even as a Catholic one can hold the view of the "material sufficiency of Scripture," and that a "material *Sola Scriptura* principle" is acceptable for a Catholic. In other words, for Geiselmann it is legitimate for Catholics to hold that Scripture

and venerates with the same sense of loyalty and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testament—for the one God is the author of both—together with all the traditions concerning faith and practice, as coming from the mouth of Christ or being inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church."

³⁶ See ES. 1507.

³⁷ Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 31.

adequately transmits Revelation. He also insisted that this doctrine of the material sufficiency of Scripture holds a stronger tradition, which was Trent's implicit assertion.

When examined closely, though, this theory presents far too many difficulties. Two other important questions arise: (1) As Catholic theologians, dogmas cannot be held from a principle of *Sola Scriptura*. Therefore an adequate definition of "material sufficiency of Scripture" needs to be provided. When considering the dogmas of 1854 and 1950, it seems that employing the term "sufficiency" loses all meaning; therefore, (2) does the idea of the sufficiency of Scripture really come to terms with all the problems of the notion of Tradition, "or is it a case of lingering over a relatively superficial symptom of a state of affairs that lies much deeper?" To which Ratzinger, believes the answer is simply, "Yes."³⁸ The question of the material sufficiency of Scripture is really a secondary question to the one the Reformers initially raised: namely, the question of the relation between the authority of the Church and the authority of Scripture. It is only by going behind the positive sources of Scripture and Tradition, to their own source (namely, to Revelation itself), that we will grasp the relation between the authority of the Church and of Scripture, and to therefore obtain a more adequate notion of Tradition.

3.1.2. Ratzinger's Notion of the Relation between Revelation and Tradition

Ratzinger therefore identifies the notion of Tradition by dividing his analysis into five components. This is done to first specify his notion of the distinction between Revelation and Scripture, and then to grasp the significations of the notion of Scripture under both the Old and New Covenants, which in turn highlights the Christocentricity of God's Revelation, bringing him to a specific understanding of Tradition. He completes his analysis by outlining the function of exegesis in the communication of Revelation. I will consider these five components consecutively.

3.1.2.1. Revelation and Scripture

Ratzinger begins his investigation into identifying the distinction between Revelation, Scripture and Tradition by first noting:

³⁸ Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 34.

The fact that “tradition” exists is primarily based on the non-identity of the two realities, “revelation” and “scripture.” Revelation means God’s whole speech and action with man; it signifies a *reality* which scripture makes known but which is not itself simply identical with scripture. Revelation, therefore, is more than scripture to the extent that reality exceeds information about it.³⁹

This position repeats what Ratzinger had discovered through his study of Bonaventure, and applied in his assessment of *De fontibus Revelationis*.⁴⁰ Scripture could be seen as the material principle of Revelation—and as Ratzinger says, “perhaps the only one, perhaps one side by side with others,”⁴¹ a question he leaves open in this section—but it is not to be equated with Revelation itself. Ratzinger believes that this was something the Protestant Reformers were aware of, as were the patristic and medieval theologians, though it became obscure in the post-Tridentine debates.⁴²

Since Revelation is a living reality wherein God reveals himself to a living man in the location of his presence, Scripture itself cannot be equated with Revelation, and therefore Scripture can be had without Revelation and Revelation without Scripture. For Scripture to convey divine Revelation faith is required in the recipient of Scripture. “For revelation always and only becomes a reality where there is faith.”⁴³ The unbeliever can read Scripture and know what it says, and even understand it (i.e., know it purely conceptually, understanding how its statements cohere), and yet have no share in Revelation. This is because, as Ratzinger says, “Revelation is in fact fully present only when, in addition to the material statements which testify to it, its own inner reality is itself operative in the form of faith. Consequently, revelation to some degree includes its recipient, without whom it does not exist.”⁴⁴

Ratzinger notes that Revelation goes beyond Scripture in two respects: firstly, “as a reality derived from God it always extends upwards into God’s action” (and not just to the material words of Scripture); and secondly, “as a reality which makes itself known to man through faith, it also extends beyond the fact of scripture which serves to

³⁹ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 35.

⁴⁰ See also, Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 109: “revelation is always something greater than what is written down.”

⁴¹ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 35.

⁴² See Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 35-36.

⁴³ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 36.

⁴⁴ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 36; See also, Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 127.

mediate it.”⁴⁵ From these two important aspects, it is clear that there can never properly-speaking be a *Sola Scriptura*. “Scripture is not revelation but at most only a part of the latter’s greatest reality.”⁴⁶

3.1.2.2. Diverse Significations of Scripture in the Old and New Covenants: Scripture as Letter and Spirit

Just as there is a difference between the Old and New Covenants, so too there is a difference between the forms of Scripture found relating to both Covenants, because Scripture cannot be predicated equally of both.⁴⁷ The New Testament documents themselves testify to this, for when they speak of ‘Scripture’ they refer merely to the documents of the Old Testament and not to themselves. The documents of the New Testament also recognise that the meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures can only come through the ‘Christ-event.’ The New Testament documents do not set themselves up as new Scriptural documents, opposed to the Old Testament; although they do hold that the ‘Christ-event’ is the ‘Spirit’ which explains and sheds light on the Old Testament. Saint Paul even contrasts the Old and New Covenants respectively as *gramma* and *pneuma*, i.e., as letter (Scripture) and Spirit (see 2 Cor 3:3; 3:6-18). Paul also designates that it is the Lord, as the *pneuma*, who makes the Scripture (i.e., Old Testament) intelligible.⁴⁸

Ratzinger notes that Saint Paul here probably draws his doctrine from Jeremiah (31:33f), who holds that when the New Covenant comes there will be no need for Scripture, as the *new* Law will be written on men’s hearts. Neither will external

⁴⁵ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 36.

⁴⁶ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 37.

⁴⁷ See Joseph Ratzinger, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” in *Revelation and Tradition*, Quaestiones Disputatae Series 17 (London: Burns and Oats, 1966), 52: “by ‘scripture’ the Old Testament is meant ... which is scripture in the proper sense.” See also, on page 54: “The impossibility of designating the New Testament as scripture, which was so decisively felt by Paul and the early Christian centuries, is still plainly operative here.”

⁴⁸ See 2 Cor 3:14-18. “But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. [15] Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; [16] but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed. [17] Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [18] And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

instruction be required, as it will be the Lord himself who instructs. The ‘Christ-event’ appears as the fruition of a line of hope running throughout the Old Testament which saw that in the future ‘Scripture’ would be rendered superfluous by the immediate proximity to man of the divine teacher. Undoubtedly what is behind Ratzinger’s doctrine here is his Bonaventurian understanding of the theology of history, previously summarised (see Section 1.2. of this Chapter above), where it was said that Bonaventure saw history as having Christ at its centre. With the coming of the New Covenant, which is Christ Who is the Word or *Logos* Incarnate, the manifestation of the God Who is love, this new law of love written on the hearts and minds of those whom Christ contacts becomes the interior teacher and communicator of the Word.

We cannot say though that the restriction of the term ‘Scripture’ to the documents of the Old Testament is merely because there is no reference found within the New Testament documents to themselves being ‘Scripture’; a fact whose relevance was superseded once the canon of the New Testament was established in the second half of the second-century.⁴⁹ The conviction of the New Testament documents is that the documents of the Old Testament *alone* are strictly-speaking predicated as (the letter of) ‘Scripture.’ The inference being, that the New Testament’s documents themselves assert that with the coming of the New Testament the term ‘Scripture’ must refer to something greater than the *gramma* (i.e., greater than the written letter).

“One thing therefore is clear. In the new order of salvation which began with Christ, ‘scripture’ occupies a different position from the one it had under the old covenant.”⁵⁰ From Deutero-Isaiah (see 54:13) and Jeremiah there is a longing to go beyond the *gramma* in the new immediacy of the Spirit of God. In the New Testament,

⁴⁹ The Canon of Scripture has been defined at various times in the Church’s history. The Synod of Rome (382), see ES. 179; the Third Council of Carthage (28 August 397), see ES. 186; Pope Innocent I (20 February 405), see ES. 213; the Council of Florence (4 February 1442), see ES. 1335; the Council of Trent (8 April 1546), see ES. 1502-1503. For a good history of the canonisation of the New Testament, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also, Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007).

⁵⁰ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 38-39.

Scripture has come into existence *de facto*. Christ is Scripture (the Word of God) in the flesh. So much so that when the Word became man, Scripture became flesh.⁵¹

3.1.2.3. Revelation's Christocentricity and Scripture's Material Sufficiency

Since Revelation properly-speaking is nothing other than Jesus Christ himself (what Ratzinger calls the 'Christ-event' or the 'Christ-reality'),⁵² and since it is in him that the Father's Word is spoken into his very humanity (or flesh), reception of this Revelation is, as Ratzinger says, "equivalent to entering into the Christ-reality."⁵³ This is why Saint Paul speaks of those who have received the Revelation of Christ as being, "in Christ."⁵⁴ In this light, a propositional conception of Revelation can only be secondary, as propositions are only a medium for attempting to explicate the mystery of Christ. This understanding alone can shed adequate light on the question of the material sufficiency of Scripture. Once it is discovered that the essential act of Revelation consists in the 'Christ-event' or the 'Christ-reality,' we can see that only it has the capacity of holding the 'material sufficiency' of divine Revelation. When speaking materially about Revelation it must be said that the 'Christ-reality' can be expressed with ever greater clarity, with further explicit (material) formulations, even *subsequent* to Scripture itself.

Ratzinger goes on to say that the reception of the 'Christ-reality,' in biblical terms, is called faith. For the New Testament, faith is equivalent to the indwelling of Christ.⁵⁵

⁵¹ See Joseph Ratzinger, "Taking Bearings in Christology," in *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, trans., Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 24. Original German title: *Schauen auf den Durchbohrten* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1984). This article was republished: Scott Hahn (ed.), "Seven Theses on Christology and the Hermeneutic of Faith," *Letter and Spirit* 3 (2007): 195. Here, while commenting on the last words of Christ on the Cross, Ratzinger says that the four evangelists all agree "that Jesus prayed in the words of Scripture and that Scripture became flesh in him."

⁵² See Jn 14:9 which reads: "He who has seen me has seen the Father." See also, Pope Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (Verbum Domini)*, Vatican translation (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2010), 13: "the Christ event is at the heart of divine revelation."

⁵³ Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 40.

⁵⁴ For instance, see: Rom 6:11; 8:1-2; 12:5; 16:7; 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 15:22; 2 Cor 1:21; 5:17; 12:2; Gal 2:17; Eph 2:13; etc.

⁵⁵ See Eph 3:17 which reads: "and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love."

For Scripture, the presence of Revelation is equivalent to the presence of Christ. And Christ's presence in this indwelling manner is seen in two ways: firstly, as it is identical to faith, whereby the individual encounters Christ; and secondly, under the Pauline conception of the 'Body of Christ,' whereby the Church, the community of the faithful represents Christ's continued presence in the world. Faith is, therefore, the entrance into Christ's presence, an event testified to by Scripture but not identical with Scripture. And thus the presence of Revelation is essentially connected with "faith" and "Church,"⁵⁶ which, therefore, establishes an inter-connectedness between these two. Here too, Ratzinger shows how Revelation again goes beyond Scripture: in that Revelation is concerned with the actions of God, whereas Scripture is a testimony of these actions; and that Revelation can be had without Scripture (as it precedes Scripture) and Scripture can be had without Revelation, though only in a mitigated sense (i.e., in the sense of it being known purely conceptually, understanding how its statements cohere—see Section 3.1.2.1. of this Chapter above—or as an unbeliever would have it, i.e., without faith).

3.1.2.4. Ratzinger's Notion of the Nature of Tradition

The proclamation of the Gospel is an explication of the 'Christ-reality,' calling men to the acceptance of this reality through faith, and within the life of the Church. For Ratzinger this proclamation makes explicit the 'Christ-reality' in two ways, corresponding to the double form of Revelation in the Old and New Covenants: It is an interpretation of the Old in light of the 'Christ-event' and orientated back toward that 'Christ-event'; and it is also an interpretation of the 'Christ-event' itself on the basis of the *pneuma*, i.e., on the basis of the Church's presence. The 'Christ-event' is made present in the Church through the preaching of the Gospel because Christ is alive, not dead; and it is in his Church that Jesus lives and is present (yesterday, today and tomorrow⁵⁷). This is because the Church is his body, in which his Spirit is active.

Here Ratzinger makes a distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Church. "As the New Testament shows, Jesus' message was at first a directly eschatological

⁵⁶ See Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 127: "revelation is something alive, something greater and more: proper to it is the fact that it *arrives* and is *perceived*."

⁵⁷ See Heb 13:8 which reads: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever."

one, directed towards the kingdom of God, not towards the Church.”⁵⁸ The Church is not in contradiction to the Kingdom, but it holds a secondary place. The preaching and activity of the twelve at Pentecost was primarily concerned with the Kingdom, rather than with the Church. This is seen particularly by the actions of the Twelve who do not initially go to the Gentiles but to convert Israel. Only after the significant events of the killing of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) and James (Acts 12:2), and the arrest and flight of Peter (Acts 12:3), do the Apostles recognise their failure to convert Israel and decide to preach to the pagans and, as Ratzinger says, so create the Church instead of the Kingdom. This was a decision made in the Holy Spirit at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15).

This action “in the Holy Spirit” was not only the reason for the establishment of the Church, but also for the Church’s interpretation of the New Testament, just as there was a Christological interpretation of the Old Testament. It also gives rise to the following interpretations of Old and New Testaments: (1) That there is an Old Testament theology of the Old Testament, which the historian or exegete can draw from the Old Testament itself. Texts of the Old Testament can be read in light of further Old Testament texts, resulting in the growth of Revelation by new interpretations of the Old; (2) That there is also a New Testament theology of the Old Testament, which is not identical with the actual intrinsic Old Testament theology of the Old Testament, although it is connected through the *anologia fidei*. This New Testament theology of the Old Testament is a new interpretation of the Old Testament in light of the ‘Christ-event,’ which does not arise from a purely historical consideration of the Old Testament alone. It is not to be thought that this re-interpretation is coming purely from ‘outside’ the Old Testament as if it were adding something wholly new, but this interpretation of the Old by the New continues the inner structural pattern of the Old Testament, which itself lived and grew through such re-interpretations; (3) That there is a New Testament theology of the New Testament, which corresponds to the Old Testament theology of the Old Testament. It is the theology which the historian can gain from the New Testament; and (4) That there is a Church theology of the New Testament, called dogmatic theology. This theology Ratzinger says:

⁵⁸ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 42.

is related to the New Testament theology of the New Testament in the same way that the New Testament theology of the Old Testament is related to the Old Testament theology of the Old Testament. What is actually ‘additional,’ and what, therefore, distinguishes dogmatic theology from biblical theology, is what we call, in a precise sense, tradition.⁵⁹

The Church’s theology of the New Testament is not simply identical with the historically observable New Testament theology of the New Testament, but goes beyond it; and yet it is not something purely extrinsic to it either. In the actual New Testament itself there are the beginnings of the Church’s interpretation of what has been handed down, so much so that the Church’s theology of the New Testament extends into the New Testament itself. Although dogmatic theology is equated with the Church’s theology of the New Testament, it also includes, in addition to the Church’s interpretation of the New Testament, the private theology of individual theologians, since it is a scientific study. Dogma, therefore, is designated as the Church’s theology of the New Testament.

According to this action “in the Holy Spirit”—i.e., the action of the Church interpreting the New Testament—Ratzinger outlines a number of sources of Tradition: (1) The extent to which the reality of Revelation is more than Scripture; (2) The specific character of New Testament Revelation as *pneuma*, as opposed to *gramma*. This state has been expressed in the Church’s practice by placing *fides* above *Scriptura*, i.e., by placing the Creed as a rule of faith above what has been written. “The creed appears as the hermeneutical key to scripture which without interpretation must ultimately remain dumb”⁶⁰; (3) “The character of the Christ-event as present and the authoritative enduring presence of Christ’s Spirit in his Body the Church and, connected with this, the authority to interpret Christ yesterday in relation to Christ today, the origin of which we have observed in the Church’s reinterpretation by the apostles of the message of the kingdom.”⁶¹

In accordance with these three sources Ratzinger distinguishes the following strata in Tradition: (1) Foundational to all Tradition is the Father’s gift of his Son to the world and the Son’s permission to be given to the ‘nations,’ as a sign. This original oral

⁵⁹ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 44.

⁶⁰ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 45.

⁶¹ Ratzinger, “Revelation and Tradition,” 45.

Tradition or *paradosis* (in the character of judgment and gift of salvation) continues in Christ's Body, the Church. Tradition is the continuing presence of the mystery of Christ in his Church. This is the fundamental reality antecedent to any explicit expression of it, even those expressions found in Scripture; (2) Since faith is the indwelling of Christ in the believer, Tradition exists concretely in the presence of faith. This presence is antecedent to any formulation of it. As it is fertile and alive it naturally develops throughout the ages; (3) The main organ of Tradition is the authority of the Church, i.e., those who have authority in it; (4) Tradition is present as actually expressed in the rule of faith (i.e., in the Creed). "The question of whether certain express affirmations were transmitted from the beginning side by side with scripture, whether, therefore, there is a second material principle besides scripture, independent from the beginning, becomes quite secondary in comparison; but it would probably have to be answered negatively."⁶²

3.1.2.5. The Function of Exegesis in Revelation's Communication

Finally, Ratzinger completes his analysis of Tradition by looking at the function of exegesis within the notion of Tradition. "Tradition by its very nature," says Ratzinger, "is always interpretation, [it] does not exist independently, but only as exposition, interpretation 'according to the scriptures.'"⁶³ Revelation is made present through the preaching of the Church. This is even true of Christ's own preaching. Jesus' preaching appears as the fulfilment, and consequently the interpretation of what went before; and the interpretation is authoritative. Jesus' preaching, and for that matter the Church's preaching, does not bring something absolutely new, never yet testified to in the Scriptures (i.e., in the Old Testament). Christ and the Apostles' preaching, along with that of the Church, proclaim the reality of what was written and awaken this to a new life; something the historian of the Old Testament was never in the position to derive.

The authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures found within the preaching of the Apostles and the Church is not interpretation in the sense of purely exegetical exposition, but it comes through the spiritual authority of the Lord operative in the

⁶² Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 46.

⁶³ Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 47.

Church's entire existence: her faith, life and worship. Being tied to what has previously occurred and what has been spoken by God, the Apostles and the Church's preaching is linked to God's concrete action in history, from which it receives its historical character. From this, we can see the unity of the Jesus of history with the Christ of faith. "The Jesus of history is no other than the Christ of faith, even though faith is always more than history."⁶⁴

A double criteriology in matters of faith must be insisted upon. Firstly, there is what the ancient Church referred to as 'the rule of faith,' and the regulative function of the Church's official witness to Scripture and its interpretation. This 'rule of faith' is the Church's authoritative interpretation of Scripture and cannot be played off against Scripture. Secondly, there is the restriction set by the *littera scripturae* (i.e., the historically ascertainable literal meaning of Scripture). This is simply what can be unambiguously recognised from Scripture, either through a scientific examination or through simple reading. Although it has the function of a real criterion and is therefore something to which even the Church's Magisterium must adhere, as it is an independent criterion it does not represent the absolute criterion for faith. Such scientific analysis or simple reading of the text, Ratzinger says, although it "does not sit in judgment on faith ... it nevertheless continues to exist in faith as a critical court of appeal and as such has an urgent task, that of guarding the purity of the testimony *once* given, and of defending the *sarx* of history against the caprice of *gnosis* which perpetually seeks to establish its own autonomy."⁶⁵

I will now turn my attention to Ratzinger's second essay appearing in *Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition*, which looks at Tradition's Pneumatological aspect.

3.2. The Pneumatological Aspect of Tradition: Ratzinger's "Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition"

Occasioned by Geiselmann's focus upon the reasons leading to the replacement of *partim-partim* by *et* at Trent, and Geiselmann's contention of the material sufficiency of

⁶⁴ Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 48.

⁶⁵ Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 49.

Scripture, in Ratzinger's essay entitled, "On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition," appearing after his essay on "Revelation and Tradition" in volume 25 of the *Quaestiones Disputatae* series, he chose to return to the Tridentine decree and its background proceedings.⁶⁶ Here he claims that an important speech made by Cardinal Legate Marcello Cervini (1501-1555) on 18 February 1546, and a letter most probably inspired by Cervini, from the Cardinal Legates to Cardinal Alexander Farnese (1520-1589) dated 28 February 1546, are fundamentally important for understanding Trent's decree of Tradition.

In these two sources, Ratzinger points out that for Cervini there are three foundational principles of the faith: (1) The sacred books written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; (2) The Gospel which Christ did not write, but taught by word of mouth and implanted simply in men's hearts; a part of which was written down by the evangelists; and (3) The Son of God, upon ascending to the Father, sent the Holy Spirit, who was to reveal the mysteries of God in the hearts of the faithful and teach the Church all truth until the end of time (this, together with the second principle, presents the Pneumatological aspect of Tradition). Cervini also noted that Revelation was made known diversely at different times: firstly, to the patriarchs, whose faith is recorded in the Scriptures (i.e., the Old Testament); secondly, in Christ, who implanted the Gospel not orally but in the hearts of men, some of which was written down other things remaining merely in men's hearts; and thirdly, Christ sent the Holy Spirit into the world to reveal the mysteries of God and to make clear anything which remained doubtful in men's minds. Consequently, there are not two principles of the faith: Scripture and Tradition, but three: Scripture, the Gospel and the Revelation of the Spirit in the Church.

By 'Scripture' here is meant only the Old Testament, as Ratzinger had noted in his essay, "Revelation and Tradition." Although it is (chronologically) the first principle of our faith, the second and third, namely the Gospel preached by Christ and the life of the Spirit in the Church, present the Pneumatological aspect of Revelation and its transmission. The 'Christ-event' is included in 'the Gospel,' which includes both what

⁶⁶ The Tridentine decree on Tradition can be found: See ES. 1501-1508 and Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans., Roy J. Deferrari (Powers Lake, ND: Marian House, 1957), 783-786 (from now abbreviated as Denz.).

is consigned to writing and what is inscribed in the hearts of the faithful. This second principle of the Gospel “indicates a pneumatic surplus over what is written.”⁶⁷ The dignity of the Gospel is such that it cannot be restricted to what is written. If it were containable by written sources it would be limited, thus prohibiting the Church’s preaching from being inexhaustible. If the Church’s preaching were exhaustible, then there would come a time when the Church would have to cease preaching, for it would have said everything that could be said. The third principle of our faith is the Revelation made by the Spirit in the life of the Church. Since Tradition does not appear as *one* principle, both the writings of the Old and New Testaments (as ‘Scripture’) cannot appear as a single ‘reality’ to which is contrasted a second ‘reality,’ Tradition. The New Testament as a complex of event and reality can be taken as a unity in contrast to the Old Testament on the one hand and to the specific events of the age of the Church on the other. Its inner unity is stronger and more important than its division into written and unwritten, so that, as a single principle, it can be contrasted against the Old Testament, regardless of the two forms (written and unwritten) in which it is realised. This, more forcefully shows why it is impossible to designate the documents of the New Testament as ‘Scripture.’

When reviewing Trent’s decree on Tradition another observation arose for Ratzinger: Under the heading of neither Cervini’s second nor the third principle, which points to Tradition, does the notion of Tradition appear in the decree as *verbal*? In both cases, it consists rather as, *real* Tradition. It is “the surplus of reality over the word which bears witness to it.”⁶⁸ This is self-evident regarding the third principle, but also evident in the second principle: the inscribing of the Gospel in the hearts of the faithful. From these considerations, Ratzinger says that “tradition might even be described as the pneumatological component of the Christ-event.”⁶⁹

Ratzinger admits that although Trent’s official decree on Tradition is somewhat scant in pronouncing Cervini’s three principles of the faith, they are actually present *in*

⁶⁷ Ratzinger, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” 53.

⁶⁸ Ratzinger, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” 54.

⁶⁹ Ratzinger, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” 55.

actu in Trent's decrees on the Eucharist⁷⁰ and on Purgatory.⁷¹ In both cases the instruction by Jesus and the Apostles, corresponding to Cervini's concept of the Gospel—his second principle—and the instruction by the Holy Spirit, referring to Cervini's notion of Revelation implanted in men's hearts—(his second and third principles, both of which present the Pneumatological aspect)—is referred to as Tradition (*tradere*). Despite this though Trent's decree on Tradition does implicitly convey Cervini's threefold principle when it speaks of: (1) The Gospel promised through the prophets in the Scriptures (here 'Scripture' only refers to the Old Testament)⁷²; and (2) when it makes mention of Christ and the Apostles promulgating the Gospel in both its oral and written forms⁷³ (here the Pneumatological element appears united to the apostolic, because two kinds of apostolic traditions are distinguished: those derived from Christ and those which derive from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Here also we see the emphasis on history); and (3) when the concept of sacred Scripture is examined, then that of Tradition. Scripture is described as being received and venerated by the Church with the same sense and loyalty as "all the traditions concerning faith and practice as *coming from the mouth of Christ* or being

⁷⁰ See ES. 1635 (Denz. 873a): "Itaque eadem sacrosanct Synodus, sanam et sinceram illam de venerabili hoc et divino Eucharistiae sacramento doctrinam *tradens*, quam semper catholica Ecclesia ab ipso Iesu Christo Domino nostro et eius Apostolis erudite, atque a Spiritu Sancto illi omnem veritatem in dies suggerente [*cf. Io 14:26*] edocta retinuit et ad finem usque saeculi conservabit" [emphasis added]; "And so this most holy Council, handing on the sound and genuine doctrine regarding this venerable and divine sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Catholic Church—instructed by our Lord Jesus Christ himself and his apostles and by the Holy Spirit, who continually reminds her of all truth [*cf. Jn 14:26*—has always held and will preserve until the end of the world."

⁷¹ See ES. 1820 (Denz. 983): "Cum catholica Ecclesia, Spiritu Sancto edocta, ex sacris Litteris et antique Patrum *traditione* in sacris Conciliis et novissime in hac oecumenical Synodo docuerit, purgatorium esse." [emphasis added]; "The Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit and in accordance with Sacred Scripture and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, has taught in the holy councils and most recently in this ecumenical council that there is a purgatory."

⁷² See ES. 1501 (Denz. 783): "quod promissum ante per Prophetas in Scripturis."; "This gospel was promised of old through the prophets in the Sacred Scriptures."

⁷³ See ES. 1501 (Denz. 783): "sanctis Dominus noster Iesus Christus Dei Filius proprio ore primum promulgavit, dinde per suos Apostolos tamquam fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae omni creaturae praedicari iussit [*cf. Mc 16:15*]"; "our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, first promulgated it (i.e., the Gospel) from his own lips; he in turn ordered that it be preached through the apostles to all creatures [*cf. Mk 16:15*]."

inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.”⁷⁴

So what is Trent’s notion of Tradition and how did Cervini understand the Pneumatological concept of Tradition? As Ratzinger notes, Trent had pointed out that Tradition cannot be defined *negatively* as though it consists in merely what comes under the umbrella of the unwritten. This is because, as Trent says, the “truth and rule [of the Gospel] are contained in the written books *and (et)* unwritten traditions that have come down to us.”⁷⁵ inferring that there are traditions not only found outside of Scripture, but also within Scripture. A *positive* definition is required. To which Ratzinger says that “Tradition refers to the *institutio vitae*, that mode of realisation of the word in actual Christian living. In other words, it is the form in which the word finds reality and without which the word would remain unreal.”⁷⁶ Ratzinger later goes on to say that the *institutio vitae christianae* is, “the form of human existence actually current and valid in the Church’s present, and which alone provides for scripture the place where it assumes reality. As such, that is to say, as something which is living and which is more extensive than scripture, it is fundamentally apostolic, though in details it is, of course, changeable like everything living.”⁷⁷ The Pneumatological concept of Tradition, therefore, is the Holy Spirit’s activity of bringing to mind all that Christ had taught, by speaking within the life of Christ’s body, the Church.

To conclude, therefore, from his assessment of Trent’s decree on Tradition Ratzinger holds that both the presence of the Spirit and the link with the unique events that once occurred in history go to constitute the theological concept of Tradition. Not only did Trent perceive the connection of the concept of Tradition with that of

⁷⁴ ES. 1501 (Denz. 783) [emphasis added]: “orthodoxorum Patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam Verteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, nec non traditions ipsa, tum ad fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tamquam vel oretenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas et continua successione in Ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affect ac reverential suscipit et venerator”; “following, then, the example of the orthodox Fathers, it [i.e., the Church] receives and venerates with the same sense of loyalty and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testament—for the one God is the author of both—together with all the traditions concerning faith and practice, as coming from the mouth of Christ or being inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.”

⁷⁵ ES. 1501.

⁷⁶ Ratzinger, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” 59.

⁷⁷ Ratzinger, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” 61.

Revelation, but also, in line with patristic and medieval theology, it viewed the notion of Revelation in a far less material way than what took place subsequently. And therefore the thesis that Revelation closed with the death of the last Apostle appears far too unqualified. Revelation is indeed closed as regards its material principle, but is present and remains as regards its reality. To the extent that it was accomplished in historical facts and events, it is closed; but it is not closed insofar as it is a perpetual reality today, since what was accomplished remains perpetually living and effective in the faith of the Church, and since Christian faith does not simply look to what has past but to what is present and what is to come. Thus, for Ratzinger, there are four “strata” in the concept of Tradition as derived from this decree: (1) The inscription of Revelation, i.e., the gospel is not simply in the Bible but in men’s hearts; (2) The Holy Spirit speaks throughout the whole age of the Church; (3) Tradition is found in the conciliar activity of the Church; and (4) Tradition is contained in the whole of the Church’s life.⁷⁸

Through these four strata there is expressed the one reality of the Christian present, in which the whole post-apostolic past of the Church is present as a totality of the Church’s life, in which Scripture is a central element, but never the only element. Ratzinger concludes by saying that Trent presents a much richer testimony of the doctrine of Tradition than do subsequent centuries, and therefore it is able to provide new insights and stimulus for future theological work.

Now that a thorough investigation of both Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger’s theology of the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted or communicated to successive generations has been achieved, I will proceed to the final chapter, wherein the comparative study itself will be undertaken. In finally undertaking this study all the goals of this thesis, as previously outlined (see Section 1. of Chapter One above), will have been achieved.

⁷⁸ Ratzinger, “On the Interpretation of the Tridentine Decree on Tradition,” 65-66.

Chapter Four:

The Comparison of Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission

In this fourth and final chapter I will provide a comparative analysis of the theology of divine Revelation's transmission to successive generations, as it has been detailed in the previous two chapters, through the careful study of Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's theology in this regard. In doing so, I hope to have adequately achieved the goals enunciated from the outset of this thesis (see Section 2. of Chapter One above).

This chapter will therefore be divided into four sections. I will begin by providing a summary of the findings outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis on Thomas Aquinas's theology of the manner of divine Revelation's transmission or communication to successive generations (Section 1.). I will then proceed to do the same for the findings detailed in Chapter Three, of Joseph Ratzinger's theology of the same (Section 2.). After which I will proceed to outline the similarities and the differences of these two theologians' theology in this area (Section 3.). I will conclude this chapter, and this thesis, by noting how its initial goals have been achieved (Section 4.).

1. Essential Aspects of Thomas Aquinas's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission

In drawing-together Thomas's theology of the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations, which was detailed in Chapter Two, we see that there are five essential aspects to be considered. I begin by identifying what of divine Revelation, according to Thomas, is actually communicated to successive generations (Section 1.1.); then, I pin-point how Thomas understands *sacra doctrina* to have been communicated from Revelation's original recipients to others (Section 1.2.); after which, I identify Thomas's notion of Tradition (Section 1.3.); which will lead me into summarising how the metaphysical foundation of Thomas's Revelation theology also holds true for his notion of how this Revelation is communicated to successive generations (Section 1.4.); I conclude this summary by identifying the role Scripture

plays in his theology of divine Revelation's communication to successive generations (Section 1.5.).

1.1. Thomas's Notion of What of Divine Revelation is Actually Transmitted or Communication to Successive Generations: *Sacra Doctrina*

We saw in the first major section of the first chapter (see Section 1. of Chapter One above), that the major commentators on Thomas's Revelation theology and on the theology of Revelation in general, identified that for Thomas divine Revelation is not only distinct from sacred Scripture, as it is a divine act historically preceding Scripture, but that Thomas also held Tradition too could not be equated with Revelation. These commentators viewed Thomas's understanding in such a way that he held Revelation to be a historical event formally consisting in the divine activity penetrating the psychological life of the Prophet, and that it is the *sacra doctrina* which results from this prophetic revelatory act which is communicated by the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles—now contained in sacred Scripture, though not restricted to it—which is communicated to successive generations. Thus, strictly-speaking, for Thomas it is not so much Revelation which is transmitted or communicated to successive generations, but rather the *sacra doctrina* which results from the act of divine Revelation.

1.2. How Thomas Understands *Sacra Doctrina* to have been Communicated from Revelation's Original Recipients to Others: Thomas's Distinction between *Revelatio*, *Sacra Doctrina* and *Theologia*

This instruction, handed on by the Prophets and Apostles to the Church under the inward impulse of the Holy Spirit, consists in what they had received through God's act of Prophetic Revelation. Thomas argues that the Revelation given to the Prophets and Apostles via a *locutio interior* is passed on to others via their *locutio exterior*.¹ This primarily takes the form of an oral teaching rather than through writing. Consequently, in Thomas's corpus we find him distinguish between *Revelatio*, *Theologia* and *Sacra Doctrina*. For Thomas, *Revelatio* consists in the divine activity penetrating the psychological life of the Prophet which conforms the Prophet's intellectual judgment to

¹ See *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q.3, a.1: "For the outward utterance is intended to signify the inward thought."

the divine knowledge. *Revelatio*, therefore, precedes *sacra doctrina* so that it is *sacra doctrina* which is conferred on the Prophets through the act of *Revelatio*, and it is this *sacra doctrina* which is communicated to successive generations through tradition. *Theologia* for Thomas is to be taken either in the more ancient sense of it being discourse about God (*sermo de Deo*) or the rational discovery of God in the sense of natural philosophical theology. *Sacra doctrina* is the very content of what God has revealed to the Prophets, and through Christ to his Apostles. A rational reflection on this, for Thomas, as with its more modern acceptance (from Abélard), is also *Theologia*. In Thomas's thought too, *sacra doctrina* is properly-speaking *scientia*, since it is a participation in the divine *scientia* which God has of himself and which the blessed also have of God. *Sacra doctrina* had by the believer (i.e., one having the theological virtue of divine faith) in this life though is a sub-alternated science (*scientia subalterna*) since the evidences of its principles are believed and not 'seen,' as they are by God and the blessed. In this sense too, for Thomas, since *sacra doctrina* is a participation in the divine knowledge it is truly *sapientia*.

In Thomas's mind, although this *sacra doctrina* is unidentifiable with the act of *Revelatio* it is essentially associated with it, since, as he initially asserts, the very purpose of divine Revelation is for man's salvation and for him to have access to the supernatural realities required for him to know and love in order for him to attain his supernatural beatitude.² Therefore, it is the content received by the Prophets (Christ and the Apostles included) that is to be transmitted, rather than the act of *Revelatio* itself. This transmission, or *Revelationis Mediatæ*, as Garrigou-Lagrange calls it, consequently consists in the conveyance of *sacra doctrina* to successive generations. Thomas sees this transmission taking place through a number of steps. Firstly, from the higher angels to the lower angels; then, from the lower angels to the Prophets (and the Apostles); and lastly from these to the rest of humanity. Christ, the Prophets and Apostles received Revelation immediately (i.e., *Revelationis Immediatæ*—with Christ receiving Revelation in the fullest sense since he possessed the intuitive Beatific Vision of the divine essence in his human intellect), while the rest of humanity receives Revelation mediately (i.e., *Revelationis Mediatæ*). Now, since one requires the divine assistance to interiorly move them to accept what God has received (either those who have received Revelation

² See *Summa theologiæ*, I, q.1, a.1.

immediately or mediately), and since God can move free agents in such a way that they move freely, in the process of its transmission down through the ages, God preserves the content of his Revelation from the contamination of error and misunderstanding; and this He does through the ordinary means of the Church's preaching.

1.3. Thomas's Notion of Tradition

Thomas's notion of Tradition, therefore, is that it is the very conveyance of *sacra doctrina* down through the ages. For this reason, it is not identifiable with *Revelatio*, nor with Scripture (since it is not identifiable with any written text). As with Scripture, Tradition for Thomas contains the content of *Revelatio*, though unlike Scripture, to which the content of *Revelatio* is limited, Tradition contains the whole of Revelation's content, and yet is not identified with the act of divine Revelation. It is from the *sacra doctrina* which it conveys that Tradition gains its authority. Thomas also holds that Tradition cannot be equated with the teaching office of the Church (i.e., the Magisterium). This is because this office has the authority to interpret the content conveyed through Tradition, requiring that it be distinct (though not separate) from Tradition. Thomas argues that Tradition is the medium through which the *sacra doctrina*, resulting from the cognitive act of divine Revelation, is passed on to successive generations. And yet, since the substance of the knowledge contained in Scripture is what was given in the act of God revealing, Thomas sometimes synonymously employs the terms, *sacra scriptura* and *divina revelatio*.

Regarding the typical objection to this Thomistic synthesis, concerning the manner by which Revelation's *sacra doctrina* is transmitted to successive generations without being contaminated by error, Thomas holds that it is preserved by the activity of the Holy Spirit who, as the prime mover, is not only able to move natural (involuntary) agents in accordance with their nature, but indeed also voluntary (i.e., free) beings in accordance with theirs as well.³ And this activity, Thomas holds, primarily takes place within the context of the Church and her preaching and especially in the Church's promulgation of the Creed, wherein we find not an addition to *sacra doctrina*'s content or to the content of Scripture, but rather the Church's definitive declaration of the

³ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.83, a.1 ad 3.

essential *regula fidei*. In this regard, Thomas notes the necessity of the role of the Pope (and the Church's Magisterium) who has the final say in deciding matters of faith. Despite the necessity of the Pope (and the Church's Magisterium) in determining matters of faith Thomas does not say that this teaching authority is a *regula fidei*. Instead, it is a necessary means by which we come to know divine Revelation's *sacra doctrina*. This also places these authorities at the service of Scripture, as its legitimate and faithful interpreters.

1.4. The Metaphysical Foundation of Thomas's Understanding of how Revelation is transmitted to Successive Generations

Then, in accordance with the metaphysical foundation of the Thomistic theology of divine Revelation, Matthew Levering identified that for Thomas the manner by which *sacra doctrina* is transmitted to successive generations is rooted in his doctrine of the divine Processions (actions *ad intra*) and Missions (action *ad extra*). Since the divine Missions are inseparable from the divine Processions (which, as we saw, holds the place of being the metaphysical foundation of Thomas's Revelation theology), as they are a temporal termination of these Processions, the Mission of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit in the act of Revelation can be none other than a temporal extension of the divine actions *ad intra*. It is for this reason too, that although the activity of the Son and the Spirit in divine Revelation are distinct, they can never be separated; and thus the Mission of the Spirit in the economy of divine Revelation must coincide with the Mission of the Son (i.e., Jesus Christ). The Spirit acts in accordance with the activity of Christ in the proclamation and the acceptance of divine Revelation.

1.5. Thomas's Notion of Scripture and its Role in the transmission of Divine Revelation to Successive Generations

Lastly, it is in the light of Thomas's understanding of the nature of *Revelatio* and its subsequent *sacra doctrina* that Thomas's notion of Scripture and its necessity arises. Upon the occasion of man's elevation to the supernatural end of heavenly beatitude, he not only strictly-speaking requires a divine Revelation to be made of this end and the adequate means to attain it, but as Weisheipl has shown, he also requires sacred Scripture. Due to the fact that *sacra doctrina* is a wisdom beyond our grasp, it must

necessarily employ metaphoric and symbolic language. This is also seen in the fact that since Revelation is a divine ‘speech-act’ whereby the divine Word is intended to be made known to all men, it necessarily entails God speaking to man through the employment of human words, and indeed the simplest and most accessible of human words, i.e., metaphoric language. Due to this, together with Scripture’s divine authorship, Scripture contains various senses; and these for Thomas are two: the *Sensus Literalis* and the *Sensus Mysticus*.

In Thomas’s theology of Scripture, for two reasons he holds that its literal sense is the most fundamental: firstly, due to the occasion of its metaphoric language, Scripture’s intent can sometimes be obscured, and, therefore, the literal intent behind the metaphor must be detected; and secondly, because the spiritual sense can only be gained in and through the literal sense. One gains the divine author’s intention by first gaining the human author’s intended purpose, which is done firstly by apprehending the literal sense. With this grasped, one can then go on to find further spiritual meanings in the text, which are not to be held against the literal sense and may not have even been intended by Scripture’s original human author. For Thomas, it is not to be thought that the literal sense only conveys the human author’s intention while the spiritual sense conveys the intention of the divine author; rather, the literal sense is intended by both the human and divine authors, while the spiritual sense may have been intended at least in part by the human author, though indeed in total by the divine. And yet, the fullness of the spiritual sense can never have been fully intended by the original human authors since that would exhaust Scripture’s intention, which cannot occur since its principal author is divine.

As Elders has shown, it is in the correct understanding of these senses that Thomas sees Scripture as a medium or a vessel for conveying divine Revelation. By looking at the interplay between Scripture’s literal and spiritual senses Elders identified that for Thomas divine Revelation is not just conveyed by Scripture through relating the historical events wherein God has intervened throughout human history, but also, and most especially, through the Scripture’s employment of its spiritual sense. Through this sense Scripture portrays how, through his omniscient providence, God has connected things within their historical context to have the capacity to have relevance and meaning for man beyond themselves. And thus, historical things of the Old (and New) Testament

not only have relevance and meaning in themselves, but also provide an access to granting a greater meaning in the current economy of the Church and even beyond, so as to provide meaning for future eternal realities. A proper interpretation of these meanings, Thomas also notes, can only be reserved to the Church's official teaching office. And yet, since the Revelation found in Scripture's content is inexhaustible, the Church can never fully exhaust its meanings, "discovering in the course of history the full depth of the treasures stored in the Sacred Text."⁴ Consequently, for Thomas, although no new additions can be made to Scripture's canon since the death of the last Apostle, Revelation's full content will never be exhausted, making divine Revelation have a certain perpetuity, in that through the Church the spiritual meanings contained in Scripture, or mediated by Scripture, will never be fully disclosed. This is because the ultimate meaning of Scripture is deeper and richer than what the human authors could have ever intended or understood.

I will now offer a summary of the findings of how Ratzinger understands the manner by which divine Revelation is communicated to successive generations, as this was detailed in chapter three of this thesis.

2. Essential Aspects of Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation's Transmission

I will now draw-together the essential aspects of Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation's is transmission to successive generations, which were detailed in Chapter Three of this thesis. In doing so, there are four essential aspects to be considered: I begin by identifying how Ratzinger understands the 'Christ-event' or the 'Christ-reality' to be communicated from Revelation's original recipients to others, in this we find Ratzinger's dynamic notion of Revelation (Section 2.1.); after which, I identify Ratzinger's notion of Tradition (Section 2.2.); which will lead me into identifying Ratzinger's understanding of the role Scripture plays in his theology of divine Revelation's communication to successive generations (Section 2.3.); I conclude this section by summarising the metaphysical foundation of Ratzinger's theology of the manner by which Revelation is communicated to successive generations (Section 2.4.).

⁴ Elders, "Aquinas on Holy Scripture as the Medium of Divine Revelation," 150.

2.1. Ratzinger's Theology of Revelation's Transmission: Revelation's Dynamism, Scripture and Tradition

Consequent upon his discovery of Bonaventure's understanding of Revelation, Ratzinger obtained a deeper insight into the notion of Tradition. After his study of Bonaventure's work in this area, Ratzinger could argue that a more adequate notion of Tradition was

the living process whereby the Holy Spirit introduces us to the fullness of truth and teaches us how to understand what previously we could still not grasp (cf. Jn 16:12-13), the subsequent 'remembering' (cf. Jn 16:4, for instance) can come to recognize what it had not caught sight of previously and yet was already handed down in the original Word.⁵

Tradition, therefore, is the mode of God's continual self-communicative *act* whereby God reveals himself within history to mankind forming a narrative (equated with the Augustinian *Sacra Historia*), through the Church, to whom the Spirit has been entrusted by Christ. Herein is found Revelation's dynamism. The new manner of living out the Gospel as seen in the lives of Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Dominic de Guzmán and the thirteenth-century mendicants, especially as canonised by the Church, is a testimony that, although it is new, it is not a break from the Revelation received in the past. The Church's canonisation of Francis's radically new way of life shows that the Church not only looks to the certain fixities of the past in the Church Fathers but that it has a forward-looking aspect as well. This is due to the dynamic notion of Tradition (derived from the dialogical understanding of Revelation), which ensures that new insights into the revealed Word will be gained by successive generations. Herein Ratzinger discovers, from his study of Bonaventure's theology of history, that although Joachim and the Franciscan Spirituals correctly held the notion of a progressive history of the Church, they went too far in asserting that this progression essentially consists in a severance from the past. The continual unveiling of the Word in history, giving new insights, presents us with Revelation's dynamism, though having continuity with the past. The Church recognises in Francis a continuity with the past, a revitalisation for the present, and a prospect for the future; but such continuity cannot be had apart from the

⁵ See Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 59.

Church instituted by Christ, since it is the Church Who is the historical dialogue partner with the eternal ‘I’ of the Revealer.

In his assessment of *De fontibus Revelationis*, we find Ratzinger taking these foundational notions of Tradition into the debate. Rather than define more accurately the notion of Tradition, in his assessment Ratzinger more accurately distinguishes the relationship between Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition. It is in his work, “Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition,” that we find a greater development of his notion of Tradition.

Because Revelation is God’s self-manifestation to mankind it cannot be fully contained in human words, even those of Scripture. Therefore, as with Trent and medieval theology, since Revelation is alive and active (on-going in its perception or reception) Scripture cannot be equated with it, as Revelation precedes Scripture. Tradition too cannot be understood to be something operating ‘parallel’ or alongside Scripture. Since Revelation is something greater than what can be written down, Tradition cannot be identified or equated with textual sources, but must be the actual conveyance of the living dialogue which is Revelation. With this in mind Ratzinger notes that the fundamental flaw of *De fontibus Revelationis* is its failure to distinguish the order of our knowing from the order of reality: in other words, it said that the sources of our knowing Revelation (namely Scripture and Tradition) are identified as the sources of Revelation. But as Ratzinger argues, the only real and fundamental source of Revelation is the person of Jesus Christ himself. Divine Revelation is therefore not transmitted to successive generations partly in Scripture and partly through Tradition, but, as Ratzinger had observed while studying Geiselmann’s contentions and the Tridentine decree regarding this matter, both Scripture and Tradition, together, communicate divine Revelation (i.e., *totum-totum* and not *partim-partim*).

Although correctly distinguishing between Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition necessarily results in the discarding of the Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura*, as Ratzinger notes, medieval theologians such as Bonaventure and Thomas did hold that regarding the sources of Revelation, Scripture can be said to be only the material principle of Revelation. Despite this, they are not Sola Scripturists since they held that Revelation is more than what can be found in Scripture. For them, Revelation “is life

living on in the Church in a way that makes Scripture a living reality and illuminates its hidden depths.”⁶ Along these lines then Tradition cannot be seen as a material principle of Revelation, since it is the process of growth by the Church in her comprehension of Revelation as illumined by the Holy Spirit, and as she is the proper receiver of Revelation’s dialogical ‘speech-act.’ Ratzinger, therefore, notes in his assessment of *De fontibus Revelationis* the importance of distinguishing between Scripture, Tradition, and the Church’s Magisterium.

2.2. Ratzinger’s Understanding of the Notion of Tradition

It is in his *Revelation and Tradition: A Question of the Concept of Tradition* that Ratzinger most explicitly develops his understanding of the nature of Tradition. The specific question he attempts to answer is: ‘How does the word of Revelation uttered in Christ remain present in history and reach men today and in successive generations?’ From this study, we can see the following three important points concerning Ratzinger’s understanding of the nature of Tradition and its role within divine Revelation.

As a clear development of his thought from his *Habilitationsschrift* and his assessment of *De fontibus Revelationis*, in this document Ratzinger notes that for Revelation to be transmitted it must be received, and therefore we must equate the reception of Revelation (or Tradition) with one’s entrance into the ‘Christ-event.’ As the entrance into and living within the ‘Christ-event’ is made known to us through the propositions of the faith and through Scripture, the propositional notion of Revelation can be seen here to only have a secondary role. The propositions of the faith, as with Scripture itself, are merely the media through which the mystery of Christ is made known to us. This entrance into the ‘Christ-event’ necessarily takes place through faith, though not the individual believer’s faith, but the faith of the Church. And thus, entrance into the ‘Christ-event’ is also an entrance into the faith, life and worship of the Church. Here Ratzinger upholds divine Revelation’s ecclesiological dimension.

The second aspect of Tradition outlined here by Ratzinger is that for one to enter into the ‘Christ-event’ one must first know something of it, and therefore the notion of Tradition also essentially entails the Church’s on-going proclamation of the ‘Christ-

⁶ Wicks, “Six texts,” 276.

event,' calling men and women to the acceptance of this reality through faith in the life of the Church. Now, since the 'Christ-event' cannot be equated with what is historically observable of the New Testament, as it necessarily goes beyond it: it is not to be identified with the *gramma* of the New Testament but with its *pneuma*, the Church's proclamation of this event consists in her Spirit-guided interpretation of this event. This ecclesiological theology of the 'Christ-event' is designated by the Church as her dogma. Consequently, to be receptive of divine Revelation one must profess the faith of the Church, being receptive of her interpretation of the 'Christ-event' (i.e., her dogma). Faith (*fides*) and the Church's Creed are therefore placed above Scripture, not just as it is the Church's authoritative and definitive interpretation of Scripture,⁷ but as it is the rule of the Church's faith, just as entrance into the 'Christ-event' is above information about it. With this we can see that for Ratzinger, Tradition consists in the continuing presence of Christ in his Church, existing concretely in the believer through the presence of faith, as guided by the authority of the Church and expressed in the Creeds as the rule of faith (i.e., the Word uttered and the Word received in that divine dialogue of love).

And thirdly, since the Church is Christ's living body her interpretation and preaching are identified with Christ's interpretation and preaching. The Church's authoritative interpretation (and thus Tradition) cannot be equated with theological exegesis but with the faith of the Church, which is manifest through her life and worship in the *pneuma*, whereby she enters into the 'Christ-event,' the divine dialogue of love. And thus, since the Church's authoritative preaching is inextricably tied to God's concrete actions in history, there is necessarily a unity between the 'Jesus of history' and the 'Christ of faith.'

Now, with this new understanding of Tradition, as derived from the new understanding of Revelation, Tradition does not fundamentally consist in the passing-on of new doctrine given by Christ (although this is indeed part of it—namely, the propositional aspect of it), but it essentially consists in the on-going communication of

⁷ See Joseph Ratzinger, "Crisis in Catechetics: Handing on the Faith and the Sources of the Faith," in *Canadian Catholic Review* 7 (1983), 178: "Dogma is nothing other than the Church's authoritative interpretation of Scripture." See also, Joseph Ratzinger, "Sources and Transmission of the Faith," in *Communio*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 1983), 20: "dogma is nothing other than the interpretation of Scripture."

the gift of God's utter self-disclosure and manifestation in the person of Jesus Christ down through the ages. With this, we also see the necessity of the Spirit's activity essential to the notion of Tradition. Due to Christ's inexhaustibility there is the obvious need for the Spirit (of Truth),⁸ not only to guide the Church into all truth,⁹ but to bring to mind all that Christ had taught (namely, all aspects of himself).¹⁰ Tradition therefore is based on the Word preached, which embraces not only all that Christ preached but also the whole lived experience of the person of Christ, what he said and what he left unsaid, what the Apostles were able to fully express in words—namely, the 'Christ-event.'

With this, we can see why Ratzinger holds that it is quite difficult to define Tradition rather than to describe it functionally in terms of what it does. Since it hands on the word of God, but is not the word of God, its role is not 'productive' but 'conservative.'

2.3. Ratzinger's Understanding of the Role of Scripture in Revelation: Letter and Spirit

This notion of Revelation as a *dialogue that unfolds in history* between God and humanity gained from his study of Bonaventure also affects Ratzinger's understanding of Scripture, especially in its role in, and relation to, Revelation. Since Revelation's dialogue takes place in history it precedes Scripture and is therefore not identified with Scripture, since "revelation is always something greater than what is written down."¹¹ And yet, Scripture must be viewed in such a way that the new insights into the Word gradually being unveiled are mediated through Scripture. Because Bonaventure and Ratzinger understand Revelation as either the unveiling of future events, the gaining of Scripture's hidden meaning, that is, its pneumatological intent, or the union with the divine reality through the 'silence of one's intellect,' the letter of Scripture itself cannot

⁸ See Jn 3:34 which reads: "for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit."

⁹ See Jn 16:13 which reads: "When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

¹⁰ See Jn 14:26, which reads: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

¹¹ Ratzinger, *Milestones*, 109.

be considered to be Revelation *per se*. Such a notion immediately eliminates the possibility of a pure *Sola Scriptura*.

In order to grasp the transcendent truths of Revelation mediated by Scripture one needs to reach beyond the mere literal sense, to its Spirit—its allegorical, tropological, and anagogical meaning. In attaining the Spirit of Scripture, one attains not only new insights into Scripture but also new insights into divinely revealed reality and into a knowledge of something of future events. This unveiling of Scripture's Spirit, going beyond the letter to Scripture's hidden intent, is the process of *Revelatio*, and it only occurs for the faithful living in the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who transcends history.

For Bonaventure and Ratzinger, whether one reads the letter of the Old or New Testament, without attaining the letter's spiritual sense, one does not attain Revelation, but remains, so to speak, in the 'Old Testament.'¹² Since the New Testament is wherever the letter has been surpassed by the Spirit, it does not consist in a book but in the Spirit, and the Spirit's interpretation of the letter. As with Augustine, Bonaventure's *Revelatio* requires a divine illumination enabling one to grasp Scripture's spiritual or divine intent which goes beyond its letter. Bonaventure's example of this is where Joseph was illuminated in order to interpret Pharaoh's dream (see Gen 41:14-36). He also equates it with the *inspiratio* given to the sacred authors of Scripture, who necessarily 'clothe' this divine intent in human words. It is this spiritual or divine intent of Scripture in which faith consists, since it is *Revelatio*. And thus, it is within and through the very letter of Scripture that the Spirit, and thus *Revelatio*, is conveyed. With this in mind Ratzinger argues that the letter of Scripture is not properly-speaking Scripture, but its spiritual or divine intent is, since this intent is the very content of *Revelatio*'s divine dialogue.

Despite this, though, both Bonaventure and Ratzinger hold that Scripture's spiritual sense is not detected through individual interpretation. In order for the individual to grasp this he or she needs to enter into the faith of the Church. By entering into the faith of the Church, which as we saw above is an entrance into the 'Christ-event,' one receives *Revelatio*, whereas to merely receive the faith of the Church is to

¹² See 2 Cor 3:6 [NIV], "for the letter kills, the Spirit gives life."

penetrate into the lowest level of the *visio intellectualis*. Up until the present, this penetration into the Spirit of the New Testament is limited, leaving open the possibility of future generations grasping the new insights into *Revelatio*.

With Scripture's meaning advancing in a steady growth throughout history, Bonaventure and Ratzinger could also argue for the necessary corollary, that Scripture needed to be embedded in a historical receiving subject; this is the Church, the historical dialogue partner with the eternal Revealer.

Then, concerning the question of the 'material sufficiency' of Scripture, it must be said that following Ratzinger's work on Bonaventure and his assessment of *De fontibus Revelationis*, in the sense that Scripture has become flesh in Christ, Scripture can now be said to be the sole 'material principle' of divine Revelation. It is not the *gramma* of Scripture which is Revelation's 'material principle' but its *pneuma*, which is Christ himself.

2.4. The Metaphysical Foundation of Ratzinger's Revelation Theology

Just as it was from his study of Bonaventure that Ratzinger drew the crux of his insights regarding divine Revelation, so too, it is in Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology that we find the metaphysical foundation of his understanding of the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted or communicated to successive generations. For both Bonaventure and Ratzinger, Christ's centrality in history is ultimately due to the centrality of the Word within the Trinity itself. This is because in the Trinity, the Word *mediates* between the Father and the Spirit. From both John Damascene and Richard of St Victor's influence, Bonaventure saw that this mediatory role of the Word in the Trinity arises from the fecund goodness of the Father, by which the Word emanates, and through the divine *caritas*, whereby the Word, as co-Spirator with the Father, spirates or 'breathes-forth' the Spirit.

As the Word of the Father, the Son is all that the Father 'speaks.' He is the exemplar of all created natures as they are merely limited expressions of this Word. When the Word becomes flesh in the Incarnation "the mystery of the Father is uttered in history and time,"¹³ and Christ holds the central position of all history. Here the Word

¹³ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 48.

who is the centre of the Trinity becomes the centre of history. Thus, the primary purpose of the Incarnation is God's manifestation of his love. Not only his love for creation (and especially humanity) but also a manifestation of the mutual love between God the Father and God the Son. This love mutual love between the Father and the Son is manifest in creation since all things are created through the Word as it is creation's exemplary cause.

Now that the essential aspects of both Aquinas and Ratzinger's theology of how divine Revelation is transmitted or communicated to successive generations have been identified and presented, I will presently attempt to draw together these findings by undertaking a comparative study of their similarities and differences. This will be done by separately considering each of the essential aspects of their theology in this regard as presented so far in this chapter, and how these two theologians compare regarding them.

3. The Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Differences between Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's Theology of Divine Revelation

In this last section of this thesis I will compare and contrast the positions of Aquinas and Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation's transmission to successive generations as presented in the previous two chapters. With this I hope to have accomplished the goals previously set forth in the introductory chapter (see Section 1. of Chapter One above).

3.1. Foundational Differences: Thomas Aquinas's Intellectualism as a University Professor and Joseph Ratzinger's Personalism for Pastoral Concerns

Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger are arguably two of the great theologians of their respective eras. Each though had their respective challenges and theological contexts in which they wrote. As theologians their task is always to dive deeply into the Revelation given by God and to offer their findings to their contemporaries, especially in response to the important issues and concerns of their age. Aquinas and Ratzinger were not exceptions to this. Despite this, even though, as Ratzinger explicitly states, divine Revelation has an ongoing aspect, Revelation is foundationally one and the same for all generations: this is because it is the Word of God Who is revealed. And therefore,

although they were working some seven hundred years apart from each other their respective theological thrusts had certain similarities as well as significant differences.

The initial fundamental difference between Aquinas and Ratzinger resides with their respective goals and purposes as theologians. Aquinas was a university professor which demanded that the theological thrust of his career was mainly concerned with providing his students with a systematic theological approach. And this he achieved to a tremendous degree. On the other hand, although Ratzinger began his career with similar intentions to Aquinas, due to pastoral considerations he could not afford the efforts required to achieve such academic goals. In fact, Ratzinger's life could be said to have followed more in the shoes of his great mentor, Bonaventure, than it did Aquinas. Thus, Ratzinger was unable to construct a succinct and systematic theology, as he tells us.¹⁴

Not only did Aquinas and Ratzinger have very different theological historical precursors and situations, but their theological pursuits were also quite different. Thomas's desire to replace the then current theological approach, as he says in the prologue to his *Summa theologiae*, led him to employ the intellectualism of Aristotle adopting the latter's scientific approach. On the other hand, Ratzinger, working mainly in the mid to late twentieth-century, as with the *Resourcement* theologians around him, saw the need to move away from the arid theological speculations of neo-Scholastic theology to re-orientate itself back to the more ancient theological sources, of the Church Fathers, Scripture and the Liturgy. Having experienced the catastrophes of the Second World War and its ideological precursors and consequences, Ratzinger could see that theology needed to offer new meaning for people's lives. He, along with the *Resourcement* theologians, believed this could be done by returning to theology's sources and by implementing a more personalistic approach. From the study of Aquinas and Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation's communication to successive generations, which has been detailed in this thesis, I argue that there is a fundamental difference between them: of Aquinas's intellectualism and Ratzinger's personalism.

With this foundational difference between these two firmly in mind, I now outline the similarities and differences which have been identified in this study, according to

¹⁴ See Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*, 66. Original Title: *Salz der Erde: Christentum und Katholische Kirche an der Jahrtausendwende* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt GmbH, 1996).

their respective understandings of the manner by which divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations. I begin by broadly presenting the differences between them in regard to their understanding of the content of the act of divine Revelation's transmission (Section 3.2.). I then analyse their respective notions of Tradition (Section 3.3.); after which I outline their respective understandings of Scripture's role in this communication (Section 3.4.); before concluding this chapter by analysing the similarities and differences between what they understand as the metaphysical foundation of their respective approaches (Section 3.5.).

3.2. Divine Revelation's Transmission: The Intellectualism of Thomas's *Sacra Doctrina* and the Personalistic Dynamism of Ratzinger's Revelatory Dialogue

As was previously observed regarding his understanding of Revelation's transmission, for Thomas it is not so much Revelation *per se* which is transmitted to successive generations, but rather, the result of this divine Revelation, namely *sacra doctrina*. Since for Thomas *Revelatio* is the act by which God elevates the Prophet's intellect so as to conform his or her judgment to the divine foreknowledge, it is not this act which is transmitted down through the ages, but rather the divine teaching resulting from it (i.e., *sacra doctrina*). Clearly, this understanding results from Thomas's intellectualism. On the other hand though, as stemming from his personalism and as a consequence of holding Revelation as a dialogue, Ratzinger insists that Revelation's transmission has a more dynamic and perennial character. For him, what is conveyed to successive generations is the very dialogue of Revelation—the Word spoken by the Father and received by the Church. Such a dialogue with the Word enables new insights to be gained from this Word down through the ages. In this I argue that Ratzinger's position is not contrary to Thomas's, but complementary with it.

3.3. Notions of Tradition: Thomas's Conveyance of *Sacra Doctrina* and Ratzinger's Entrance into the 'Christ-event'

In this regard, and in accordance with his intellectualism, Thomas holds Tradition as the medium through which the *sacra doctrina*, resulting from the prophetic cognitive act of divine Revelation, is passed on to successive generations. Revelation's *sacra*

doctrina is conveyed through the Church's Creeds which are her definitive declarations of the essential *regula fidei*. One's acceptance of this *sacra doctrina*, as proposed by the Church, is principally one's intellectual assent to what has been revealed, through one's act of faith. On the other hand, Ratzinger, again, due to Revelation's dialogical nature, understands Tradition as having a greater personalistic emphasis, consisting in what he identifies as the 'Christ-event.' One's entrance into the 'Christ-event' is equated with one's entrance into Revelation's dialogue through faith, and indeed, through one's entrance into the faith of the Church, as the Word's proper dialogue partner. Therefore, for Ratzinger, Tradition consists in the continuing presence of Christ in the Church, existing concretely in the believer through the presence of faith. This presence is born in the believer, by the believer entering into the divine dialogue of love which constantly takes place between God and man in the very person of Jesus Christ.

Although Ratzinger's notions here are essentially in line with the principles enunciated by Thomas in his theology of divine Revelation and its transmission, they are clearly an advance on Thomas's thought. For the emphasis is now not merely on the acceptance of what has been revealed in divine Revelation, but on the Who which is revealed, and on entering into the very dialogue that takes place in this Who. Ratzinger's notion, that throughout successive generations the 'who' of the believer not merely contacts the 'what' of Revelation, but quite clearly enters into the ongoing dialogue between God and man in the very person of Christ, is clearly a development from Thomas's understanding. Plainly, Ratzinger's development in this regard was born from the *Ressourcement* movement's impetus for theology to provide a deeper meaning for people's lives.

3.4. Scripture's Role in Revelation's Transmission: Thomas's Identification of Revelation's Need for Metaphoric and Symbolic Language and Scripture's Senses, and Ratzinger's Letter and Spirit (*Gramma* and *Pneuma*) of Scripture

These two notions from Aquinas and Ratzinger concerning the content of divine Revelation conveyed to successive generations, and their respective understandings of Tradition, also impact their views of the role played by Scripture in this transmission. For Thomas, since the *sacra doctrina* that is revealed to man is a certain participation in

the divine knowledge, it is a divine *sapientia* and therefore a knowledge necessarily beyond the capacity of the human (or indeed any creatable) intellect. Also, since Revelation for Thomas is essentially a divine ‘speech-act’ it must make known the unique divine Word through the medium of human words. It therefore requires the employment of metaphoric and symbolic language: thus Scripture’s necessity. For Thomas, Scripture conveys divine Revelation through its literal and spiritual senses. Its divine intent can only be gained by apprehending the spiritual sense in and through the literal, and not against it. Consequently, Thomas also insists that a proper interpretation of these scriptural senses is reserved to the Church’s teaching office. Such interpretations though can never exhaust the divine intent of these senses, otherwise at some point the Church would have to cease her preaching. As a consequence, the Church will always discover new meanings in Scripture, through the literal and spiritual senses.

As with Thomas, Ratzinger affirmed that Revelation precedes Scripture and is not identified with it; and thus, neither Ratzinger nor Aquinas can be considered *sola scripturists*. Both Aquinas and Ratzinger hold that Scripture’s role in mediating Revelation requires a correct understanding of Scripture’s senses and how they operate. For Ratzinger though, in order to obtain Scripture’s revelatory intent one must attain Scripture’s Spirit. To fail in this regard is to remain in the ‘Old Testament,’ so to speak. The New Testament, therefore, consists not in a letter (*gramma*) but in the Spirit (*pneuma*). By going beyond the ‘clothing’ of Scripture’s human words, one is able to attain its divine meaning—an insight that can only be had by the subject receiving a divine illumination, whether through the *lumen Propheticum* for the Prophet or the *lumen fidei* for the believer. For Ratzinger, therefore, properly speaking Scripture does not reside in the letter of Scripture but its Spirit. To attain Scripture’s Spirit one must necessarily enter into the faith of the Church, which as we have seen, is to enter into the ‘Christ-event.’ An individual’s interpretation of Scripture can only be valid insofar as he or she enters into the ‘Christ-event,’ through the Church’s faith, life and worship, not only because the Church (in which Christ is truly present) is Revelation’s proper dialogue partner and its proper receiving subject, but also because Scripture’s Spirit is now indeed Christ himself (see Lk 24:27). As a consequence, there is now only one ‘material principle’ of Revelation, not Scripture (or at least, not its letter—i.e., its

gramma) but the ‘Christ-event’ (which is Scripture’s Spirit—i.e., its *pneuma*). In this, we can clearly identify a development in Ratzinger’s thought from Thomas’s understanding of Scripture’s role in communicating Revelation. Again, this development arises from Ratzinger’s personalist emphasis and his understanding of Revelation’s dialogical nature. Despite this development, though, again, Ratzinger’s understanding is not at variance to Thomas’s but is in accordance with his principles.

3.5. The Trinitarian Metaphysical Foundations of their Revelation Theology: Thomas’s Intellectualism and Ratzinger’s Bonaventurian Voluntarism

Regarding the metaphysical foundations of their respective theology of divine Revelation, and therefore, their understanding of the manner by which it is communicated to successive generations, although both Aquinas and Ratzinger would agree that it resides in their Trinitarian theology, they indeed differ as to how this occurs. In accordance with his intellectualism, because Thomas understands the Father generating the Son (or the Word) through the action *ad intra* of paternal (intellectual) generation, whereby the Father ‘speaks’ or ‘utters’ the Word, he holds that the Word is the very *scientia* or doctrine of the Father. As such, therefore, for Thomas the Word has two manners of acting in the world: firstly, as the exemplary cause through whom all things are made (which is similar to Bonaventure’s position); and secondly, as restoring a fallen world through the Incarnation—whereby, in Christ, the Word is fully “clothed” in flesh. And thus, in Christ, all that the Father has spoken is made known to humanity (i.e., to the humanity of Christ, the ‘first fruits’ of redemption). Regarding the Incarnation, therefore, in line with Thomas’s intellectualism, he emphasises the doctrinal aspect of the Revelation which comes through Christ. And he therefore posits that the ultimate purpose of divine Revelation is to make known to man his supernatural ultimate end.

On the other hand, in accordance with his voluntarism, Bonaventure and therefore Ratzinger understand the Word as emanating from the Father through the latter’s fecund goodness (a notion borrowed from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite). But since the *Word* emanates from the Father, as with Thomas, he is the exemplary cause of creation, and yet, since the cause of his emanation resides in the Father’s infinite goodness, which is self-diffusive, the ultimate purpose for God’s Revelation and the Incarnation resides

not so much with the doctrine (or *scientia*) which Christ is, or reveals, as it is with the Revelation of God's love and its consequent communion of persons. Here again, we find exemplified the personalist approach of Ratzinger (and Bonaventure) in contrast to Thomas's intellectualist approach.

4. Conclusion: The Achievement of the Thesis's Goals

In Section 2 of Chapter One I stated that this thesis sought to investigate Thomas Aquinas and Joseph Ratzinger's understanding of how divine Revelation is transmitted to successive generations, and proposed that a comparative study of these two theologians' positions needed to be undertaken. In doing this my intention was to discover whether or not the principles of Ratzinger's theology in this regard are in conformity with Aquinas's, and, if so, to see whether or not Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation's communication provides us with any development from that of Aquinas. In order to achieve this goal both theologians' theology in this regard needed to be detailed so as to compare the two. This was comprehensively achieved by the second and third chapters of this thesis.

Concerning the first question, of whether or not Ratzinger's theology of divine Revelation's transmission to successive generations coincides with the principles of Thomas Aquinas's theology of the same, it can safely be said that essential it does. Regarding the second question, of whether or not Ratzinger's theology in this regard has advanced the science beyond Aquinas's understanding, it must be said that he has, despite the fact that at root both theologians hold to the essential nature of divine Revelation consisting in it being a divine 'speech-act.' Thus, in Ratzinger's theology of Revelation's transmission there is an important development from that of Aquinas's theology of the same.

I argue that Ratzinger advanced Aquinas's theology of Revelation's transmission, in four important ways:

Firstly, due to Aquinas's intellectualism he understood that divine Revelation primarily consists in the conveyance of divine knowledge (through Revelation's divine 'speech-act') to the intellects of Christ and the Prophets (via the *lumen Propheticum* for the Prophets and the Beatific Vision for Christ). This consequently influenced his

understanding of Revelation's transmission to successive generations. He taught that it is not so much 'Revelation' *per se* that is transmitted but rather the intellectual content of this Revelation, namely *sacra doctrina*. In this, although Thomas does not teach that Revelation ceased with the death of the last Apostle (as the 20th Century neo-Scholastics had contended) he does hold that the Apostles were the beneficiaries of the fullest knowledge imparted by divine Revelation (from Christ).¹⁵ From his personalism Ratzinger advanced this understanding by positing that because Revelation is essentially a divine 'speech-act' it is necessarily dialogical, and that this dialogue unfolds in history¹⁶; and consequently, opposed to the neo-Scholastics, he held that Revelation cannot be understood as the imparting of static propositional truths by God to mankind, and nor can it be seen to have ceased with the death of the last Apostle.¹⁷ Thus, whereas Thomas effectively held that Revelation 'ended' with the historical revelatory act of God conforming Christ or the Prophet's intellective judgment to the divine foreknowledge via the Beatific Vision and the *Lumen Propheticum* (respectively), Ratzinger held that Revelation has an ongoing history.

As a consequence of this first point, I would argue that Ratzinger has advanced Thomas's doctrine here by positing that *what* is transmitted to successive generations is not so much *sacra doctrina* (although he would not deny this, and thus there is a certain complementarity between the two understandings on this point), but rather the 'Christ-event,' as Ratzinger calls it.

Then thirdly, for Thomas, the notion of Tradition is more akin to it being the medium by which *sacra doctrina* is passed on to successive generations via the teaching and preaching of the Church; whereas for Ratzinger, Tradition has more of a dynamic connotation since it consists in the conveyance of a 'Who' rather than a *scientia*—here I would argue that there is more of a difference of emphasis, which has arisen from Aquinas's intellectualism and Ratzinger's personalism. Again, since Ratzinger does not

¹⁵ See *Summa theologiae*, I, q.1, a.8 ad 2; I, q.43, a.7 ad 6; I, q.117, a.2 ad 1 et 2; I-II, q.106, a.4; II-II, q.174, a.6. III, q.83, a.4 ad 2.

¹⁶ See Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition," 64-65.

¹⁷ See Collins, *The Word Made Love*, 27: Ratzinger's understanding of Revelation is not as a body of static truths to be believed but as "the dynamic of an *unfolding event*, in turn giving it a narrative texture rather than a propositional one." Regarding Ratzinger on Revelation ceasing with the death of the last Apostle, see: Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, 80.

deny that Christ, being the Word of God, is the very *scientia* of the Father, he does not deny Thomas's doctrinal emphasis. And thus, Ratzinger's emphasis here consists more in a development of Thomas's theology rather than in its rejection.

Concerning their respective notions of the role Scripture plays in Revelation's transmission, Aquinas and Ratzinger are in agreement that neither of them hold to the *sola scripturist* principle, and yet they differ in their emphasis on how Scripture conveys or mediates divine Revelation. For Thomas, Scripture conveys the *sacra doctrina* revealed to and taught by the Prophets and Apostles, and its revelatory intent is gained through the understanding of its literal and spiritual senses; whereas for Ratzinger, 'Scripture' in the New Testament dispensation consists not in its *gramma* but in its *pneuma*, which is Christ.

I believe though that the most fundamental difference between Aquinas and Ratzinger's understandings of the way in which divine Revelation is transmitted or communicated to successive generations resides in Aquinas's intellectualism and Ratzinger's personalism.

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ES Denzinger, Heinrich. *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*. Edited by Peter Hünermann. 43rd Edition. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012.

PL *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 217 vols., Paris, 1844-1855. This is a collection of ancient Christian sources in Latin.

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