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In societatem filii eius: Predestination in/as Friendship with God in Thomas Aquinas

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Summary: This paper proposes a reading of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of predestination as fundamentally oriented towards and realized in friendship with God. On this reading, the seemingly disparate questions, "What does it mean to be predestined?" and "What does it mean to grow in friendship with God?" are not only mutually illuminating but ultimately coterminous. In the first part of the paper, I contextualize this theological rapprochement by foregrounding Aquinas' treatment in the *Summa Theologiae* of predestination as a Christocentric, communal reality, and by considering friendship with God as the end of Aquinas' doctrine of grace. In the second part, I attend to Aquinas' scriptural commentaries on Romans and the Gospel of John, in order to conduct a reading of predestination in/as friendship with God. Ultimately, as invited in friendship and adopted in grace into the life of Christ, God's ordering of the rational creature to eternal life is nothing other than God's ordering of humanity as *viator* to friendship with Himself in the inner life of Trinitarian love itself.

Keywords: Aquinas, Predestination, Christ, Friendship, Trinitarian Love

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Artikel wird eine Lektüre der Prädestinationslehre von Thomas von Aquin vorgeschlagen, die sich grundlegend an Gott orientiert und in Freundschaft mit ihm verwirklicht. Bei dieser Lesart sind die scheinbar unterschiedlichen Fragen: „Was bedeutet es, prädestiniert zu sein?“ und „Was bedeutet es, in Freundschaft mit Gott zu wachsen?“ nicht nur wechselseitig aufschlussreich, sondern letztendlich sinnlich. Im ersten Teil des Artikels kontextualisiere ich diese theologische Annäherung, indem ich die Behandlung durch Aquin in der *Summa Theologiae* der Prädestination als christozentrische, gemeinschaftliche Realität in den Vordergrund stelle und die Freundschaft mit Gott als den Zweck der Gnadenlehre von Aquin betrachte. Im zweiten Teil beschäftige ich mich mit den schriftlichen Kommentaren von Aquin zu den Römern und dem Johannesevangelium, um eine Lesart der Prädestination in/als Freundschaft mit Gott durchzuführen. Letztendlich ist Gottes Ordnung der rationalen Kreatur zum

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ewigen Leben nichts anderes als Gottes Ordnung der Menschheit als *Viator* der Freundschaft mit ihm selbst im inneren Leben der trinitarischen Liebe, wie sie in Freundschaft aufgefordert und in Gnade in das Leben Christi aufgenommen wurde.

Schlüsselwörter: Thomas von Aquin, Prädestination, Christus, Freundschaft, Trinitarische Liebe

I. Introduction

There are few theological topics more perplexing and inviting as the doctrine of predestination. In the *Summa Theologiae* (*ST*), Thomas Aquinas first addresses predestination in q. 23 of the *prima pars*, complemented by his Treatise on Grace in the *prima secundae*, qq. 109–114. In the latter, Aquinas explores in detail the gift of grace as the means of humanity’s salvation: God enacts salvation both operatively and co-operatively, by means of the movement and perseverance of *auxilium* and the infusion of healing and elevating habitual grace, by which humanity performs meritorious works of charity.

Although Aquinas’ treatment of grace is indeed central to his treatment of predestination in the life of the *viator*, equally if not more important to defining concretely what it means for humanity to participate in grace is the topic of friendship with God. In this paper, I offer that by attending to Aquinas’ reflections on predestination and friendship with God in the *Summa Theologiae*, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, and *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, we discover that the two seemingly disparate topics are not only mutually illuminating but ultimately coterminous. Thus to ask, “What does it mean to be predestined?” and “What does it mean to grow in friendship with God?” is to ask one and the same question, rendering predestination all the more practical and friendship the more profound.

In the first part of the paper, I will attempt to put “salvation in context” by introducing Aquinas’ treatment in the *Summa* of predestination in Christ and friendship with God. In the second part, I will offer a reading of predestination as friendship with God, looking first to Aquinas’ scriptural commentaries of John 15:15 and Romans 8:15 in particular, and what resources they offer ultimately for considering the Trinitarian love as the final end of God’s predestining will.

II. Salvation in Context

In qq. 22–23 of the *prima pars*, Aquinas offers a basic definition of divine providence as “the type of things ordered towards an end” which pre-exists in the divine mind,¹ and further specifies predestination as the application of providence to the rational creature, as “a kind of type of the ordering of some persons towards eternal salvation, existing in the divine mind.”² For all his insight into this unique nexus of God’s gratuitous ordering of creation and man’s freedom, Aquinas too has nonetheless been criticized as producing a “strained” account of predestination.

According to Lee H. Yearley, “Thomas’ account is coherent, understandable, and fairly demonstrable at the level of providence as a structure of realization allowing for better and worse use. In the realm of predestination the coherence and understandability become strained and the general demonstrability almost disappears.”³

1. Predestination in Christ

In response, we might look helpfully beyond the *prima pars* to the *tertia pars*, in which Aquinas’ “strained” theology of predestination is given its proper grounding, direction and fulfillment in Christ.⁴ In q.24 of the *tertia pars*, Aquinas locates Jesus Christ in his humanity at the heart of humanity’s predestination. In Article 1 entitled, “Was Christ predestinated?” Aquinas answers in the affirmative, claiming that predestination is the logical consequence of the eternal origins of the Incarnation. He writes, “it is impossible to maintain that God did not decree from eternity that he was to bring this [the Incarnation] about in time, for this would be equivalent to asserting that the divine mind is subject to development. [...] It is in

1 *STI*, q.22, a.1, co.

2 *STI*, q.23, a.2, co.

3 Lee H. YEARLY, “St. Thomas Aquinas on Providence and Predestination,” *Anglican Theological Review* 49:4 (1967): 423.

4 In this spirit, Matthew Levering in his essay, “Aquinas on Romans 8: Predestination in Context,” writes, “By emphasizing the historical unfolding of God’s eternal plan for the temporal missions of Son and the Holy Spirit, Aquinas’ commentary on Romans thus makes especially clear how the doctrine of predestination, in the *Summa theologiae*, takes on its true shape in the *secunda* and *tertia pars*. Matthew LEVERING, “Aquinas on Romans 8: Predestination in Context,” *Reading Romans with St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012) 196.

this sense that Christ is said to have been predestinated.”⁵ Coupled with this temporal fulfillment of God’s eternal plan is the specific humanity of Christ as that which is predestined to union with the Son of God: “For the human nature was not always united to the Word; and it was by divine favour accorded to this human nature that it was united in person to the Son of God.”⁶

Specifically, Aquinas reveals Christ as the *pattern* and *cause* of humanity’s predestination. He establishes the pattern of that to which humanity is called, i.e. to adoption into his very sonship in God: “Christ was predestinated to being the Son of God by nature; and we are predestinated to adoptive sonship which is a certain shared likeness in the sonship by nature. Thus we read, *Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son.*”⁷ Therefore, insofar as humanity may be understood as patterned off of Christ’s sonship, we can say ultimately that Christ incarnate is the exemplar and cause of man’s predestination. Of course, any act of predestination in general derives from God, whether it is of Christ or of humanity. Yet as Aquinas specifies, Christ is always logically prior, for “if predestination is considered in terms of its result then Christ’s predestination is the cause of ours; for God, in his eternal act of predestination, established that our salvation should come about through Jesus Christ.”⁸ As Matthew Levering summarizes, “Aquinas reminds us that Christ Jesus does not stand outside the order of predestination: rather, as the Son of God he predestines, and as man he is predestined and is the cause of our predestination.”⁹

Or in the words of Herbert McCabe, predestination concerns “nothing but our sharing in this predestined freedom that Christ has.”¹⁰ Rather than frame the question in oblique philosophical jargon, or rehearse the traditional theological arguments of the past, McCabe translates this causal and exemplary effect of Christ’s predestination into theatrical terminology. Commenting on Paul’s letter to the Romans 8:30 (“And those whom he predestined he also called; and those

5 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume 50, The One Mediator* (3a. 16–26), transl. by Colman E. O’NEILL O.P. (Great Britain: Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited, 1965), *ST III*, q. 24, a. 1, co.

6 *ST III*, q. 24, a. 2, co.

7 *ST III*, q. 24, a. 3, co. Sonship is a central theological term to this paper, which will be treated in more detail in Section 3.2.

8 *ST III*, q. 24, a. 4, co. It is interesting to further note that the reply to obj. 3 notes that God could have found “some other cause” than the Incarnation to effect salvation through his predestining will. Without investigating further, we can appreciate the intentionality and unique role to which Christ was chosen as “cause of our salvation.”

9 LEVERING, “Aquinas on Romans 8,” 213.

10 Herbert MCCABE, O.P., *God Still Matters*, ed. by Brian DAVIES, O.P. (London: Continuum, 2002), 184.

whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified”), McCabe depicts Christ as the protagonist of a divine drama:

Predestination means first of all the predestination of Christ, and this means that the life of Jesus was a divine drama, God’s self-revelation, the enactment of his plan. And Paul is saying that what we mean by our salvation is being taken up into the same plan of God in Christ [...] Our predestination means that our Christian lives are part of the pattern of God’s revelation of himself in Christ. We are playing our part in the divine drama. We are ‘conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be first born among many brethren’ [...] So that in seeing and welcoming us, God is seeing and welcoming his beloved Son.¹¹

McCabe’s dramatic reading returns the reader to Paul’s original exhortation in the letter to the Romans, in which the Christological is emphatically evangelical. Paul appeals not to individuals, but ultimately to the *community* of believers who are patterned after Christ. Most emphasizes that Paul preaches on the topic of predestination not in order to theorize abstractly concerning the God of Jesus Christ but “to encourage all the faithful.”¹² St. Paul thus addresses all Christians, refusing further to distinguish them into those who are called and predestined and those who are merely called.¹³ “In his mind,” writes Most, “*kletos*, ‘one who is called,’ refers to one who has answered the call; he has been called effectively (Cornely, Prat). All Christians are called in that sense.”¹⁴ Nor does predestination concern an identifiable demography of Christians throughout history over against non-Christians presumed to be excluded from the life of Christ. As Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch note in their introduction to *The Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, the temptation to *hubris* in being the “elect” is equally illusive, and directly frustrates the unity intended in the Body of Christ throughout history:

the Jews took pride in the blessings and advantages of the Old Covenant not shared by the Gentiles (2:1–3:20); and the Gentiles claimed to have replaced Israel as the new and beloved

11 Ibid., 183. He further depicts this Christic drama as a “huge wave, a great surge of the love of God sweeping us up to him. We are carried by this wave even into the courts of heaven even into the life of the Trinity itself, the life of eternal love.” Ibid. This wave imagery too reifies the unstoppable power of the love of God for humanity enacted in predestination.

12 William G. MOST, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God* (Front Royal: Christendom Press, 1997), 22.

13 Most mentions that St. Augustine first introduced this inclination to reprobation as intrinsic to the gratuity of predestination, though condemned by later exegetes. Most cites the words of Père Legrange, who comments: “That opinion, so full of consequences, *isolated* in ancient times, and *rejected* by modern authors [...] *has no foundation in the text and is contrary to the whole context.*” M. J. LAGRANGE, O.P., *Saint Paul, Epître aux Romains* (Gabalda, Paris, 1931), 214.

14 MOST, *Grace, Predestination*, 22.

people of God (11:13–32). For this reason, Paul argues at length for the unity and equality of all peoples in Jesus Christ (3:28–30) and challenges believers of every nationality to welcome one another as servants and worshippers of the same Lord (10:12; 15:7–12).¹⁵

In this light, Romans is to be read as addressed to an ever-expansive *community* of belief: neither to the prideful nor the factional, nor to isolated individuals. As Lagrange concludes, interpreting Romans 8:30, “*Paul does not think of the particular destiny of each Christian in the designs of God, but of the designs of God for Christianity; those who are in his mind are the faithful as a group, those who have answered his call.*”¹⁶

2. Friendship with God as the End of Grace

In order to best contextualize Aquinas’ robust account of friendship in the spiritual life, we might helpfully look first to its grounding in the doctrine of grace. Just as we can move from understanding predestination as “an aloof divine decision to save some individual human beings”¹⁷ to a Christocentric, communal reality, so can we re-contextualize Aquinas’ treatment of grace in the *Summa* as oriented not merely towards individual merit but ultimately towards gratuitous, ongoing *relationship* with God. Beginning with q. 109 in the *prima secundae* on the “necessity of grace,” Aquinas’ treatise on grace details humanity’s progression in and through the unmerited gift of grace towards meriting beatitude. Everlasting life, he explains, “is an end exceeding the proportion of human nature [...] Hence man, by his natural endowments, cannot produce meritorious works proportionate to everlasting life.”¹⁸ As Denys Turner comments in *Thomas Aquinas: a Portrait*, “[t]he inequality between creature and Creator is even more ‘original’ than any caused by original sin, and is such that God and human creatures cannot naturally share anything, above all they cannot share a common life.”¹⁹ Sin does work to exacerbate this separation, but inequality with God is native to man as created.

¹⁵ *The Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 13.

¹⁶ LAGRANGE, O.P., *Saint Paul*, 217. Cited within MOST, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 22.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁸ *STI–II*, q.109, a.5, co.

¹⁹ Denys TURNER, *Thomas Aquinas: a Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 149.

This is an ontological distance of natures that even Aristotle understood as disqualifying man's communality with the divine.²⁰

In order to reconcile this radical ontological inequality, Aquinas concludes that “a higher force is needed, viz. the force of grace.”²¹ Aquinas defines grace as a “gratuitous strength superadded to natural strength” (*virtute gratuita superaddita virtuti naturae*), further subdividing its various operations in man for three purposes: “in order to be healed, and furthermore in order to carry out works of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious. Beyond this, in both states man needs the Divine help, that he may be moved to act well.”²² Thus, the divine help (*auxilium*) provides the good intention of the act, and the infusion of habitual grace in the forms of *gratia sanans* and *gratia elevans* re-orders the passions under the rational will, and directs the rational will to seek God as the object of his beatitude.

The climax of Aquinas' treatise on grace is q.114 of the *prima secundae*, “Of Merit,” in which he addresses grace in relation to the reward of eternal life. For Aquinas, an award is “something bestowed by reason of merit” and “something given anyone in return for work or toil, as a price for it.”²³ As Joseph Wawrykow explicates in *God's Grace & Human Action*, Aquinas consistently articulates merit in terms of justice: “In the *Scriptum* and in the *Summa*, ‘merit’ consistently refers to the establishment of a right in justice to a reward from God [...] to explicate the biblical texts affirming God's just reward of good behavior.”²⁴ It is “just” that graced, meritorious activity be rewarded in “a kind of equality”²⁵ (*aequalitas quaedam*) due to the work done by man for God. This “kind of equality,” Aquinas clarifies, is the fruit not merely from human efforts, or congruous merit,²⁶ but ultimately as a gift of condignity by the Holy Spirit: “inasmuch as it springs from the free will, there can be no condignity because of the great inequality [...] If, however, we speak of a meritorious work, inasmuch as it proceeds from the grace of

20 “for friendship can survive many losses, but when one side is removed at a great distance—as a god is—then it is no longer possible.” Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. and ed. by Roger CRISP (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) VIII.7, 152. Citation drawn from Joseph BOBİK, *Veritas Divina: Aquinas on Divine Truth* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2001) 92.

21 *STI-II*, q. 109, a. 5, co.

22 *STI-II*, q. 109, a. 2, co.

23 *STI-II*, q. 109, a. 2, s. c. and co.

24 Joseph P. WAWRYKOW, *God's Grace & Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), ix.

25 *STI-II*, q. 114, a. 1, co.

26 Aquinas defines congruous merit as “an equality of proportion” whereby “if a man does what he can, God should reward him according to the excellence of his power.” *STI-II*, q. 114, a. 4, co.

the Holy Ghost moving us to life everlasting, it is meritorious of life everlasting condignly.”²⁷

It is important to note that, in line with the primacy of Christ’s predestination in understanding humanity’s predestination, so too is Christ capable not only of meriting eternal life condignly, but through God’s predestining will to merit eternal life for others. “Christ has been ordained,” writes Wawrykow, “to a greater role. Christ has been chosen by God to be the savior of all, through whose acts the possibility of salvation is achieved [...] Thus, Christ alone can merit condignly for others because God has ordained Christ and Christ’s acts do this.”²⁸ Wawrykow thus echoes Aquinas’ own emphasis on Christ’s manuaction of fallen humanity towards the divine life:

each one of us is moved by God to reach life everlasting through the gift of grace; hence condign merit does not reach beyond this motion. But Christ’s soul is moved by God through grace, not only so as to reach the glory of life everlasting, but so as to lead others to it, in as much as He is the Head of the Church, and the Author of human salvation, according to Heb. 2:10: “Who hath brought many children into the glory [to perfect] the Author of their salvation.”²⁹

The question arises: what does such condignity look like as the end of human perfection? Is eternal life a kind of static or transactional exchange of justice, whereby God welcomes man into eternal life as a kind of restitution for the condign “work or toil” merited in one’s lifetime?

Missing in this account of grace is not so much an internal deficiency on the part of grace and justification, but rather its logical extension into an account of *friendship* as that which Aquinas finds at the heart of any activity of charity. Acts of charity themselves constitute the “merit” of grace, which establish not merely condign merit, but loving, relational friendship with God. As Aquinas comments of charity in the *secunda secundae*, “Since [...] there is something in common between man and God, inasmuch as God communicates, i.e., offers, His beatitude to us, some sort of friendship ought to be founded on that offer.”³⁰ Far from a transactional vision of salvation offered at arm’s length, Aquinas reveals that salvation is realized in and as the embrace of friendship. It is not the reward of a God pleased merely with man’s work on earth, but the eternal continuation of the love of God for humanity and humanity for God that began in the earthly life of grace. As Aquinas mentions in his *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics*, the

27 Ibid.

28 WAWRYKOW, *God’s Grace & Human Action*, 217.

29 *ST I–II*, q. 114, a. 6, co.

30 *ST II–II* q. 23 a. 1, co.

distinction between the equality of justice and charity of friendship is not one of theological difference but rather of logical progression, the former enabling and issuing into the latter:

The reason for this difference (i.e. between friendship and justice) is that friendship is a kind of union that cannot exist between widely separated persons; but they must approach equality. Hence it pertains to friendship to use an equality already uniformly established, but it pertains to justice to reduce unequal things to an equality. When equality exists the work of justice is done. For that reason equality is the goal of justice and the starting point of friendship.³¹

In order to be meritorious in the first place, grace must be actualized by charity. As Paul Wadell remarks simply, “[w]hat grace enables charity completes.”³² In this way, grace enables participation in and foretaste of perfect *friendship* with God in charity. “By identifying charity as friendship,” Wadell notes, “Thomas is claiming that not any relationship of the Christian with God is acceptable, but *only* a relationship of friendship” (emphasis mine).³³ Without this emphasis on the activity of charity as the ultimate horizon of grace, it is inversely easier to discern the ways in which grace can potentially *not* come to fruition, whether via operating grace (*gratia operans*) that is infused in one’s soul but never cooperated with (*gratia cooperans*),³⁴ or a failure to persevere in grace.

Therefore, Aquinas concludes that beyond the miracle of condign merit through Christ Jesus and in the grace of the Holy Spirit, God invites humanity to nothing less than intimate friendship with God. Especially given the fact that Aquinas’ preferred mode of understanding the grace of charity is the activity of

31 Thomas AQUINAS, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Aristotle’s Love and Friendship: Ethics-Books VIII–IX*, trans. by Pierre CONWAY, O.P. (Providence: The Providence College Press, 1951), 501. Cited within William W. YOUNG III, *The Politics of Praise: Naming God and Friendship in Aquinas and Derrida* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 104.

32 Paul J. WADELL, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 126.

33 Paul J. WADELL, *Friends of God: Virtues and Gifts in Aquinas* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1991), 2.

34 Within this internal division of habitual grace into operating habitual grace and cooperating habitual grace, “there is a double effect, even as of every other form; the first of which is ‘being,’ and second, ‘operation’; thus the work of heat is to make its subject hot, and to give heat outwardly. And thus habitual grace, inasmuch as it heals and justifies the soul, or makes it pleasing to God, is called operating grace; but inasmuch as it is the principle of meritorious works, which springs from the free-will, it is called cooperating grace.” *ST I–II*, q.111, a.2. The activity of friendship may be viewed as this giving “heat” outwardly, after having been made “hot,” i.e., to be a friend of God by the grace of God.

friendship,³⁵ many scholars have connected this theological emphasis to the strength and importance of Aquinas' own friendships in his personal life,³⁶ especially his scribe and confessor, Reginald of Piperno,³⁷ and his brother, Reginald d'Aquino.³⁸ Yet as always, personal relationship with Christ took pride of place, a devotion around which both his theological writing and his prayer life revolved.³⁹

For Aquinas, the charity of friendship is expressed through benevolence (*benevolentia*) and reciprocity (*communicatio*). In benevolence, "we love someone so as to wish good to him" rather than love someone for the good he or she provides for ourselves (*concupiscentia*).⁴⁰ Anthony Keaty, drawing upon Wadell, interprets

35 As Mary Ann Fatula writes, "Other mystics have used spousal imagery to convey the depth of God's nearness to us. But Thomas began to see that only profound friendship-love, with its dimensions of equality, reciprocity, and mutual self-revelation, forms the heart of all intimacy, even the spousal union." Mary Ann FATULA, O.P., *Thomas Aquinas, Preacher and Friend* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 31.

36 *Ibid.*, 31.: "He was especially close to his sister, Theodora, and to his niece, Frances. Thomas was dear friends with his mentor, John of San Guiliano; his beloved teacher, Albert the Great; and, most of all, his secretary and devoted companion, Reginald of Piperno, to whom he disclosed all the secrets of his heart." Jean-Pierre Torrell mentions Aquinas' dedication of the *Catena Aurea* to Cardinal Annibaldo d'Annibaldi, his former student and his provisional successor at Saint-Jacques, with whom he was "united by bonds of friendship." Jean-Pierre TORRELL, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Volume 1, The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert ROYAL (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 137.

37 "Reginald's functions as socius were to hear the master's confession, to serve him at Mass, to say Mass himself and allow Thomas to serve or at least attend if he were ill, to accompany him on journeys, to take dictation, and even to copy Thomas's *littera inintelligibilis* into legible script. He was more than a mere secretary who copied and took dictation; he was a personal companion, looking after all Thomas's needs." James A. WEISHEIPL, O.P., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), 111.

38 Among prayers once made first for clarity of mind & purity of body, and second for humility of rank, he prays thirdly "that I should know what had become of the soul of my brother Reginald who suffered so cruel a death in defense of the Church. And all three prayers my God has answered; I know this by revelation." *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents*, ed. by Kenelm FOSTER, O.P. (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1959), 42. When Emperor Frederick II lost papal support in his deposition by the Council of Lyons in 1245, Thomas Aquinas' brother Reginald d'Aquino was involved in a failed assassination attempt on his life. Reginald was executed by Frederick, and promptly considered a martyr by the family. *Ibid.*, 48.

39 Torrell recounts the story of Thomas' levitation in prayer, during the time in Naples from 1272-3 while he was writing the questions on the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord, as such an instance of intense love of Jesus: "As was his habit, he prayed quite early in the morning in the chapel of Saint Nicholas; Dominic of Caserta, the sacristan who observed him, saw him in levitation and heard a voice coming from the crucifix: 'You have spoken well of me, Thomas, what should be your reward?' – 'Nothing other than Thee, Lord.'" Jean-Pierre TORRELL, *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Vol. 1*, 285.

40 *ST II-II*, q. 23, a. 1, co.

benevolence as an exacting love, which “impl[ies] that the true friend makes the active seeking of the friend’s true good ‘the sustaining project of the lover’s life.’”⁴¹ Aquinas moreover offers in *ST II–II*, q. 23, a. 1 that this mutual love (*mutua amatio*)⁴² that is between friends⁴³ is the very love with which God desires our friendship and participation in divinity.⁴⁴ In this way, the mutuality of friendship translates directly into growth in holiness. As David Burrell, C.S.C. writes, humanity participates in his own transformation by charity as a gift to God, “offering a new ordering for all the other virtues to make one’s life a wholehearted response to the creator’s invitation (*ST 2–2.23.8*) [...] [the theological virtue of charity] is a created participation in God’s love which, orienting us to the source of all existence, thereby orders all our other dispositions to become responses to that same invitation [...]”⁴⁵

III. Predestination Realized in/as Friendship

Thus far, we have considered humanity’s predestination to eternal life as patterned upon the humanity and mission of Christ, and friendship as the form by which grace effects union with God. Might Aquinas’ treatment of predestination in Christ and friendship with God be read as mutually illuminating? That is to say, can we understand predestination as a doctrine realized in friendship with God? In this light, God’s ordering of the rational creature to eternal life is nothing other than God’s ordering of humanity to friendship with Himself: the gratuitous gift of eternal community, ultimately ordered toward the *mutua amatio* of Trinitarian love itself.

In order to vindicate a reading of predestination in/as friendship with God, and conversely, friendship with God as the origin, means, and end of predestination, we might fruitfully look to Aquinas’ engagement with Sacred Scripture, and in particular, his meditations on John 15:15 and Romans 8:15⁴⁶. This methodologi-

⁴¹ Anthony W. KEATY, “Thomas’s Authority for Identifying Charity as Friendship: Aristotle or John 15:15?” *The Thomist* 62:4 (1998): 584. Internal quote from WADELL, *Friends of God*, 31.

⁴² *ST II–II*, q. 23, a. 1, co.

⁴³ “amicus est amico amicus,” *ST II–II*, q. 23, a. 1, co.

⁴⁴ “Accordingly, since there is a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication [...]” *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ David B. BURRELL, C.S.C., *Friendship and Ways to Truth* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 75.

⁴⁶ This joint consultation and resonance of reading Aquinas’ commentaries on Sts. John and Paul together is prompted by multiple academic voices who notice their influence on Aquinas’ mature

cal re-prioritization of Scripture guiding theological reflection – and not vice versa – was certainly germane to Aquinas himself, for whom theology divorced of personal engagement with scripture loses its authority.⁴⁷

1. John 15:15: Friendship in Christ

John 15 is a particularly fecund chapter of the gospels for reflecting on the relationship between predestination and friendship. Jesus' address of his disciples during the Last Supper of John 15:12–17 marks a turning point in their relationship, which invites consideration of what exactly it means to be friends with the divine. In John 15:15, Jesus makes explicit his great love for his disciples, very simply, by calling them his friends: "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15). Aquinas himself takes note of John 15:15 in the *Summa*, utilizing it as the scriptural foundation for the *sed contra* of *ST II–II*, q. 23, a. 1, in which he first defines charity as friendship.⁴⁸

What is special about the gift of friendship offered by Christ? As Aquinas explains in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, friendship with Christ is intimately linked to the gifts of recognizing grace and receiving *sacra doctrina*. In explaining how exactly it is that the servant "does not know what his lord does,"

teaching on grace. In particular, see Paul MURRAY, O.P., *Aquinas at Prayer: The Bible, Mysticism and Poetry* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), 96. Murray further lauds Ceslaus Spicq, who "writing in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, went even further declaring that what we find 'in the commentaries of St Thomas on St John, and especially on St Paul, is the most mature fruit and the most perfect realization of scholastic medieval exegesis.'" Ceslaus SPICQ, 'Saint Thomas d'Aquin exégète,' *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 14 (Paris 1946): 694–738.

47 In a similar spirit, John Boyle challenges contemporary readers of Aquinas to adopt this self-same methodological *volte-face* in their own academic engagement with the *Summa*: "If Scripture is the foundation of theology, then more of the speculative science ought to be spelled out in the commentary. There should be full and rich exposition of grace, along the lines of questions 109–14 of the *Prima secundae* of the *Summa theologiae*. What such readers of St. Thomas want is for the commentaries on Scripture to illuminate the *Summa*. But what if it is rather more the other way around? Might we not ask the *Summa* to illuminate Scripture? Might not the *Summa* give its readers the foundational conceptual tools to be better able to undertake the serious study of sacred Scripture?" John F. BOYLE, "On the Relation of St. Thomas's Commentary on Romans to the *Summa Theologiae*," *Reading Romans with St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 75.

48 "It is written (Jn 15:15): 'I will not now call you servants [...] but My friends.' Now this was said to them by reason of nothing else than charity. Therefore charity is friendship." *ST II–II*, q. 23, a. 1, s. c.

Aquinas comments, “What things don’t [bad servants] know? Strictly speaking, they do not know what God does in us. For God acts in us in all the good we do [...] So the bad servant, darkened by the pride in his own heart, does not know what his lord does when his servant attributes to himself what he does.”⁴⁹ *Hubris* enslaves the bad servant to his own accomplishment; theologically, he is unable to recognize the *auxilium* and habitual gift of grace given by the lord God, who inspires and directs good action. The disciples are first called friends, therefore, because in their love of Christ, they recognize the movement of grace in their own hearts, not to mention recognize the lord God incarnate in the flesh who inspires the good that they do.

Secondly, by means of friendship with Christ, the *ratio*, or reasoning, ordering, or purpose, of God’s predestining will is offered in *sacra doctrina*, forming yet another mode by which friendship can be seen at one with predestination. As mentioned, God’s friendship originates in the communication of grace, and deepens with man’s recognition of the workings of God’s grace within oneself and with the reciprocal love and meritorious works that result. But equally important to such grace is the intellectual gift of the *ratio* of redemption itself. As Denys Turner remarks, “slaves may serve the life of their masters in the role of ‘instrumental cause,’ like a living tool [...] [b]ut even living tools cannot share the life of their masters as friends do, who ‘know [one another’s] business,’ its *ratio*.”⁵⁰

Young affirms that this intimate disclosure, revealed in the loving reciprocity of friendship, is at once a revelation of sacred doctrine *and* of God’s predestining will. He writes, “Predestination takes the form of friendship because Jesus discloses to the disciples ‘everything that I have heard from the Father.’ Thomas indicates that disclosure is a true sign of friendship, for a friend ‘reveals to his friend the secrets of his heart.’”⁵¹ Insofar as predestination is God’s ordering of man towards eternal life, it is deeply consonant with sacred doctrine itself, as “the revelation to us of the end toward which the world was created.”⁵²

49 Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John, chapters 9–21*, ed. by The Aquinas Institute, trans. Fr. Fabian R. LARCHER, O.P. (Lander: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2013), 293, § 2015.

50 TURNER, *Thomas Aquinas: a Portrait*, 149.

51 YOUNG, *The Politics of Praise*, 109. Cf. AQUINAS, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, 293, § 2016, “For the true sign of friendship is that a friend reveals the secrets of his heart to his friend. Since friends have one mind and heart, it does not seem that what one friend reveals to another is placed outside his own heart [...]” Cf. also *Summa contra Gentiles* (ScG) IV, c.21, no.5: “Of course, this is the proper mark of friendship: that one reveal his secrets to his friend. For, since charity unites affections and makes, as it were, one heart of two, one seems not to have dismissed from his heart that which he reveals to a friend.”

52 YOUNG, *The Politics of Praise*, 110.

Aquinas does distinguish, however, what Jesus Christ as the Son of God knows intimately from the Father, and what he has made known to the disciples. In his commentary on the Gospel of John in the *Catena Aurea*, Aquinas employs the interrogative wisdom of Augustine in order to more fully understand John's mention of "the things that I have heard of My Father":

But how did He make known to His disciples all things that He had heard from the Father, when He forebore saying many things, because he knew they as yet could not bear them? He made all things known to His disciples, i.e. He knew that He should make them known to them in that fullness of which the Apostle saith, *Then we shall know, even as we are known*. For as we look for the death of the flesh, and the salvation of the soul, so should we look for that knowledge of all things, which the Only-Begotten heard from the Father.⁵³

As Augustine claims, the incarnate Christ invites humanity to enter into a mystery that is yet latent in faith while on earth, and offered as a promise of the intimacy by which God the Son knows and loves God the Father. As Mary Ann Fatula writes, "Jesus is power for us because he is not only the mystery of God's closeness to us, but even more the mystery of the intimate closeness *within* God. 'No one has ever seen God. The only-begotten Son, in the Father's heart, has revealed God to us' (John 1:18)."⁵⁴ In man's friendship with Christ, defined both by the particularity of embodied, human friendship and by the grace of the Holy Spirit,⁵⁵ he already begins to glimpse the fullness of revelation that comes at the end of the rational creature's movement to God,⁵⁶ by loving the Son of God as a friend. Man

53 Thomas AQUINAS, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers by S. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. John Henry NEWMAN, vol. 4 (Oxford: J. G. F. and J. Rivington, 1845), 486.

54 WEISHEIPL, O.P., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino*, 63.

55 Aquinas writes, "Therefore, since by the Holy Spirit we are established as friends of God, fittingly enough it is by the Holy Spirit that men are said to receive the revelation of the divine mysteries. Hence, the Apostle says: 'It is written that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love him. But to us God has revealed them, by His Spirit.' (1 Cor. 2:9–10)." Thomas AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, ed. by Joseph KENNY, O.P. (New York: Hanover House, 1955–57), IV, c. 21, no. 5.

56 The emphasis on grace and friendship in Aquinas' commentary and its proximity to the completion of the *secunda pars* of the *ST* has led Young to view God and not man as the primary agent in the *secunda pars* of the *ST*, as is traditionally held in Aquinas' description in *ST I*, q.2 of the *secunda pars* as the section detailing "the rational creature's advance towards God," (*de motu rationalis creaturae in Deum*). Young writes, "Given the chronological proximity of the commentary [of the Gospel of John] and the *Summa*, as well as the consonance between their views, it is reasonable to argue that the *secunda pars* is as much about God's activity towards us, and how we should reciprocate such love, as a study in the intentionality and structure of human moral action." YOUNG, *The Politics of Praise*, 135.

is predestined by God to love as God loves, and man returns God's invitation to love in friendship.⁵⁷

Not only does our friendship with God make evident the gift of grace in our lives and make possible the loving reception of *sacra doctrina*, such revelation in turn also reinforces how we love one another. "These things I command you, that you love one another" (Jn 15:17). Young remarks on this progressive intimacy of knowledge and love in Christ thus:

In living out fidelity to these secrets, by attending to particulars through practical wisdom and the infusion of grace in theological virtue, our participation in *scientia Dei* and our friendship with God deepen [...] We keep the precepts of God close to our hearts by loving each other; as Thomas says, we remember God's love in loving the neighbor."⁵⁸

2. Romans 8:15: Divine Adoption

John 15:15 offers an enriching locus of theological reflection on the nature of divine friendship with Christ: how grace aids recognition of grace and the rational reception of revelation, and how predestination as friendship might propel man's eternal knowledge and love of God. Of equal if not greater importance to these questions for Aquinas is the letter of Paul to the Romans. Aquinas' devotion to Paul is generally recognized throughout his *oeuvre*. Paul predominates as a textual reference for Aquinas' treatise on grace,⁵⁹ not to mention in the *Scriptum* and

⁵⁷ Similarly, the temporality of God's love is another means by which Aquinas understands the relationship between predestination and friendship. As he writes in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*: "Now God's love is twofold. One is eternal, by which we are predestined: *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world* (Eph 1:4). The other is temporal, by which we are called by him, and this is simply the carrying out of predestination. And this is because those he chose by predestining them he also chose by calling them: *those whom he predestined he also called* (Rom. 8:30); *he chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles* (Luke 6:13)." AQUINAS, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 295, § 2020.

⁵⁸ YOUNG, *The Politics of Praise*, 110–11.

⁵⁹ In *Paul in the Summa Theologiae*, Matthew Levering writes that of the seventy Biblical quotations spanning I–II qq. 109–114, fifty-five come from Paul's three letters of Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians. Of these fifty-five, Romans is preponderant: "Romans is especially strong in question 109 (ten of sixteen) and question 113 (seven of nine). In question 111 Romans provides five of the eleven Pauline quotations, and in question 114 nine of seventeen. Romans is weakest in question 110 (one of five) and questions 112 (two of twelve)." Matthew LEVERING, *Paul in the Summa Theologiae* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 155–6.

the *tertia pars* of the *Summa*,⁶⁰ to such an extent that Levering suggests that “to read the *Summa Theologiae* means to have the words of Paul ringing in one’s ears.”⁶¹ In the aggregate treatment of grace in the *Summa* and in the *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Romans*, Aquinas engages closely with the Pauline epistles to produce his mature teaching on grace. It is informed, above all, by Pauline concerns of God’s justice and mercy, the mystery of God’s predestining will, the role of human freedom in participating in this providential order, and the central salvific mission of Jesus Christ.

In many ways, Romans 8:15 functions as a kind of theological epilogue to John 15:15, and intimates how in the friendship offered in Christ, God invites man into the very inner life of the Trinity. Aristotle once said famously that a friend is another self.⁶² In Romans 8:15, Paul challenges his audience in Rome to love Christ as their other Christic self.⁶³ This kind of Aristotelian baptism purports merely to a metaphorical unity of affection imagined between God and humanity; but Paul insists on nothing short of the miracle of humanity’s full adoption into the life of God: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom. 8:15–17)

The central claim of Romans 8 is not merely of friendship with Christ, but adoption by God the Father as his children, welcomed into the same rapport with which he loves God the Son. Aquinas embellishes filial adoption in terms of the

60 “Aquinas’ commentary on distinctions 1–22 of Book III of the *Sentences* contains 164 references to Paul, whereas Aquinas refers to Paul 502 times in questions 1–59 of the *tertia pars*. In both the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Summa Theologiae*, Paul is the most frequently cited biblical author (followed by John).” LEVERING, *Paul in the Summa Theologiae*, xiv.

61 *Ibid.*, 283. As Foster explains with reference to William of Tocco’s *Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis*, “[Thomas] wrote on all the epistles of Paul, which he valued above all writings, the Gospel alone excepted; and while engaged on this work in Paris, he is said to have had a vision of the Apostle.” FOSTER, *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 70.

62 “So, because each of these characteristics belongs to the good person in relation to himself, and he stands in the same relation to his friend as to himself (his friend being another self), friendship too seems to be one of these characteristics, and those who have them to be friends.” Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX, 4, 1166a 30–33.

63 This loving-other-as-self is present also in *ST II–II*, q. 30, a. 2, in which Aquinas describes pity as a grief for another by which one feels the pain “as one’s own”: “[f]or, since he who loves another looks upon his friend as another self [*Quia enim amans reputat amicum tanquam seipsum*], he counts his friend’s hurt as his own so that he grieves for his friend’s hurt as though he were hurt himself.”

lavish riches of God's eternal life, which is at one with his being, and is offered to his children as an inheritance:

Now one's heir is a person who receives or gets his chief goods and not some small gifts [...] Now the chief good by which God is rich is himself. For he is rich of himself and not in virtue of something else, because he does not need the goods other have: *you do not need my goods* (Ps 15:2). Hence the children of God obtain God himself as their inheritance: *the Lord is my chosen portion* (Ps 16:5); *the Lord is my portion, says my soul* (Lam 3:24).⁶⁴

By grace, God extends the bounty of divine inheritance to all humanity. Through the redemption of God's own son, the believer is baptized into divine communion as an acquaintance or friend, and ultimately as assimilated in the sonship and inheritance of Christ: "If some are children, namely, through the Spirit, it follows that they are heirs, because the inheritance is owed not only to the natural child but also to the adopted: *we have been born anew to an inheritance which is imperishable* (1 Pet 1:4); *yea, I have a goodly heritage* (Ps 16:6).⁶⁵ This is the true source of the condignity discussed in *ST I-II*, q. 114, a. 3, which Aquinas fittingly connects to Romans, writing, "the worth of the work depends on the dignity of grace, whereby a man, being made a partaker of the divine Nature, is adopted as a son of God, to whom the inheritance is due by right of adoption, according to Romans 8:17: 'If sons, heirs also.'"⁶⁶

From the work of grace deriving from God's predestining will, through its actualization in Christ's salvific call to friendship with God in John 15:15, the final and greatest theological surprise of grace arrives in Romans 8:15. Here, Paul exhorts believers to love *as* God's own self, to see one's friend of Christ *as* one's self. As mentioned, the community of faith is conformed in the grace of friendship into the very person of Christ, whose identity and incarnate earthly mission is a return of love to God the Father. As W. Norris Clarke writes in his *Explorations in Metaphysics*, "The whole personality of Jesus as expressed in the Gospels is also totally relational, dialogical, *toward the Father*. 'All that I have received from my Father [...] all that my Father has he has given to me [...] my food is to do my Father's will,' etc."⁶⁷ This relationality is intimated in Romans 8:15, when Paul quotes Christ's shout of love from the cross, "Abba, Father."⁶⁸ Thus grace as an exercise

⁶⁴ AQUINAS, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, 217 § 646.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *ST I-II*, q. 114, a. 3, co.

⁶⁷ W. Norris CLARKE, S.J., *Explorations in Metaphysics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 117.

⁶⁸ This allusion draws parallels most easily with the cry of Christ on the cross in love for his Father, but also as a biblical moment whose significance lies in Christ's *naming* God and calling on God

in friendship is perfected ultimately as adoption Christ's love for His – and now our – Father. By grace, we are welcomed into the very love shared in the triune God.⁶⁹

Wadell describes the great mystery of this personal transformation as “the staggering possibility of beholding God as another self,”⁷⁰ and “the almost blasphemous promise of charity.”⁷¹ This seemingly boundless promise of God's love illustrates beautifully what it might mean to concretize predestination as this journey of friendship by, with, and as God. Levering writes in reference to Romans 8, “For Paul, Aquinas emphasizes, predestination is not an abstract doctrine about an abstract divine plan. Rather, the ‘predestined’ are those who participate fully in the temporal missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit; predestination is the plan of Trinitarian gifting, by which we are configured in charity to Christ.”⁷² This is the fullest account, ultimately, of the primacy of the predestination of Christ in defining salvation and eternal life. Christians do not bear a separate or distinct predestination by an aloof, abstract God; rather, they are transformed by grace into the sonship of Christ, and realize through friendship with Him their predestination to participation in Trinitarian love itself.⁷³

particularly as “Father.” Young notices in relation to the Exodus story that this kind of immanence and relation to the divine was in the Old Testament intimated only in obscurity: “Semantic readings of the Name as ‘I am who I am’ often emphasize its signification of God's transcendence and infidelity—the inability of any human name to grasp or conceptualize who God is [...] God's utter transcendence of our world.” YOUNG, *The Politics of Praise*, 2. According to Aquinas, one of the greatest ways for man to profess his sonship in God is the recitation of the Our Father: “For we confess that we have God as our Father, when we follow the Lord's instruction to pray: *our Father, who art in heaven* (Matt 6:9). AQUINAS, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, 217, § 644.

69 Clarke further clarifies the unique definition of the persons of the Trinity with the love which they communicate to each other: “Thus the Father knows himself *as Father* only in communicating the whole ‘absolute’ perfection of his divine nature to the Son, that is, as Giver; whereas the Son knows himself *as Son* only in receiving this same nature from the Father, that is, as Receiver; so too the Holy Spirit is known only as the love image breathed forth by both Father and Son as the expression of their mutual love.” CLARKE, S.J., *Explorations in Metaphysics*, 117–8.

70 WADELL, *Friends of God*, 40.

71 *Ibid.*

72 LEVERING, “Aquinas on Romans 8,” 213.

73 It is worth noting that the workings of God's predestining remain for humanity an eternal mystery, as does man's understanding of the “mutual indwelling” of the Trinity. Liz Carmichael offers a rendering of this mysterious *mutua inhaesio* as an ongoing divine exchange of love and interpenetration: “All love causes the lover to be ‘in’ the beloved. ‘Indwelling’ with respect to our cognitive power happens through knowledge and thought, the beloved ‘dwelling’ in the lover's mind and heart and the lover reciprocally seeking to enter the inmost depths of the beloved.” LIZ CARMICHAEL, *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 115.

IV. Conclusion: Trinitarian Love and the Viator

If the aim of the Christian life is discipleship in God's love, then "we can only truly love God when we have learned what it means to be God's friend."⁷⁴ Another helpful term to chart this journey towards full friendship with God is humanity as *viator*: a wayfarer and traveler in the divine drama of salvation. As Young writes, "our journey as 'wayfarers' towards the beatific vision meanders through our practice of this friendship"⁷⁵; and as Aquinas notes, "we are called wayfarers by reason of our being on the way to God, Who is the last end of our happiness."⁷⁶

As *viatores*, men and women are on the way to the fullness of Trinitarian friendship in God. This glory, ordained from eternity, is according to Wadell yet "inchoate" and awaiting further growth in friendship: "[Aquinas] speaks of this friendship as *inchoatus*, a Latin word meaning something just beginning, something incomplete and unfinished. The life of God we have in grace is *inchoatus* inasmuch as it is a promise of glory that must be brought to fullness through charity's love. Grace grows through charity."⁷⁷ The emergent life of charity is fundamental to the human experience of God on earth. "With regard to this life," writes Aquinas,

there is fellowship between us and God and the angels, imperfectly indeed in this present life, wherefore it is written (Phil. 3:20): "Our conversation is in heaven." But this "conversation" will be perfected in heaven, when "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face" (Apoc. 22:3, 4). Therefore charity is imperfect here, but will be perfected in heaven.⁷⁸

Within the *viator*, eternal love is implicit, imperfect, and yet expectant. This paper has sought to chart the trajectory of this inchoate life in God, by translating the mystery of predestination in the life of the *viator* as friendship by, with, and as Christ – "*in societatem filii eius*," as Aquinas will cite of 1 Cor. 1:9 in his definition

Furthermore, divine inscrutability seems only to inspire all the more forcefully in Paul a spirit wonder. Commenting on Romans 11:33–36, Aquinas notes that Paul writes in conscious awareness of his limitations in explicating God's mysterious predestination for humanity. He writes, "Above the Apostle endeavored to assign a reason for the divine judgments, by which the Gentiles and Jews obtain mercy after unbelief; now he recognizes his inadequacy for such an investigation and exclaims his admiration of the divine excellence." LEVERING, "Aquinas on Romans 8," 215. Inner citation of Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, 319, § 933.

74 WADELL, *Friends of God*, 2.

75 YOUNG, *The Politics of Praise*, 100.

76 ST II–II, q. 24, a. 4.

77 WADELL, *Friendship and the Moral Life*, 126.

78 ST II–II, q. 23, a. 1 ad 1.

of charity as friendship with God.⁷⁹ Adopted into Christ's sonship, humanity is ultimately conformed to Trinitarian love, a reality only inchoately glimpsed reality on earth, and perhaps best articulated in Aquinas' beloved quote from Galatians, of "faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6).

79 "Accordingly, since there is a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication, of which it is written (1 Corinthians 1:9): 'God is faithful: by Whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son.' The love which is based on this communication, is charity: wherefore it is evident that charity is the friendship of man for God." *ST II-II*. q. 23, a. 1, co.