

A SURVEY OF THE THEOLOGY OF SACRAMENTAL GRACE

While proximately directed to the pastors and Lenten preachers of Rome, Pope Pius XII's 1945 Pastoral Instruction on the Sacraments, "Il meno," published as it was in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*,¹ wished to impress upon priests the world over that it is their constant duty "to re-educate the faithful to a more lively conscience, a fuller understanding, a more just evaluation of grace and of the divine Sacraments."²

As though to point the way in this task of re-education, the Holy Father's Instruction laid its chief emphasis upon a truth too little realized by the faithful: the fact that the sacraments are dynamic realities not only in that they confer sanctifying grace, *ex opere operato*, on subjects duly disposed and co-operative, but dynamic realities also in that they furnish the power to act in conformity with this new being and life of grace, the power—for those who will use it—to "walk in newness of life" (*Rom.* 6:4).

This truth, that the sacraments deliver a sustained and sustaining power for leading a seriously Christian life, for striving towards spiritual perfection, is brought home to us almost at the very beginning of the Instruction, and again later on, where it is dealt with in greater detail.

Thus, in the exordium, after noting that in our troublous times we stand in particular need of the support of grace, and after acknowledging that that supernatural assistance can and should be sought in prayer, the Holy Father hastened on to insist:

"But those supernatural forces, that divine grace, have their primary source in the Holy Mass and in the Sacraments. . . . Like the natural forces, but to a degree incomparably superior, the Sacraments are realities, and working realities. They have the power to raise man above himself and the whole natural

¹ *AAS*, XXXVII (1945), 33-43; English translation in *American Ecclesiastical Review*, CXIII (No. 6, Dec., 1945), 464-474.

² *Ibid.*, 35 (*AER*, 466).

order, into the sphere of the divine, to infuse in him a new life, that he may truly live of God, and not alone to infuse it into him, but to conserve and increase it. . . . The Sacraments . . . are, so to speak, the channels which communicate to man this new being, this mysterious life" of grace.³

What the exordium briefly suggests finds fuller expression in the body of the Pope's discourse. Having touched on the disposition and co-operation prerequisite in adults for fruitful reception of the sacraments, Pope Pius went on to state, in part:

Nevertheless We do not propose here to insist so much upon this relationship between the *opus operatum* and the *opus operantis*, as rather upon the life which the faithful must lead, if they wish truly to correspond to the grace received by means of the Sacraments, and in the first place by means of the Most Holy Eucharist. Giving us the Sacraments, Christ did not intend to exempt us from the struggle for Christian perfection, but to make us able to face it. . . . In the co-operation of the power of the Sacrament and of human effort consists the secret of a lively faith, of a seriously Christian life, of a true striving toward spiritual perfection. . . .

Now the grace of God, the "newness of life," the power to act in conformity with this new life, is that which the Sacraments give. This activity itself must be exercised in all fields: in personal life, in the life of the family, in that of the profession, in peace and tranquillity, in agitation and danger. . . . Sacraments cannot be conceived as isolated from the whole complex of life. They are destined to purify it, to sanctify it, to direct it toward God.⁴

Remarkable is the pastoral conclusion which the Holy Father then draws, to the effect that, grave though the priestly duty is of schooling the faithful to co-operate by disposing themselves for the worthy and fruitful reception of the sacraments, the pastor of souls has a more important duty still: that of bestirring the faithful to a further co-operation after such reception, co-operation with the power which the sacraments give, co-operation which will unite sacrament and life in "an unceasing mutual action and reaction."⁵

³ *Ibid.*, 34 (*AER*, 465).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 38-39 (*AER*, 469-470).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 39 (*AER*, 470).

In short, co-operation, we would say, with the special sacramental graces of the respective sacraments, unto the special end of each sacrament.

Thus the Holy Father. That there is need of re-education in these matters cannot be denied. Generally speaking, the laity's conception of the efficacy of the sacraments does not reach beyond the bare fact that the sacred rites infuse or increase sanctifying grace. Dom Ralph Russell rightly observes: "We seem to limit the sacramental action in time to the moment of reception and in place to the Church, cutting it off from the rest of life."⁶ In other words, lost upon most is the truth voiced by Rivière, that the "efficacy of the sacraments is not restricted to the moment when they are received, but prolongs itself thereafter according to the successive needs of life."⁷

Unfortunately, this underestimation of the power and purpose of the sacraments is not confined to the laity. An instance is this unhappy assertion in an ascetical article: "As we always need the help of God's grace for any supernatural act, we must use prayer, the ordinary means of grace, and the sacraments, the extraordinary means."⁸ More distressing still is the declaration of a dogmatic theologian, E. Neveut. Assailing the above statement of Rivière, Neveut insisted that, far from having the future as its object, sacramental grace "looks only to the past," is meant solely to repair the ravages of sin.⁹

⁶ R. Russell, O.S.B., "The Sacraments and An Apostolic Laity," *New Life*; reprinted in *Techniques for Convert-Makers*, Feb., 1953, p. 1.

⁷ J. Rivière, "Sacrement," *Dict. pratique des connaissances religieuses*, t. VI (1928), col. 120.

⁸ *Review for Religious*, IX (Jan. 15, 1950), 26. "Il meno," we have observed, evinces a higher appreciation of the sacraments as instruments for attaining Christian perfection, and even emphasizes the primacy of the sacraments as sources of "those supernatural forces"—actual graces, for all that one must also have recourse to prayer. A. Lehmkuhl, "Sacramente," *Kirchenlexikon*, ed. 2, 10. Bd. (Freib. im Br., 1897), col. 1495, brings out the correct relation between sacraments and prayer.

⁹ E. Neveut, C.M., "La grâce sacramentelle," *Divus Thomas Plac.*, XXXVIII (1935), 272-273. Others before us have noted the confusion of this article; cf. *Bulletin Thomiste*, XIII (1936), p. 747, n. 1147, and B. Brazzarola, *La natura della grazia sacramentale nella dottrina di San Tommaso* (Grottaferrata, 1941), 103.

Other instances of such misconceptions, in clergy and laity alike, could readily be multiplied. Imperative, therefore, is greater concentration on the doctrine of sacramental grace, not only by pastors but also and especially by theologians. The clarification and a fuller and more precise elaboration of the theology of sacramental grace must be recognized as one of the truly current problems and major tasks facing the professional theologian. Before the pastor of souls can catechize and preach on sacramental grace with maximum effectiveness, his confrere, the specialist in theology, must give him more light than has been available hitherto.¹⁰

What (the pastor may well ask the theologian) is that special grace, peculiar to each of the seven sacraments, which these confer over and above their common effect of sanctifying grace and the infused virtues and gifts? That the sacraments do confer such grace, sacramental grace *in sensu stricto*,¹¹ is certain enough. But what is its precise nature? Thereon, after many centuries, deplorable disagreement still obtains.

Scientific theology has its sins of omission, and, verily, here is one of them.¹² Despite the fact that the doctrine of sacramental grace should be the crown of sacramental theology,¹³ despite the truth that the nature of sacramental grace is a question of "most delicate and sovereign importance,"¹⁴ this topic has been relatively neglected. The attention of theologians has been pre-empted, as it were, by two other aspects of the efficacy of the sacraments.

¹⁰ Brazzarola, *op cit.*, 3, remarks: "What our catechetical practice knows of the special effects of the sacraments is still too little; the special aid conferred on us, which underlies the sacramental effect, still awaits the light of a more complete exploration."

¹¹ "Sacramental grace" is understood in this strict sense throughout the present article. When taken in the wide sense, the term embraces all grace effected by the sacraments, including sanctifying grace and the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

¹² As has often been confessed; cf. *L'Ami du Clergé*, XXI (1899), 1099; L. Maupréaux, "La grâce sacramentelle," *Revue Augustinienne* (1907), 216; A. Michel, *Dict. prat. des connaissances relig.*, *Supplement*, 1930, p. 484; D. Bertetto, "La grazia sacramentale," *Salesianum*, XI (1949), 400.

¹³ H. Schillebeeckx, O.P., *De Sacramentele Heilseconomie* (Antwerpen 't Groeit, 1952), p. VII.

¹⁴ T. Pègues, O.P., *Commentaire français littéral de la Somme théologique*, t. XVII (Toulouse-Paris, 1927), 83.

Thus, over against Protestants, theologians have lavished their greatest attention on the basic truth that the Christian sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato*. Then, in domestic dispute among themselves, they have debated endlessly as to the exact manner in which the sacraments are causes of grace. In comparison with what has been written around those two subjects, quite insignificant is the volume of literature on the grace that the sacraments give.

From the medieval theologians one could not justly expect more than what one actually finds—initial efforts, tentative speculations. After all, only in the thirteenth century did the question of the nature of sacramental grace come to the fore. Near the dawn of that century there had emerged the concept of sanctifying grace as something distinct from the theological virtues, while the virtues themselves had come to be recognized as habits.¹⁵ Not until this clarity had been gained concerning ordinary habitual grace could the problem of sacramental grace present itself.¹⁶

The speculation which then set in, pioneering as it was, went forward on a modest scale, even in St. Thomas Aquinas. Although the *Doctor Communis* dealt with the nature of sacramental grace on several occasions, he did so in such general terms that his doctrine found widely varying interpretations down through the centuries.¹⁷ The theories now current all claim to be grounded in his teaching.

Something of that teaching, and of the theories to which it gave rise, we shall hear in due course. For the moment we are simply underlining the dearth of thought and research on the nature of sacramental grace. The great commentators on St. Thomas and the later theologians regularly discussed the problem, but usually only within the space of a few pages, pages given over in large part to an exegesis of the Angelic Doctor. By their nearly 8,000, respectively,

¹⁵ Cf. A. Landgraf, *Dogmengeschichte der Frühscholastik*, I/1 (Regensburg, 1952), 202-219; H. Rondet, S.J., *Gratia Christi* (Paris, 1948), 191-195.

¹⁶ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 56-57; P. Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments*, transl. from 3rd French ed. (St Louis, 1910), 197.

¹⁷ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 39-40, 45-46; C. Crowley, O.P., *A Defense of the Common Thomistic Teaching on Sacramental Grace* (Rome, 1947), 24; A. Piolanti, O.M.I., *De Sacramentis*, ed. 2 (Turin, 1947), 60, 62; E. Doronzo, O.M.I., *De Sacramentis in genere* (Milwaukee, 1946), 216-217.

9,000 words on the subject, John of St. Thomas and the *Salmanticenses* stand out as notable exceptions.

With our century the few pages of the earlier writers shrunk to a few lines or a few paragraphs in the average dogmatic manual, and even in so massive a work as Pesch's *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*.¹⁸

To be sure, with recent years considerably more space has been given to our topic, in several of the better textbooks and treatises on the sacraments, e.g., Van Noort, Leeming, Lennerz, Ferland, Daffara, Hervé, Piolanti, Mors, Puig de la Bellacasa, and of course, Doronzo.

However, in these and in other modern authors one notes the same lack of unanimity as in the past. Doubtless this divergence of views will persist as long as the question continues to be debated solely within the narrow confines of textbooks. Sorely needed are special and penetrating studies on the nature of sacramental grace. On that problem the last half-century seems to have produced but a handful of articles and only three or four monographs.

Among the articles, widely cited are those of Neveut, Michel, Vieujean, Gounin, Bertetto.¹⁹ It must be said that none of these advanced the question to any great degree. As to the monographs, the first of these, if we call it a monograph, is the Abbé de Bellevue's *La grâce sacramentelle*, published at the turn of the century.²⁰ Despite the enthusiastic reviews which it received in its day,²¹ and although it has been dutifully cited ever since as a standard work, upon examination this book proves rather disappointing. Only nineteen of its 465 pages discuss the fundamental question of the ontological nature of sacramental grace *in communi*.

The other three monographs are all doctoral dissertations: one

¹⁸ T. VI, ed. 2 (Freib. im Br., 1900), n. 137.

¹⁹ Neveut, *art. cit.*, 249-285; A. Michel, "Sacraments," *DTC*, t. 14 (Paris, 1939), col. 627-631 (reproduces without substantial change the unsigned article in *L'Ami du Clergé*, XLVI (May 23, 1929), 323-326); J. Vieujean, "La grâce sacramentelle," *Revue Eccl. Liège*, XXV (1933), 145-157; P. Gounin, "Sur la grâce sacramentelle," *Revue Apologetique*, Aug., 1932, pp. 129-150, and Sept., 1932, pp. 257-277; D. Bertetto, D.S.B., "La grazia sacramentale," *Salesianum*, XI (1949), 397-413.

²⁰ Vannes, 1899; Paris, 1900.

²¹ Cf. *L'Ami du Clergé*, XXI (1899), 1099; also, Maupréaux, *art. cit.*, 216-217.

from the Gregorian University in 1941, by Bruno Brazzarola, O.M.I.; then one from the Angelicum in 1947, by Charles Crowley, O.P.; and the third from the Catholic University of America in 1948, by Lawrence Everett, C.S.S.R.²² While these studies are welcome additions to the scanty literature on the subject, none of them may be said to have settled the objective question as to the exact nature of sacramental grace. Accomplishment of the latter task awaits the talents of some veteran theologian, in whom a sure command of vast areas of speculative and positive theology is wedded to a rich knowledge of the evolution of theological thought from the twelfth century onward.

Theologians possessed of such attributes grace the ranks of the Catholic Theological Society of America. If some of them are stimulated to fruitful thought and research by the following survey of the theology of sacramental grace, these elementary pages will have served some useful purpose.

Since it is the teaching of the *Doctor Communis* which has dominated all subsequent discussion of the nature of sacramental grace, our survey begins with a résumé of his thought on the subject. Here special heed is given to an important shift of emphasis which is discernible in the *Summa Theologica*, in contrast with the earlier writings of St. Thomas.

Then, in its second section, the survey traces the rise and development of the major theories on the nature of sacramental grace, theories all claiming to reflect the mind of the Angelic Doctor. As to the validity of those rival claims, the present writer's opinions, such as they are, find expression in the course of and at the end of this second section.

The final portion of the survey turns from the dispute on the mind of St. Thomas and concentrates on the objective question: What is the nature of sacramental grace? Here attention is focused on the fact, not universally realized, that sacramental grace certainly *involves* a title to receive from God actual graces and other divine aids for attaining the end of the sacrament. Then, finally, our survey reviews some of the major arguments for and against the position

²² Brazzarola, *op. cit.*; Crowley, *op. cit.*; Everett, *The Nature of Sacramental Grace* (Washington, D. C., 1948).

that sacramental grace *consists* in the aforesaid title, i.e., does not add anything more, such as a special habit or disposition, or some modal perfection of sanctifying grace.

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What, according to the Angelic Doctor, is the role of sacramental grace in the economy of salvation? And how did he conceive the nature of that grace? The following pages answer these questions in turn, undertaking at the same time to correct certain gross misconceptions concerning St. Thomas' thought on the above points.

Church Fathers assigned two offices to the Christian sacraments: a positive one, that of sanctifying, perfecting, consecrating man; and, so to speak, a negative or medicinal one, in that the sacraments were intended by the Divine Good Samaritan to heal man stricken by sin.²⁴

By the greater prominence which they gave to the second of those roles, Western Fathers, especially St. Augustine, exercised a profound influence on the theology of the sacraments which burgeoned with the Middle Ages. Almost all the Scholastics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries thought of the sacraments chiefly in terms of their curative function, as remedies for the defects caused by sin.²⁵

This conception prevails in the earlier works of St. Thomas, notably in the *Commentary on the Books of Sentences* and in the *Quaestiones de Veritate*.²⁶ To illustrate, the young commentator

²³ *Summa Theol.*, Ottawa ed.; *S. c. Gentiles*. Leonine ed.; *Scriptum super Sententiis*, ed. Moos (beginning with *In 4 Sent.*, d. 23, Parma ed.); *De Veritate*, Parma ed.

²⁴ Cf. E. Doronzo, *op. cit.*, 213; Piolanti, *op. cit.*, 66; H.-D. Simonin, O.P., G. Meersseman, O.P., *De sacramentorum efficientia apud theologos Ord. Praed.*, Fasc. I: 1229-1276 (Romae, 1936), 106.

²⁵ Cf. Simonin-Meersseman, *op. cit.*, 1, 61, 67, 97, 106; Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 53-55; D. Iturriz, S.J., *La Definición del Concilio de Trento sobre la Causalidad de los Sacramentos* (Madrid, 1951), 29-31, 35; H. Weisweiler, S.J., *Maître Simon et son groupe "De Sacramentis"* (Louvain, 1937), p. LXVII; for some exceptions, cf. *ibid.*, pp. XCVII-XCIX, C, CI, CLXVIII-CLXIX.

²⁶ Cf., e. g., St. Thomas' *Prologus In 4 Sent.*; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1; a. 2; a. 3; *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 12-15. One should not exaggerate, however. The *Scriptum super Sent.* adverts from time to time to the fact

taught that, but for sin there would have been no sacraments. Sacraments presuppose sin, were instituted to remedy the spiritual defects which it causes.²⁷

The Christian sacraments accomplish this purpose in two ways. In common with the pre-Christian sacraments they counter the effects of sin through the sacramental rite, which serves "ad eruditionem, humiliationem, et exercitationem."²⁸ But, above all, the sacraments of the New Law function as remedies for sin in that they confer grace to that end. "Sacraments were not instituted for conferring grace except insofar as grace is something formally healing the malady of sin."²⁹

To elucidate the latter point somewhat, we may adduce these further teachings from the *Commentary on the Books of Sentences* and the *De Veritate*. Besides giving or increasing sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*), which is in the essence of the soul, and the virtues and gifts which flow from that grace to perfect the soul's powers, the Christian sacraments, all seven, effect something else, something for repairing the spiritual defects consequent upon original and actual sin.³⁰

Because these consequences of sin are hidden or not as known as the acts for which the virtues perfect the soul's powers, that sacramental effect which is ordained to repair the defects of sin has no proper name of its own, but retains the name of its cause and is called sacramental grace.³¹

Whereas sanctifying grace with its cortege of virtues and gifts is an effect common and the same in all the sacraments, sacramental grace varies from sacrament to sacrament: it is diversified and multiplied according to the diversity and multiplicity of the defects left by

that the sacraments of the New Law are not simply remedies; cf., e.g., the Proem to *In 4 Sent.*, d. 4, q. 2: ". . . de effectu baptismi qui est res . . . quaeruntur tria. Primo, de effectu ipsius quantum ad remotionem mali. Secundo, de effectu ipsius quantum ad collationem boni. . . ."

²⁷ Cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 1.

²⁸ Cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 1.

²⁹ *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 2, ad 1.

³⁰ Cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 5; *De Veritate*, c. 27, a. 5, ad 12.

³¹ Cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 5; *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 12, ad 15.

sin, against which the seven sacraments were instituted; thus one sacramental grace differs from another according as they are ordered to diverse effects.³²

Sacramental grace is something other than sanctifying grace and the grace that is in the virtues and gifts.³³ For though sacramental grace cannot exist without them, they can exist without it.³⁴ That sacramental grace is something distinct is seen moreover from the fact that it "perfects by removing firstly and principally the defect consequent upon sin, but the grace of the virtues and gifts perfects by inclining to the good of the virtues and gifts; for example, the (sacramental) grace of Confirmation perfects by removing the malady of infirmity, whereas the gift or the virtue of fortitude perfects by inclining to the good which is proper to the virtue or the gift."³⁵

Noteworthy, finally, is St. Thomas' insistence on the point that this remedial thing, sacramental grace—as distinct from sanctifying grace and that of the virtues and gifts, is the effect for which the sacraments were primarily instituted. Sacramental grace is the grace to which the sacraments are directly ordained. It is the grace which they directly contain and signify. It is their principal, their proper effect. To be sure, because sacramental grace has a connection with sanctifying grace and the concomitant virtues and gifts, being unable to exist without them, these also are contained in the sacraments, by a kind of continuation; they are an effect of the sacraments *ex consequenti et per quamdam connexionem*.³⁶

To sum up, in his earlier writings the Angelic Doctor envisages the Christian sacraments almost exclusively as remedies against sin.³⁷

³² Cf. *In 2 Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 6, sol. un., ad 5; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 5; d. 7, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2; *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 12.

³³ Cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 5; d. 7, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2, ad 2; sol. 3.

³⁴ Cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 5.

³⁵ *In 4 Sent.*, d. 7, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2, ad 2.

³⁶ For the whole, cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 5 (where I understand "sacramenta" as the subject of the ambiguous "per quamdam continuationem contineant"); d. 7, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2, ad 2; *ibid.*, sol. 3; d. 23, q. 1, a. 2, sol. 1.

³⁷ Simonin-Meersseman, *op. cit.*, 106. The conception of the sacraments as remedies still plays a capital role in the *S. c. Gentiles* (cf. 1. IV, c. 56); but in this same work we meet another analogy, a supple and rich one, which the *Summa Theologica* was to develop in classic fashion (III, q. 65, a. 1):

With the *Summa Theologica*, however, there is marked progress and a significant shift of emphasis, though this fact has been overlooked by Neveut and others who imagine it to have been St. Thomas' definitive teaching that sacramental grace is ordained solely to remove the consequences of sin.

The *Summa* advances beyond, without discarding, the conception of the sacraments as remedies. The positive function of the sacraments comes into its own. Besides being remedies, the sacraments of the New Law are sources of Christian life—they aim to perfect man for the right performance of acts of the Christian religion, for the worship of God *secundum religionem Christianae vitae*.³⁸

Indeed, the *Summa* tends to accent this positive office of the sacraments, rather than their medicinal one, as when we read: "The sacraments of the Church have a twofold purpose: to perfect man in things pertaining to the worship of God according to the religion of the Christian life; and also to be a remedy against the defects caused by sin."³⁹

So, then, the mature thought of St. Thomas assigned a double role to the sacraments—a positive and perfective one as well as the negative or medicinal one. What is more, both offices are ascribed not simply to the sacraments but even to sacramental grace itself. In other words, the relevance of the Christian sacraments for the worship of God, and for perfecting man in the things that pertain thereto, reaches beyond the circumstance that all the sacraments are acts of *latría*,⁴⁰ especially the Eucharist.⁴¹

Nor does that relevance stop, as Neveut believes it does, with

the parallelism between spiritual life and corporeal life, with their respective needs at different stages and in different states; cf. A.-M. Roguet, O.P., *Les sacrements (Somme théologique: Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes)*, ed. 2 (Paris, 1951), 264. Thus St. Thomas is already en route to the more adequate notion of sacramental grace which we are to meet in the *Summa Theologica*, a notion which embraces the positive function of sacramental grace.

³⁸ Cf. Simonin-Meersseman, *op. cit.*, 97, 106; Roguet, *op. cit.*, 6-9, 214-215, 222-223, 262-265, 366; *Bulletin Thomiste*, XIII (1936), p. 748, n. 1147.

³⁹ III, q. 65, a. 1, c.; cf. q. 63, a. 1, c.; q. 63, a. 6, c.; q. 61, a. 2, c.

⁴⁰ Cf. II-II, q. 89, Proem.

⁴¹ Cf. III, q. 63, a. 6, c.

the deputation to Christian worship which is accomplished by the sacramental characters of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders.⁴²

Nor, finally, does it end with the fact that the grace of the virtues and gifts, which the sacraments confer, perfects the powers of the soul with reference to their acts.⁴³

Rather, as St. Thomas expressly states on one occasion:

Sacramental grace seems to be ordained principally to two things: to take away the defect of past sins, in so far as these are transitory in act but remain as to their *reatus*; and, further, to perfect the soul in things pertaining to the worship of God according to the religion of the Christian life.⁴⁴

A question remains, however. Are we to understand that this twofold office, the positive as well as the negative, is verified in the sacramental grace of all seven sacraments? In the final analysis, yes.⁴⁵ This can be gathered from III, q. 65, a. 1, the celebrated article on the *numerus septenarius sacramentorum Ecclesiae*.

There St. Thomas declares, as we have already heard in part: "The sacraments of the Church have a twofold purpose: to perfect man in things pertaining to the worship of God according to the religion of the Christian life; and also to be a remedy against the defects caused by sin. And in both ways it is fitting that there should be seven sacraments."

⁴² Cf. III, q. 63, a. 1, c.; a. 2, c.; a. 6, c.—True to his thesis that for St. Thomas sacramental grace is merely a remedy for the effects of sin, Neveut, *art. cit.*, p. 269, appealing to III, q. 63, a. 3, ad 3, maintains that the positive office which the *Summa Theologica* attributes to the sacraments is realized not by sacramental grace but by the sacramental character.

⁴³ Cf. III, q. 62, a. 2, c., and ad 1.

⁴⁴ III, q. 62, a. 5, c.; cf. also q. 62, a. 2, c., with ad 1 (perfective effect of sacramental grace), and ad 2 (remedial effect). Thus, e.g., the sacramental grace of Baptism has not only a negative but also a profoundly positive function. ponder III q. 62, a. 2, c., together with q. 69, a. 5; cf. D. Winzen, O.S.B., in *Die Deutsche Thomas-Ausgabe*, 29. Bd. (Salzburg, 1935), 524.

⁴⁵ According to III, q. 63, a. 6, c., whereas all the sacraments furnish a remedy against sin, not all of them are directly ordained to divine worship, as is evident in the case of Penance, which does not afford man any advance in what pertains to divine worship, but liberates him from sin and restores him to his former state.

In demonstrating this twofold *convenientia* of the seven sacraments the Angelic Doctor attends first to their positive or perfective function. The argument proceeds from the famous analogy between spiritual life and corporeal life, with their respective needs at different stages and in different states. Only thereafter, and hence in second place, is the remedial function of the sacraments developed (where, incidentally, one finds a handy catalogue of the defects caused by sin, against which the special graces of the seven sacraments are directed).

The foregoing examination of the *Summa Theologica* authorizes us to conclude, against Neveut: according to the definitive thought of St. Thomas, each Christian sacrament—more precisely, the sacramental grace of each sacrament—is ordained to a positive and perfective role, in addition to the negative or remedial one.

Further, the results of the above study dictate caution in interpreting III, q. 62, a. 2, where sacramental grace is treated *ex professo*. Here, otherwise than in his earlier works, St. Thomas calls sacramental grace *quoddam divinum auxilium*, “a certain divine aid” for attaining the end of the sacrament. This innovation is not necessarily an indication that in the *Summa* St. Thomas revised his earlier doctrine on the ontological nature of sacramental grace. For the *Summa*’s introduction of “auxilium” could be explained thus: St. Thomas needed a new term sufficiently broad to fit the dual potency and purpose which his mature thought acknowledged to sacramental grace. It would no longer do to define sacramental grace simply as “*diversae medicinae peccati*” (as in *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 12).

Now that the teaching of St. Thomas on the role of sacramental grace has been accurately ascertained, we may turn to his doctrine on the nature of that grace. Relative to this problem one gleans the following from the *Commentary* . . . and from the *De Veritate*: As the virtues and gifts flow from sanctifying grace (which is in the essence of the soul), so too sacramental grace flows from, is an emanation of, depends upon, that same sanctifying grace; while sacramental grace is one thing, and the grace of the virtues and gifts is another, they are not contraries but disparate.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Cf. *In 2 Sent.*, d. 1, a. 6, sol. un., ad 5; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 5; *In 4 Sent.*, d. 17, q. 3, a. 2, sol. 2, ad 3; *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 12.

As to the *Summa Theologica*, its contribution may be summarized in this fashion: Sacramental grace adds something over and above sanctifying grace and over and above the virtues and gifts. It is a certain divine aid for attaining the end of the sacraments, namely, certain special effects which are necessary in the Christian life and to which the sacraments are ordained; effects not accomplished by sanctifying grace—for this perfects the essence of the soul, nor by the virtues and gifts—for these perfect the soul's powers regarding the general ordination of their acts.⁴⁷ The relation of sacramental grace with grace commonly so called may be compared with that of species to genus.⁴⁸ Sacramental grace adds above sanctifying grace something effective of a special effect to which the sacrament is ordained.⁴⁹

Thus St. Thomas. What we have heard suffices to rule out at once two mistaken views concerning the Angelic Doctor's notion of sacramental grace. Capreolus, with yet others who will be mentioned later, maintained that throughout his works, the *Summa Theologica* included, by what he called "sacramental grace" St. Thomas understood something anterior to and independent of sanctifying grace; namely, the sacramental character in Baptism, etc., and in the other sacraments the "ornatus animae" (postulated by the theory that the sacraments are physico-dispositive causes of grace). Michel, Simonin-Meersseman, and Piolanti take a somewhat similar view as to the *Commentary* . . . and the *De Veritate*, conceding that in the *Summa Theologica* sacramental grace supposes and depends upon sanctifying grace.⁵⁰

To refute both views it is enough to recall that, according to unequivocal statements in the *Commentary* . . . and in the *De Veritate*, sacramental grace is an emanation of, flows from, depends upon, sanctifying grace. This point, already noted by Peter of Palude (*infra*), was later urged against Capreolus by Sylvester of Ferrara.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Cf. III, q. 62, a. 2, c.; *ibid.*, ad 1.

⁴⁸ III, q. 62, a. 2, ad 3: "Ratio sacramentalis gratiae se habet ad gratiam communiter dictam, sicut ratio speciei ad genus."

⁴⁹ Cf. III, q. 72, a. 7, ad 3.

⁵⁰ Cf. A. Michel, "Sacraments," *DTC*, t. 14, col. 584, 588; Simonin Meersseman, *op. cit.*, 97; Piolanti, *op. cit.*, 60.

⁵¹ *Commentarius in S. Thomae Aquinatis Summam contra gentiles*, 1. IV,

The views which we here oppose are based mainly on the assertion of *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 7, c.: "... et tanto minus quanto sacramenta non perveniunt directe et immediate ad ipsam gratiam, de qua nunc loquimur; sed ad proprios effectus, qui dicuntur gratiae sacramentales, ad quod sequitur infusio gratiae gratum facientis, vel augmentum." Various solutions have been advanced to reconcile this passage with the clear-cut teaching of the *Commentary* and of *De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 12 (sacramental graces "a gratia gratum faciente dependent"). Thus Sylvester of Ferrara disposed of the difficulty by conceding that on this one occasion St. Thomas extended the term "sacramental graces" to effects other than sacramental graces properly so called.⁵² Brazzarola, following Hugon, appeals to the Thomistic principle (cf., e.g., *De Veritate*, q. 28, a. 7, c.) that, as regards things temporally simultaneous, in the order of nature one can be prior to the other, and yet again posterior to it, according to different kinds of causality: though sacramental grace is an effect of sanctifying grace (*De Veritate*, a. 27, a. 5, ad 12), in the order of final cause it is prior to sanctifying grace (*De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 7, c.).⁵³ Incidentally, this interpretation would destroy an argument for the position that in the *De Veritate* the sacraments are

c. 57: n. V (Leonine ed., t. 15, p. 192): "Non approbo autem interpretationem Capreoli dicentis quod intelligeret Sanctus Thomas quod sacramenta causant gratiam sacramentalem effective, non autem gratiam gratum facientem. Nam, cum gratia sacramentalis sit effectus gratiae gratum facientis, si illa a sacramentis non causatur effective, nec etiam ista causari potest." Cf. *ibid.*, n. VII (p. 193); "Advertendum autem, secundum doctrinam Sancti Thomae *Tertia*, q. LXII, a. 2; et *IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qu^a 5, quod . . . sacramenta . . . etiam sunt causa quorundam effectuum particularium a gratia gratum faciente . . . provenientium, quae dicuntur *gratiae sacramentales*." Cf. *ibid.*, in 1. IV, c. 72: n. XVII (p. 231).

⁵² *Ibid.*, in 1. IV, c. 72: n. XVII, 3 (p. 231): ". . . duplex est proprius effectus sacramenti. Unus, qui est primus et immediatus; qui dicitur *res et sacramentum*. . . . Alius, qui inter ultimos sacramenti effectus computatur, ad quem scilicet sacramentum est primo institutum. Et uterque potest dici *gratia sacramentalis*. . . ."

⁵³ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 241-242; he refers to E. Hugon, O.P., *La causalité instrumentale en théologie* (Paris, 1908). Cf. Hugon, "L'effet immédiat des sacrements," *Revue Augustinienne* (1908), 343-345; *idem*, *De Sacramentis*, ed. 6 (Paris, 1931), 88-89. On Hugon, cf. Bertetto, *art. cit.*, 398.

physico-dispositive causes of grace;⁵⁴ but otherwise that particular controversy is left intact.

Whatever the solution of the disputed passage may be, the evidence is overwhelming that St. Thomas constantly taught that sacramental grace supposes and somehow depends upon sanctifying grace. This intimate relationship between the two, not further determined by the Angelic Doctor, heightens the problem: What, according to St. Thomas, is the precise nature of sacramental grace? He himself did not say; he "did not categorize or place these (sacramental) graces in any of the Predicaments."⁵⁵

Hence the wide disagreement among his commentators (disagreement due also, in part, to their different persuasions concerning the doctrine of St. Thomas on sacramental causality of grace). The next section of our survey exhibits, in the order of their first definitive appearance, the major theories which claim to be grounded in the teaching of the Angelic Doctor. We may remark at this opportunity that great inaccuracy reigns among authors in assigning patrons of the various theories.

THEORIES

- (1) Sacramental graces are special habits, originating from sanctifying grace, specifically distinct from it and from the virtues and gifts and also among themselves, given to repair the defects caused by sin.

The beginnings of this theory may be traced to Peter of Palude.⁵⁶ His *Commentary on the Books of Sentences*, written before 1314, indicates that the common opinion of his day identified sacramental grace with sanctifying grace and the virtues and gifts. After rejecting this view, Peter comes to present and adopt what he—the first to do so—calls the "singularis opinio Thomae," which he describes thus:

. . . Thomas videtur velle quod ista gratia sacramentalis non solum differat a gratia gratum faciente et virtutibus acquisitis et

⁵⁴ Cf. H. Lennerz, S.J., *De Sacramentis N. L. in genere*, ed. 2 (Rome, 1939), n. 412 (p. 243).

⁵⁵ Crowley, *op. cit.*, 24.

⁵⁶ On Peter of Palude's doctrine, cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 83-91.

infusis et donis, sed et ab ipso ornatu vel caractere quia dicit quod gratiae sacramentales fluunt a gratia sicut et virtutes et supponunt gratiam gratum facientem quod non facit character vel ornatu. Et pro ista opinione est quia unumquodque sacramentum est introductum in speciale remedium contra specialem defectum sive sit culpa sive poena e culpa derelicta sive quodcumque aliud. . . .⁵⁷

Suarez remarked, and Brazzarola confirms, that Peter never expressly stated that sacramental grace is a "special habit."⁵⁸ However, Suarez concluded that such must have been the author's meaning. We may add that, in Suarez' understanding of Peter's teaching, this special habit would be lost with the loss of sanctifying grace.⁵⁹

Seemingly, Peter did not win many adherents. Among the latter most authors include Capreolus and his disciples; however, as will be seen below, theirs was a radically different conception of sacramental grace. Perhaps St. Antoninus of Florence (d. 1459) can be considered a patron of Peter's doctrine, which he cited with an air of approval.⁶⁰ Sylvester of Ferrara (d. 1526) came close to the same opinion when he described sacramental graces as "certain dispositions which are remedies for particular defects."⁶¹ According to Sasse, Eusebius Amort (d. 1775) revived Peter's teaching.⁶²

As to modern theologians, Billot can be reckoned a member of this school of thought, although, like Sylvester of Ferrara, he preferred to speak of sacramental graces as *dispositiones*: "certain habitual dispositions diminishing concupiscence in its varied and multiple ramifications."⁶³ Pègues and Manzoni echo Billot.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ *In 4 Sent.*, d. 2, q. 3, a. un.; quoted from Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 89.

⁵⁸ Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 84; Suarez, *De Sacramentis*, disp. 7, sect. 3, n. 3 (*Opera omnia*, ed. Vivès, t. 20, p. 111).

⁵⁹ Suarez (*l.c.*): "Hinc vero potest concludi, quod sit habitus. Tum quia ita datur per sacramentum, ut permaneat et duret, quamdiu homo non posuerit obicem. . . ."

⁶⁰ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 91.

⁶¹ *Commentarius in . . . S. c. gentiles*, 1. IV, c. 57: n. VII (Leonine ed., t. 15, p. 193). Note that St. Thomas distinguished between "habits" and "dispositions," as in III, q. 86, a. 5, c.

⁶² Cf. J. Sasse, S.J., *De Sacramentis*, I (Freib. im Br., 1897), 90.

⁶³ L. Billot, S.J., *De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, I, ed. 5 (Rome, 1914), 97.

⁶⁴ Manzoni, *Comp. Theol. Dogm.*, IV (1912), 32, according to Bertetto, *art. cit.*, 401; Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 127, citing the edition of 1909, IV, p. 37,

Vieujean, Leeming, Brazzarola defend the theory of special habits, and Merkelbach acknowledges it to be an acceptable alternative to the modality theory.⁶⁵ This appears to exhaust the list of Paludanus' followers. Joseph Mueller is sometimes numbered among them; however, although this author (a disciple of Billot in other respects) conceded that the theory of special habits is neither impossible nor wholly improbable, he did not espouse it.⁶⁶

Of the above authors, Leeming gives the most detailed exposition and spirited defense of the present view of sacramental grace. Among other things, he holds that the latter would not be lost together with sanctifying grace. Noteworthy too is his concession, in which he is joined by Merkelbach,⁶⁷ that sacramental grace also involves a title to receive actual graces from God at opportune times, appropriate to the end of the sacrament.

Whether the Angelic Doctor actually held the above theory of sacramental grace will be discussed elsewhere. Pourrat is among those who believe that he did.⁶⁸ Be that as it may, Pourrat certainly goes beyond the evidence when he asserts that the same teaching was that of the majority of St. Thomas' contemporaries: "The theologians of the 13th century taught generally that sacramental grace is a *habitus* distinct from ordinary habitual grace."⁶⁹ One should not confuse with the latter theory the archaic views of certain older Scholastics, which are reported and rejected by St. Bonaventure. As is evident from the Seraphic Doctor's rebuttals, those views proceeded from an imperfect theology of grace. Not yet known to their sponsors was the concept of sanctifying grace, as something distinct

n. 50, makes Manzoni a patron of the "jus ad auxilia actualia" theory of sacramental grace. Pègues, *op. cit.*, 93-94, follows Billot, whereas at p. 70 he had said that, for St. Thomas, sacramental grace is a modality of sanctifying grace itself.

⁶⁵ Vieujean, *art. cit.*, 154-155; B. Leeming, S.J., *De Sacramentis in genere* (*pro manuscripto*, Rome, 1933), 24-31; Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, seeks to establish that St. Thomas taught the theory of special habits, but seems to leave the objective validity of that theory open to question (cf., e.g., p. 230).

⁶⁶ J. Mueller, S.J., *De Sacramentis in genere* (Innsbruck, 1905), 237-238.

⁶⁷ B. Merkelbach, O.P., *Summa Theol. Moralis*: t. III, *De Sacramentis*, ed. 3 (Typis Desclée de Brouwer et Soc., 1933), n. 35 (p. 40).

⁶⁸ P. Pourrat, *op. cit.*, p. 198 with footnote 94.

⁶⁹ Pourrat (*l.c.*) cites only St. Thomas.

from the virtues, something one in and perfecting the essence of the soul; instead, those *veteres* equated *gratia gratum faciens* with the virtues, and, what is more, did not always grasp the interconnection of the virtues.⁷⁰ In consequence, those older theologians tended to speak of sacramental graces as diverse *gratiae gratum facientes*, or to identify them with the different virtues or with the gifts of the Holy Ghost.⁷¹

These primitive views vanished after the elaboration of the theology of habitual grace which was achieved near the dawn of the thirteenth century. For the rest of that century (as one gathers from what Peter of Palude later said, in coming forward with the "singularis opinio Thomae"), the prevalent doctrine maintained the real identity of sacramental grace with the ordinary habitual grace conferred by the sacrament.⁷² In consequence, extra-sacramental grace and grace given by the sacraments were considered to differ only by a distinction of reason. Some saw the grounds of this distinction in the different causes of those graces—in the one case an *opus operans*, in the other an *opus operatum*, the sacrament.⁷³ More commonly, others, St. Bonaventure among them, grounded the distinction in this, that the grace of the sacrament connotes additional effects.⁷⁴ This last theory, as we shall see below, was later interpreted by Suarez and D. Soto as being substantially identical with their own explanation of sacramental grace.

⁷⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 15.

⁷¹ See various opinions and their refutations in St. Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.* (Quaracchi), d. 1, p. 1, a. un., q. 6, c. ("Alia positio . . ."); d. 7, a. 2, q. 2, c. ("Quidam enim . . . Alia positio . . ."). Cf. also Landgraf, *op. cit.*, I/1, 202.

⁷² Cf. *Doronzo, op. cit.*, 214.

⁷³ St. Bonaventure mentions and rejects this view, *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. un., q. 6, c. ("Quidam voluerunt. . ."). This view was later revived by Gabriel Biel (d. 1495) and other Nominalists. Biel vindicated the institution of the sacraments thus, *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 2, concl. 2: "Igitur valde congruum erat instituere aliqua signa sensibilia, certa et efficacia, quibus viator quasi familiari similitudine gratiam agnosceret inesse: et per hujusmodi signa tanquam certa et efficacia eam ardentius quaereret;" quoted from J. Schwane, *Dogmengeschichte der mittleren Zeit* (Frieb. im Br., 1882), p. 584, note 3.

⁷⁴ Cf. St. Bonaventure, *In 4 Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. un., q. 6, c. ("Tertia positio. . ."). One must disagree with Everett, *op. cit.*, 37-40, 97, where St. Bonaventure is said to have conceived sacramental grace as a special habit.

- (2) Sacramental graces, given to remove the defects consequent upon sin, consist in special habits distinct from, prior to and independent of, sanctifying grace and the virtues and gifts; in Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders they are the sacramental characters; in the other sacraments, the *ornatus animae*.

John Capreolus (d. 1444) is the author of this explanation of sacramental grace. He himself seems to have deemed it the doctrine of Peter of Palude.⁷⁵ Hence these two came to be linked, erroneously, by most subsequent authors, e.g., the *Salmanticenses*, Gonet, Pègues, Michel, Piolanti.⁷⁶ The following passage quickly discloses how radically different was Capreolus' view of sacramental grace: "Dicitur enim quod character et ornatus sacramentales, sunt gratiae quaedam sacramentales. Nec alias oportet ponere, praeter characteres, vel ornatus per modum actus primi, vel habitus; quidquid sit de actibus secundis."⁷⁷

One perceives, then, that the *Princeps Thomistarum*, for whom the sacraments are physico-dispositive causes of grace, took the position that sacramental grace and the *dispositio praevia* (*ad gratiam gratum facientem*) and the character, respectively, the *ornatus animae*, are all one.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ This can be gathered from Capreolus, *Defensiones theologiae D. Thomae Aquinatis* 4, d. 1-3, a. 1. a. 1 (ed. Paban-Pègues, p. 4a): "Similem sententiam ponit (S. Thomas) 3 p., q. 62, a. 1 et *de Veritate*, q. 27, a. 4; nisi quod in praedictis locis videtur dicere quod sacramenta pertingunt effective instrumentaliter ad ipsam gratiam, non faciendo mentionem de dispositione. Sed intelligendum est quod pertingunt ad gratiam sacramentalem effective; ad gratiam vero gratum facientem solum dispositive, ut exponit Petrus de Palude (4 *Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1)." Quoted from M. Gierens, S.J., *De causalitate sacramentorum . . . textus Scholasticorum principaliorum* (Rome, 1935), p. 50, note 27.

⁷⁶ *Salmanticenses, Cursus theologicus*, t. 17, *De Sacramentis in communi* (Paris, 1881), Disp. IV, Dub. IX, n. 138; F. Gonet, O.P., *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, t. 6, *De Sacramentis in communi* (Paris, 1876), Disp. III, Art. VI, n. 197; Pègues, *op. cit.*, 70; Michel, *art. cit.*, col. 588, 629-630; Piolanti, *op. cit.*, 50.

⁷⁷ Capreolus, *Defensiones . . .* 4, d. 1, q. 3, a. 3, sol. ad ultim.; quoted from Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 97; cf. *ibid.*, 93-102, for a fuller exposition of Capreolus' teaching on sacramental grace.

⁷⁸ Michel, *art. cit.*, col. 621, and Piolanti, *op. cit.*, 50, 60, mistakenly declare that Capreolus distinguished sacramental grace, as *dispositio praevia*, from the character and *ornatus*.

It is not difficult to divine how Capreolus arrived at this conception of sacramental grace. Rightly or wrongly, he maintained that St. Thomas constantly held the sacraments to be physico-dispositive causes of grace. Now, Capreolus saw, certain passages in the *De Veritate* and in the *Summa Theologica* appear to present the sacraments as physico-perfective causes of grace. The commentator solved the problem by declaring the "grace" in question to be, not *gratia gratum faciens*, but sacramental grace, conceived as the *dispositio praevia ad gratiam gratum facientem*.⁷⁹ Further, Capreolus was moved to this identification of sacramental grace with the *dispositio praevia* or *ornatus* by his attempts to explain St. Thomas' doctrine on *poenitentia interior* as the *res et sacramentum* of Penance.⁸⁰

Let it be said at once: Capreolus' theory of the nature of sacramental grace deserves no serious consideration. We have already excluded it, in our study of St. Thomas, from the ranks of tenable interpretations of the Angelic Doctor (other reasons could be added, as the fact that, according to III, q. 63, a. 2, c., the sacramental character is a potency, not a habit). The commentator's conception of sacramental grace was not a product of objective study of the Thomistic texts which treat of that subject *ex professo*. It was rather a spurious by-product of Capreolus' preoccupations with other matters; he improvised it to meet what he thought were the demands of his other theological positions. Finally, that sacramental grace belongs to the sphere of the *res et sacramentum* is inadmissible; sacramental grace pertains to the *res tantum*.

It might be rewarding to learn how many adhered to Capreolus' view in the subsequent century. A widespread acceptance of it would help account for the fact that, as we shall say below, Cajetan found it advisable to oppose to that of Capreolus his own theory of sacramental grace, as part of his thesis that in the *Summa Theologica* the sacraments are perfective, not dispositive, causes of grace.

⁷⁹ See quotation *supra* in note 75; see also note 51.

⁸⁰ Cf. M. Schmaus, J. Geiselmann, H. Rahner, *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV/3, *Busse und Letzte Oelung*, von B. Poschmann (Freib. im Br., 1951), 96. Cf. the refutation of Capreolus in Sylvester of Ferrara, *Commentarius in . . . S. c. gentiles*, 1. IV, c. 72: n. XVII (Leonine ed., t. 15, p. 231).

Actually, for that interval authors mention only two possible disciples of Capreolus—Paul Soncinas (d. 1494), and Diego Deza (d. 1523).⁸¹ Of interest is the following summation of Deza's doctrine concerning the grace to which the *dispositio praevia* ordains, doctrine more clear and definite than that of Capreolus:

Although grace is substantially one, says Deza, many are the operations to which it is ordained, and, according as the functions of grace in each sacrament are diverse, likewise diverse is the preparation or disposition which each sacrament effects in the soul. This disposition, fruit of the sacrament, looks to the grace, however, not precisely in so far as sanctifying and source of merit, but rather *specialiter et directe*, in so far as ordered to determined operations.⁸²

Perhaps Cardinal Seripando (d. 1563) held a theory comparable to that of Capreolus—for he understood the sacramental grace of III, q. 62, a. 2 as "quoddam divinum auxilium ad consequendum gratiam sacramenti."⁸³

Few are the modern partisans of Capreolus. Honoratus Del Val, O.S.A., is cited among them.⁸⁴ De Bellevue and Neveut agree with Capreolus that for St. Thomas "sacramental grace" meant something prior to and independent of sanctifying grace. However, various nuances characterize the doctrine of these two authors on the nature of sacramental grace.

De Bellevue adopted Billot's system of intentional causality of the sacraments, but, unlike the author of that system, adapted it to the matter of sacramental grace. Recalling with approval the "*ornatus, dispositio*" of the Scholastics, De Bellevue conceived this

⁸¹ Cf. Piolanti, *op. cit.*, 50 (Deza), 60 (Soncinas; here Piolanti adds Sylvester of Ferrara, but we have already ascertained that the latter rejected Capreolus' view of sacramental grace). Soncinas spoke hesitantly (cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 101). Lecturing on the *Books of Sentences* in 1546, Melchior Cano declared: "2/a opinio est fere omnium discipulorum S. Th. secundum quem gratia sacramentalis importat quemdam habitum distinctum a caeteris habitibus virtutis, hoc tenet Capreolus . . . pal . . ." (Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 116).

⁸² Thus D. Iturrioz, S.J., *La Definición del Concilio de Trento sobre la Causalidad de los Sacramentos* (Madrid, 1951), 78.

⁸³ Quoted in Iturrioz, *op. cit.*, 277, 364.

⁸⁴ Piolanti, *op. cit.*, p. 60, footnote 3.

as the production, in the soul, of a new state, now physical, now moral, which constitutes the recipient of the sacrament in a new dignity; this dignity solicits and, in the absence of an *obex gratiae*, obtains as its natural complement the infusion or increase of sanctifying grace; at the same time the new needs of the acquired dignity call for a superabundance of actual graces, veritably "graces of state"; however, it is not in these latter that sacramental grace consists, but rather in the new situation itself, or state, or dignity, created in the soul by the valid reception of the sacrament.⁸⁵

Thus, in the final analysis, De Bellevue's conception of sacramental grace has only a superficial resemblance to that of Capreolus, thanks to his insistence on situating sacramental grace in the sphere of the *res et sacramentum*.⁸⁶ This feature aside, De Bellevue's exposition comes close to the theory of sacramental grace later expounded by De Smet and Van Noort-Verhaar (*infra*).

For Neveut, too, the "quoddam divinum auxilium" of III, q. 62, a. 2, and other utterances of St. Thomas on sacramental grace are to be referred to the *res et sacramentum*. However, this author adds a further element to the notion of sacramental grace: "une grâce sanctifiante médicinale." St. Thomas is said to have taught this element also, but without calling it "sacramental grace." To be mentioned, finally, is Neveut's disdain for the thesis that the sacraments confer a special title to receive actual graces appropriate to the end of each sacrament.⁸⁷ This is in keeping with the author's contention, noted earlier in our paper, that sacramental grace, "bien loin d'avoir pour objet l'avenir, n'a de vertu propre que pour le passé, et en cela la grâce sacramentelle se distingue de la vertu ou du don."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ L'Abbé De Bellevue, *La grâce sacramentelle* (Paris, 1900), 103-107, 110-113.

⁸⁶ De Bellevue's "nouvel état physique ou moral" is far removed from the *dispositio praevia ad gratiam* of Capreolus, Deza, etc.; in their system the *dispositio* was always something physical, and was postulated by their conviction that no form can be received unless the subject has been prepared for it in advance, by the *dispositio* (cf. Iturrioz, *op. cit.*, 78).

⁸⁷ For these several points, cf. Neveut, *art. cit.*, 262-265; 271; 284, footnote 12 (n. 4°).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 273.

- (3) Sacramental grace adds above the grace of the virtues and gifts an actual divine aid extensive of the grace of the virtues and gifts to the proper effect of the sacrament.

So Cajetan (d. 1534), commenting on III, q. 62, a. 2.⁸⁹ He took the position that in the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas revised what may have been his earlier view of sacramental grace ("habituale aliquod donum"), in favor of "an actual divine aid," etc.

This was a new departure in the interpretation of the Angelic Doctor. In Cajetan's day and beyond, if Melchior Cano is correct, almost all Thomists held with Capreolus and Peter of Palude that sacramental grace is a distinct habit.⁹⁰ Cajetan himself conceded that such was the opinion of many disciples of St. Thomas.⁹¹

If this widely received "habit" theory was precisely that of Capreolus (which we have distinguished from the opinion of Peter of Palude), one can well understand why Cajetan was at pains to win from the *Summa Theologica* a new doctrine of sacramental grace. For the great commentator was the first to contend that in the *Summa* the sacraments are physico-perfective causes of grace, not—as in St. Thomas' *Commentary on the Books of Sentences*—physico-dispositive causes. So holding, against Capreolus Cajetan also had to show that the *Summa* does not exhibit sacramental grace as a *dispositio praevia ad gratiam gratum facientem*. As a matter of fact, one sees his preoccupation with this point in his commentary on III, q. 62, a. 1, in the very course of expounding the thesis of perfective causality.⁹² In addition to the foregoing consideration, the commenta-

⁸⁹ Leonine ed., *Opera Omnia S. Thomae Aquinatis*, t. 12, p. 23.

⁹⁰ Cf. *supra*, note 81.

⁹¹ *In III*, q. 62, a. 2.: n. II.

⁹² *In III*, q. 62, a. 1.: n. I, ". . . reminiscere, cum . . . dicetur sacramenta causare instrumentaliter gratiam, ut non recurras ad characterem;" n. VI, ". . . gratia sacramentalis non ponitur dispositio, sed . . . nullum habituale donum addit supra gratiam gratum facientem . . . de effectu, qui est gratia sacramentalis . . . quam diximus et manifestabimus, non oportere esse dispositionem aliquam praeiviam ad gratiam." (Leonine ed., pp. 20, 21). It might prove rewarding to learn what had been Cajetan's own conception of sacramental grace in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, where he sustained the doctrine of physico-dispositive causality; nothing can be gleaned from the extracts (drawn from *In 4 Sent.*, q. 1, a. 1) published by M. H. Laurent, O.P.,

tor frowned upon the "habits" theory of sacramental grace because of its multiplication of habits in the soul.⁹³

To establish that III, q. 62, a. 2 teaches a different doctrine of sacramental grace, Cajetan recalled that in the *Prima Secundae* St. Thomas, dividing grace, contradistinguished the "gratuitum divinum auxilium" from the "habituale donum gratiae." Therewith, the commentator continued, St. Thomas located under the genus of grace commonly so called two genera or species of grace, namely, the grace of the habitual gift and the grace of the divine aid. And therefore, Cajetan concluded, "since in this place (III, q. 62, a. 2, c.) St. Thomas expressly says that sacramental grace adds a divine aid, the latter is not be diverted to the opposite genus of grace, namely, habitual; rather, faithfully following the sense of the text, one should understand that sacramental grace is specifically distinguished from the grace of the virtues and gifts, not as one habit from another, but rather as a gratuitous divine aid from a gratuitous habitual gift."

From his way of putting it, Cajetan gives the appearance of wishing to build his case simply on the fact that St. Thomas here calls sacramental grace "quoddam divinum auxilium," as though in the *Summa* that term always signified an actual aid, actual grace. So understanding him, later opponents urged against the theologian the undeniable fact that the *Summa*, far from reserving the expression "divinum auxilium" for actual grace, on more than one occasion applies it to habitual grace.⁹⁴

It is difficult to believe that one so well versed in St. Thomas as Cajetan could have overlooked or forgotten this usage of "divinum auxilium" in the *Summa*, a usage which applied the term now to actual grace, now to habitual. Indeed, that the commentator was not guilty of this oversight can be argued from the fact that he himself, here in his very exposition of III, q. 62, a. 2, and elsewhere, qualifies the term "auxilium" with "actuale," thus indicating that he was aware that the bare term could also be taken to mean "habitual grace."⁹⁵

"La causalité sacramentaire d'après le commentaire de Cajetan sur les sentences," *Revue des sciences philo et théol.*, XX (1931), 80-82.

⁹³ In III, q. 62, a. 2: n. II.

⁹⁴ Cf. I-II, q. 109, a. 7, c.; a. 9, c.

⁹⁵ Cf. In III, q. 71, a. 3 (Leonine ed., t. 12, p. 123).

Perhaps, therefore, a closer study of Cajetan's reasoning would reveal that he wished to argue, not simply from the mere expression "divinum auxilium," but rather from the meaning seemingly imposed on that term by its context in III, q. 62, a. 2. The theologian's point could have been that whenever St. Thomas contradistinguishes "divinum auxilium" from habitual grace, by the former he means an actual divine aid: *atqui*, here, speaking of sacramental grace, the Angelic Doctor contradistinguishes "divinum auxilium" from habitual grace, that of the virtues and gifts, which the sacraments also confer (recall Cajetan's emphasis: "cum in hoc loco (Thomas) expresse dicat gratiam sacramentalem addere divinum auxilium . . ."); *ergo*, the "divinum auxilium" which sacramental grace adds must be an actual divine aid.⁹⁶ In other words, since with the grace of the virtues and gifts man already has that "auxilium" which suffices *in linea doni habitualis*, the "divinum auxilium" which sacramental grace adds to the former must be an "auxilium actuale."⁹⁷

Thus understood, Cajetan's argument is much more plausible than the naïve one which his adversaries have attributed to him since John of St. Thomas. However, whether the commentator's reasoning is, all things considered, solidly based on the text of St. Thomas and faithfully reflects his mind, is a quite different and thorny question, too complex to be gone into here.⁹⁸

Against Cajetan's terse statement that sacramental grace adds actual divine aids the inevitable objection was soon raised that the sacraments achieve their effects at the moment of administration, whereas those special divine aids are given afterwards, whence they can hardly be viewed as effects of the sacraments.

⁹⁶ Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 229, contends that Cajetan should have argued in this fashion but, in actual fact, did not.

⁹⁷ Compare I-II, q. 109, a. 9, c.: "Quantum igitur ad primum auxilii modum (habituaie donum), homo in gratia existens non indiget alio auxilio gratiae, quasi aliquo alio habitu infuso. Indiget tamen auxilio gratiae secundum alium modum, ut scilicet a Deo moveatur ad recte agendum."

⁹⁸ Cf. e. g., Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 230. Note, however, that when this author urges against Cajetan's interpretation the point that, according to St. Thomas, sacramental grace proceeds from sanctifying grace, he forgets that that was the language of the *Commentary* . . . and of the *De Veritate*, not the language of the *Summa*; Cajetan held that in the *Summa* St. Thomas revised his earlier doctrine.

As to this difficulty, it is commonly held that Cajetan could not have overlooked it, and must therefore have meant that at the moment of their reception the sacraments confer the aforesaid aids *in actu primo, quasi per modum habitus*, whereas the aids *in actu secundo* are given *suo tempore*, when man actually needs this assistance for attaining the end of the sacrament. Thus already John Wiggers (d. 1629) and Leonard Lessius (d. 1623),⁹⁹ and later Gonet (d. 1681), who repeated and perfected the above formulation by stating that what the sacraments confer at the moment of reception is a moral right to obtain from God the appropriate aids at opportune times.¹⁰⁰

That Cajetan did in fact think along those lines finds possible confirmation from other utterances of his. For instance, he himself distinguished, on occasion, between *auxilia actualia in actu secundo* and *in actu primo*.¹⁰¹ Noteworthy, moreover, is his commentary on III, q. 79, a. 8, c. There St. Thomas teaches that one who is distracted in receiving the Eucharist can nonetheless obtain an increase of habitual grace. Cajetan held otherwise, and appealed to other texts of the Angelic Doctor. As to the difficulty presented by above-mentioned article of the *Summa*, Cajetan proposed various solutions, the following among them:

Posset . . . forte exponi locus iste de augmento habituali *extensivo*: ita quod sacramentum hoc sit extensivum gratiae ad actus confortativos spiritus; et hoc ipsum sit gratia sacramentalis, quam in anima per modum habitus sacramentum hoc efficiat etiam in mente distractis ex peccato veniali.¹⁰²

Other features of Cajetan's teaching on sacramental grace cannot be gone into here. It must be admitted that his doctrine contains much that is puzzling. The attempt has even been made to discern there an anticipation of the modality theory of sacramental grace, later propounded by Diego Nuño, John of St. Thomas, and others.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 123, 135.

¹⁰⁰ Gonet, *Clypeus Theol. Thomisticae*, t. 6, *De Sacramentis in communi* (Paris, 1876), Disp. III, Art. VI, n. 204.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *In III*, q. 71, a. 3 (Leonine ed., t. 12, p. 123).

¹⁰² This is found in Cajetan's commentary *In III*, q. 79, a. 1: n. VI (Leonine ed., t. 12, p. 220).

¹⁰³ Cf. L. Everett, *op. cit.*, 68.

However, the latter authors themselves recognized nothing of the sort in the teaching of their predecessor, and deemed him instead an arch-adversary. In the common understanding of it, Cajetan's explanation of sacramental grace comes down to this: "at the moment of reception of the sacrament, sacramental grace adds nothing to common grace except a moral something, that is, the right to obtain, at opportune times, actual aids proportioned to the end of the sacrament."¹⁰⁴ Hence Cajetan may be said to have launched what became and remains the *sententia communior* on the nature of sacramental grace:

- (4) Sacramental grace consists in the right or title to receive from God, at opportune times, actual graces and other gifts (e.g., total remission of temporal punishment, in Baptism) proportioned to the proper end of each sacrament."

"Consists," i.e., beyond the aforesaid title, sacramental grace does not add anything else to sanctifying grace, such as a distinct habit or disposition, or some modal perfection of sanctifying grace.¹⁰⁵

More precise authors of this school of thought speak not only of "actual graces" but also of "other gifts," since, e.g., the total remission of temporal punishment in Baptism is not grace in the strict sense of the word.¹⁰⁶ As to the time when the actual graces and other divine benefits are conferred *in actu secundo*, it is understood that some are given at the moment of reception of the sacrament, others afterward, at need.

Perhaps not until J. de Lugo (d. 1660) and Gonet did the dis-

¹⁰⁴ Cf. E. Doronzo, O.M.I., *De Sacramentis in genere* (Milwaukee, 1946), 215.

¹⁰⁵ Some authors, preferring to use the term "sacramental grace" in the wide and comprehensive sense, state the present thesis somewhat as follows, with J. Puig de la Bellacasa, S.J., *De Sacramentis*, ed. 2 (Barcelona, 1948), 91: "Gratia sacramentalis est gratia habitualis cum gratiis actualibus necessariis ad consequendum proprium uniuscuiusque sacramenti finem suo tempore conferendis, et iure quodam ad eas accipiendas in sacramenti susceptione collato. His autem nihil aliud videtur addendum."

¹⁰⁶ Thus Van Noort-Verhaar, *De Sacramentis*, I, ed. 4 (Hilversum, n.d.), p. 58, n. 69.

ciples of Cajetan speak of a *jus* to actual graces, etc.¹⁰⁷ However, that idea is sufficiently implicit in earlier partisans of this theory, even before Wiggers and Lessius. Illustrative is this statement of D. Soto (d. 1560): "Illud enim auxilium nihil aliud est quam quod virtute gratiae Confirmationis Deus est *nova lege* paratus ad opitulandum. . . ." ¹⁰⁸ And Suarez: ". . . *debetur* ex divina institutione tale auxilium." ¹⁰⁹

According to D. Soto, Wiggers, and Suarez, the view that sacramental grace consists in special actual aids (*jus* thereto understood), reaches back beyond Cajetan to the thirteenth century. Soto thought to detect it in Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, and Richard Middleton.¹¹⁰ Wiggers likewise claims St. Bonaventure.¹¹¹ Suarez implied that the theory was the *sententia communis* to which Peter of Palude opposed what he called the "singularis opinio Thomae."¹¹² Be that as it may, after Cajetan the theory caught on gradually, though it was not yet widely accepted in 1546, when Melchior Cano was lecturing at Salamanca.¹¹³ J. de Lugo was able to call it, with some exaggeration, the "common opinion" of his day.¹¹⁴ We may say that it became the *sententia communior* in the seventeenth century and has remained such ever since.

This is not to assert that the many defenders of the present view of sacramental grace are agreed at every turn. Close examination of the various authors reveals many a nuance in their expositions of the general theory.

Most noteworthy is the fact that, whereas the majority uphold

¹⁰⁷ J. de Lugo, S.J., *Disputationes Scholasticae*, t. 3 (Paris, 1869), *Tract. de Sacr. in gen.*, Disp. IV, Sect. III, n. 19.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 113.

¹⁰⁹ Suarez, *De Sacramentis*, Disp. VII, Sect. III, n. 5 (*Opera omnia*, ed Vivès, t. 20, p. 112).

¹¹⁰ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 114. Gonet, *De Sacramentis in communi*, Disp. III, Art. VI, n. 197, erroneously associates this trio with the theory, expressly rejected by St. Bonaventure, that the difference between extra-sacramental grace and the grace of the sacraments is to be found only in their different causes.

¹¹¹ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 122.

¹¹² Suarez, *De Sacramentis*, Disp. VII, Sect. III, n. 3 (p. 111).

¹¹³ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 116.

¹¹⁴ De Lugo, *De Sacramentis in genere*, Disp. IV, Sect. III, n. 19.

an intrinsic connection between the *jus* and sanctifying grace, a few are content with an extrinsic connection. According to the former opinion, the *jus expeditum* to receive actual graces, etc., is, as it were, rooted in sanctifying grace. In other words, it is obtained only in a valid and fruitful reception of the sacrament, and perishes together with sanctifying grace when the latter is lost, although it can return with the recovery of sanctifying grace. Briefly, sacramental grace is contingent upon the possession of sanctifying grace.

In the other opinion, that of extrinsic connection, the *jus expeditum* is held to be rooted in the *res et sacramentum*, and is therefore obtained even in a valid but unfruitful reception of the sacrament, and survives a subsequent loss of sanctifying grace. The practical significance of this second opinion is obvious: an *obex gratiae* in the reception of a sacrament, or subsequent mortal sin, would not preclude those sacramental graces which (unlike the remission of temporal punishment) are not *de se* incompatible with the state of sin, such as special graces conducive to the ends of Matrimony. Proponents of this thesis add the further example of corporal healing in Extreme Unction, but we may remark here that it is questionable whether this effect of Extreme Unction can be wrought independently of its other effects.¹¹⁵

The theory of intrinsic connection is well expounded and applied by, e.g., Umberg, the collaborators in the revised edition of L. Lercher, *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Puig de la Bellacasa, Mors, etc.¹¹⁶ That of extrinsic connection is defended by De Bellevue, De Smet, Goupil, Van Noort-Verhaar.¹¹⁷ These appear to have

¹¹⁵ Cf. J. Umberg, S.J., in L. Lercher, S.J., *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, ed. 3, Vol. IV/2, Pars altera (Innsbruck, 1949), n. 664.

¹¹⁶ J. Umberg, *Systema Sacramentarium* (Innsbruck, 1930), n. 5; Lercher, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV/2, Pars prior (Innsbruck, 1948), n. 35 and *passim*; Puig de la Bellacasa, *op. cit.*, 91-97; J. Mors, S.J., *Theologia Dogmatica*, ed. 2, t. V (Buenos Aires, 1951), 38-40.

¹¹⁷ De Bellevue, *op. cit.*, 106-107; A. De Smet, *De Sacramentis in genere*, ed. 2 (Bruges, 1925), 49-54; J. M. Hervé, *Manuale Theol. Dogmaticae*, Vol. III (Paris, 1949), p. 430, note 4, cites Goupil, and—erroneously—Lercher and Pesch; Van Noort-Verhaar, *op. cit.*, 58-59. Incidentally, since in the theory of extrinsic connection the *jus expeditum* pertains to the *res et sacramentum*, Van Noort-Verhaar prefers to designate as sacramental grace, not the *jus*

had predecessors in the seventeenth century, certain "recentiores" whom J. de Lugo mentions and refutes.¹¹⁸ Michel believes that Cajetan was also a patron of the theory of extrinsic connection.¹¹⁹ To be noted, finally, is the fact that some authors, as Tepe, concede the theory of extrinsic connection for the sacraments which imprint a character.¹²⁰

To return to the general theory, one may attribute to its exponents the merit of having clarified and emphasized the distinction between the effects of the sacraments and the ends of the sacraments. As defined by Umberg, a sacramental effect is anything which is produced in man by the sacrament alone, i.e., *ex opere operato*. The end of the sacrament is that which, from the intention of Christ, is to be obtained through the medium of the sacramental effects, by man's co-operation with those effects. The ultimate, and therefore common, end of all the sacraments is, of course, the eternal salvation of souls. However, each sacrament has its own special and proximate end, that which Christ intended man to attain in this life by his free use of the sacramental effects. Thus, the end of Holy Orders is this, that by his free co-operation with actual graces—the right to which he receives *ex opere operato*, and by the free use of the power conferred on him *ex opere operato*, the ordained sanctify men (proximate end), and so lead them to salvation (ultimate end).¹²¹

As we shall suggest later, this distinction has great practical value for the re-education of the faithful which Pope Pius XII so ardently desired in "Il meno."

but rather the ensemble of actual graces and other gifts which are the object of the *jus*.

¹¹⁸ De Lugo, *De Sacramentis in genere*, Disp. IV, Sect. III, n. 29.

¹¹⁹ (Michel), *L'Ami du Clergé*, XLVI (May 23, 1929), p. 325, note 3. It is difficult to discover this in Cajetan's commentary to III, q. 62, a. 2, cited by Michel; more telling, perhaps, would be the passage we have already quoted from *In III*, q. 79, a. 1: n. VI; on the other hand, cf. *In III*, q. 72, a. 7: n. II: ". . . secundum auxilium firmitatis *procedentis* a gratia, quod gratia sacramentalis vocatur, specie differt (*gratia confirmationis*) a gratia baptismali" (Leonine ed., t. 12, p. 133).

¹²⁰ G. Tepe, S.J., *De Sacramentis* (Paris, 1896), p. 53, n. 61.

¹²¹ J. Umberg, *Systema Sacramentarium*, nn. 2-14; cf. Lercher, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV/2, Pars prior, n. 29.

- (5) Sacramental grace is an intrinsic modality perfecting sanctifying grace, and is specifically different for the end of each sacrament; in it is also included a right to receive, at opportune times, actual graces for the purpose of duly attaining the end proper to the sacrament.

This view of sacramental grace is often described as an attempt at a compromise between the "habits" theory and that of Cajetan.¹²² Since its emergence around the beginning of the seventeenth century it has received various refinements from its successive exponents and defenders. As generally presented today, the theory can be summed up as follows:

Sacramental grace adds to sanctifying grace, not a distinct habit, but simply a new accidental mode, perfecting it and strengthening it for the attainment of the proper or proximate end of the sacrament. Annexed to this mode, which is specifically different in each of the seven sacraments, is the right or title to obtain from God special actual graces conducive to the attainment of the proper end of the sacrament.

This latter point, the concomitant *jus*, is explained somewhat in the following fashion by Ferland, a patron of the present theory.¹²³ Sanctifying grace, even when intrinsically strengthened by the aforesaid mode, and endowed with the infused virtues and gifts, does not as yet become actually operative, and to that extent does not yet attain to the sacrament's proper end. Therefore, in order that it may come to execute its proper task, it is also enriched with an exigence of special aids which are proportioned to the sacramental end to be attained. Such a *jus* is wholly in keeping with the divinely established order of things, wherein intrinsic principles, e.g., our faculties, demand, have a right to, God's natural concursus for attaining their connatural end.

Needless to say, since the aforesaid *jus* is annexed to the mode, and since a mode cannot exist without the thing which it modifies, in this theory sacramental grace is wholly dependent upon the possession of sanctifying grace.

¹²² Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 143, 156; Piolanti, *op. cit.*, 60.

¹²³ A. Ferland, P.S.S., *De Gratia, de Sacramentis in communi* (Montreal, 1938), 437-438.

The first, or one of the first, to propose the modality theory was Diego Nuño (d. 1614).¹²⁴ The same view was later developed and defended at great length, as concordant with the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, by John of St. Thomas (d. 1644) and by the *Sal-manticenses*.¹²⁵ In the same seventeenth and in the following centuries a small company, which included Billuart,¹²⁶ rallied to this theory.

Apparently it had no great following around the beginning of the present century, since Pourrat does not mention it,¹²⁷ although in fact Oswald, Gühr, and Gutberlet had subscribed to it.¹²⁸ In recent years the view has grown in favor, counting among its patrons Hugon, Diekamp-Hoffmann, Michel, Hérís, Ferland, Daffara, Hervé, Winzen, Roguet, Gounin, Crowley, Everett, Bertetto, Journet, Zubizarreta, Doronzo.¹²⁹ Notwithstanding this increased number of partisans, it is mistaken to say that the modality theory is that of the majority of theologians.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Cf. Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, 142-144.

¹²⁵ John of St. Thomas, *De Sacramentis*, Disp. XXIV, Art. II., Dub. un. (ed. Vivès, t. 9, pp. 285-298); *Sal-manticenses, Cursus theologicus*, t. 17, *De Sacramentis in communi* (Paris, 1881), Disp. IV, Dub. IX, nn. 134-148.

¹²⁶ C. Billuart, *Cursus theologiae*, t. 8 (Paris, 1874), *De Sacramentis in communi*, Diss. III, Art. V.

¹²⁷ P. Pourrat, *Theology of the Sacraments*, 198-199; however, Pourrat's résumé is superficial and unreliable.

¹²⁸ J. Oswald, *Von den heiligen Sakramenten*, I. Band (Muenster, 1856), 71-73; N. Gühr, *Die heiligen Sacramente*, I. Band (Freib. im Br., 1897), 96-103; Heinrich-Gutberlet, *Dogmatische Theologie*, 9. Band (Mainz, 1901), 151-159.

¹²⁹ Hugon, *op. cit.*, 97-99; F. Diekamp-A. Hoffmann, O.P., *De Sacramentis* (juxta ed. sextam versio latina, Paris, n.d.), 26-27; A. Michel, "Sacraments," *DTC*, t. 14, col. 631; C. Hérís, O.P., *The Mystery of Christ* (Westminster, 1950), 142-144; Ferland, *op. cit.*, 434-439; Hervé, *op. cit.*, 429-432; D. Winzen, O.S.B., in *Die Deutsche Thomas-Ausgabe*, 29. Band (Salzburg, 1935), 397-398, 498-499; A.-M. Roguet, O.P., *Les sacrements (Somme Théologique: Les Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes)*, ed. 2 (Paris, 1951), 222-223, 365-369; Gounin, *art. cit.*, Crowley, *op. cit.*, 106-107; Everett, *op. cit.*, 139-140; Bertetto, *art. cit.*; C. Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, t. II (Paris, 1951), 624-632; V. Zubizarreta, O.Carm., *De Sacramentis*, ed. 4 (Vitoria, 1949), 63-65; Doronzo, *op. cit.*, 222-225. So also R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *De Gratia* (Turin, 1947), 121; *idem*, *De Eucharistia, Paenitentia* (Turin, n.d.), 4-5, 422-424.

¹³⁰ As asserted in Parente - Piolanti - Garofalo, *Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology* (Milwaukee, 1951), s.v. "Grace, sacramental" (p. 119).

As far back as John of St. Thomas, most representatives of this school of thought have expressly acknowledged that the exigence or right to receive actual graces is an element of sacramental grace. If some fail to do likewise, this is an oversight rather than a denial; intent on rejecting the theory which makes sacramental grace *consist* in the aforesaid right, they neglect to make clear that the latter does have a place in their own conception of sacramental grace. Hervé, for example, had been guilty of this oversight in previous editions, but corrects it in the most recent one.¹³¹

Deserving of separate mention are two recent writers who, while accepting the modality theory, go somewhat beyond the other authors in developing the integral concept of sacramental grace.

Thus, for Father Taymans d'Eypernon, S.J., in his *La Sainte Trinité et les Sacraments*,¹³² sacramental grace is an intrinsic perfection, a special modality, of sanctifying grace, entailing also an exigence of actual graces.¹³³ And, still in agreement with the others who espouse the foregoing view, he holds that each of these modalities conforms us in a special way to Christ and to the life of Christ.¹³⁴ However, the basic thesis of this work is that the sacraments, in conforming us to the Word Incarnate, also conform us the Trinity, adapt us to the life of the Three Persons; their life is reproduced and made manifest in sacramental grace. Whence the author seeks to discover in the single modalities points of contact with the Trinity, special resemblances with the properties of the Divine Persons.¹³⁵

¹³¹ *Op. cit.*, 430.

¹³² Brussels, 1949. Cf. the reviews by H. Stirnimann, O.P., *Divus Thomas*, XXX (1952), 382-384; A. Michel, *L'Ami du Clergé*, LX (June 22, 1950), 391-392.

¹³³ Taymans, *op. cit.*, 153.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 153-159.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-18, 153-159, and *passim*. Note, however, with Stirnimann, *art. cit.*, 382: "er will nicht etwa die Theorie von de Régnon fuer die Sakramentenlehre wiederholen." In this connection we may remark that, doubtless, sacramental theology will have to reckon with the various questions agitated in recent years concerning the Divine Indwelling and connected matters (cf. P. de Letter, S.J., "Current Theology: Sanctifying Grace and the Divine Indwelling," *Theological Studies*, XIV [1953], 242-272). One recalls, for example, that already J. Oswald, and after him K. Adam, admitted, as regards justification through Baptism, only a dynamic inhabitation of the

Among other arresting features of this book, to each valid sacrament it attributes an effect prior to and independent of grace which is described as "an imprint of Christ," an initial resemblance to the *Filius Unigenitus*. This "imprint" differs for each of the seven sacraments, and entrains an exigence of a corresponding grace.¹³⁶

Therewith, as he frankly indicates,¹³⁷ the author has refurbished the "ornatus animae" of the Scholastics. There comes to mind also De Bellevue's idea of the *res et sacramentum* as creating a "new state or dignity or situation" in the soul. However, it should be noted that Taymans d'Eypernon holds the sacraments to be physico-perfective, not dispositive, causes of grace.¹³⁸ Moreover, as we have already gathered, for him sacramental grace is intrinsically dependent upon sanctifying grace. For its development and consummation, the "imprint of Christ" connaturally requires the infusion or increase of sanctifying, together with its special modality and the annexed right to special actual aids; which grace the sacrament accordingly produces (as physico-instrumental cause), unless thwarted by an *obex gratiae*.

Hardly less remarkable is the elaborate conception of sacramental grace advanced by A. Piolanti.¹³⁹ He finds acceptable elements in the theories inspired by Peter of Palude, Cajetan, and Diego Nuño, and endeavors to integrate them into one harmonious whole. Since the complete exposition of this author's views runs to five pages, we must be content to give his own summary (a fuller résumé can be had in Parente-Piolanti-Garofalo, *Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology*,¹⁴⁰ which adopts this explanation). Sacramental grace, says

Holy Spirit, maintaining that substantial indwelling comes first with Confirmation; cf. L. Lercher, *op. cit.*, IV/1 (Innsbruck, 1942), p. 95, n. 98. One looks forward to the publication of Part II of H. Schillebeeckx, O.P., *De Sacramentele Heilseconomie*; from the prospectus given at p. XX in Part I (Antwerpen 't Groeit, 1952), one may hope to find some of these matters touched on in what promises to be a comprehensive treatment of sacramental grace.

¹³⁶ Taymans, *op. cit.*, 25-23.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 27, 32.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 40-42.

¹³⁹ A. Piolanti, O.M.I., *De Sacramentis*, ed. 2 (Turin, 1947), 62-67. Cf. the review by G. Filograssi, S.J., *Gregorianum*, XXX (1949), 208-212.

¹⁴⁰ Milwaukee, 1951; s.v. "Grace, sacramental," pp. 119-120.

Piolanti, is a certain habitual disposition, by which the entire supernatural organism gets a new orientation towards the end proper to each sacrament, an orientation achieved by the modification and invigoration of sanctifying grace, by augmentation of those virtues which are conducive to the peculiar end of a given sacrament (as faith, in Baptism; charity, in the Eucharist), and by a firmly rooted right to receive at opportune moments the appropriate help of actual graces.¹⁴¹

Engaging in many respects, this theory is not without its obscurities and difficulties, some of which Filograssi has pointed out in his critical review. For one thing, it is not clear whether the asserted increase of those virtues which correspond to the particular ends of the various sacraments is to be understood somewhat as in the opinion advanced long ago by John Wiggers (d. 1629). The latter, without denying that the increase of any one virtue involves also an increase of the rest, maintained that particular virtues are especially augmented by the different sacraments according as this or that virtue by its very nature is more conducive to the end of one sacrament than to the end of another.¹⁴² Filograssi inclines to understand Piolanti in a rather different sense, taking, e.g., the asserted "augmentum fidei" to be equivalent to "the habit of faith modified and rendered more capable and more prompt for its acts."¹⁴³

With Piolanti we conclude our conspectus of the theories now current on the ontological nature of sacramental grace. As we previously learned, all claim to be grounded in the doctrine of St. Thomas. For reasons already stated, that claim may certainly be dismissed when made in behalf of the theory of Capreolus and of kindred views (Neveut).

With regard to the remaining claims the decision is not so easy. So far as we are able to judge, the Angelic Doctor's teaching on sacramental grace would involve something more than a mere *jus ad auxilia actualia*. Though the supporting argument which he offered may be more plausible than is usually realized, Cajetan's interpretation does not quite square, it seems, with all that the *Summa Theo-*

¹⁴¹ Piolanti, *op. cit.*, 86.

¹⁴² Cf. Everett, *op. cit.*, 85.

¹⁴³ Filograssi, *art. cit.*, 209; cf. Piolanti, *op. cit.*, p. 63, note 4.

logica has to say of sacramental grace. For there, no less than in the earlier works of St. Thomas, that grace appears to involve something habitual and, indeed, of a physical nature, not merely moral (*jus*).¹⁴⁴ However, this is not to say that the Angelic Doctor's notion of sacramental grace did not include, as an element, the right to actual graces.¹⁴⁵ And Cajetan had at least the merit of bringing this implicit element to the fore.

Supposing, then, the substantial continuity of St. Thomas' doctrine on the nature of sacramental grace, from the *Commentary on the Sentences* to the *Summa Theologica*, we may further conclude that De Smet, Van Noort-Verhaar, etc., cannot claim the Angelic Doctor as an authority when they make sacramental grace something independent of sanctifying grace (theory of extrinsic connection between *jus* and sanctifying grace). For, one recalls, according to the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *De Veritate*, sacramental grace flows from, depends upon, and cannot exist without sanctifying grace. This observation also tells against Leeming when he maintains that sacramental grace, though depending on sanctifying grace for its origin, is not lost with the commission of mortal sin.

We judge, then, that to the mind of the Angelic Doctor sacramental grace involves something habitual, of a physical nature, originating from sanctifying grace and depending on the latter for its continued existence. Whether that something habitual is to be interpreted with the school of Peter of Palude as a habit distinct from sanctifying grace with its normal cortege of virtues and gifts

¹⁴⁴ Thus, e.g., a great stumbling block for Cajetan, and for Gonet, is III, q. 62, a. 2, ad 3: ". . . ratio sacramentalis gratiae se habet ad gratiam communiter dictam sicut ratio speciei ad genus;" cf. Crowley, *op. cit.*, 37, 39-40, 43-45; note, however, that in arguing from the *Commentary on the Sentences* and from the *De Veritate* Crowley (p. 45) forgets—as often happens among critics of Cajetan—that the latter held St. Thomas advanced in the *Summa* a new and revised view of sacramental grace, retracting the doctrine of earlier works.—Among other difficulties we may mention that the "jus ad actualia" interpretation of sacramental grace in the *Summa* is hard to reconcile with such utterances as, III, q. 71, a. 3, ad 2: "de ratione sacramenti est quod perficiat principalem effectum, qui est gratia remittens culpam vel supplet aliquem hominis defectum."

¹⁴⁵ Cf. III, q. 69, a. 5; cf. Piolanti, *op. cit.*, p. 63 with note 2; Hugon, *op. cit.*, 97-98.

of the Holy Ghost, or with the school of Diego Nuño as a modal perfection of sanctifying grace, or as the complex *dispositio* envisaged by Piolanti, is beyond the power of the present writer to decide. The difficulties of the problem will be appreciated by anyone who compares the studies of St. Thomas given us by Brazzarola and Crowley. The former builds a seemingly strong case for the interpretation inaugurated by Peter of Palude. The latter, after sharp criticism of Brazzarola, argues no less impressively in favor of the interpretation launched by Diego Nuño. We venture one minor observation. More often than not, the school of Peter of Palude, notably Billot, conceives sacramental grace chiefly in terms of a remedy for sin. This falls short of the *Summa's* doctrine on the dual role of sacramental grace, which is said to have not only a remedial function but also and especially a positive and perfective office.

For the further study of St. Thomas perhaps a suggestion will be permitted. Yet to be explored is the bearing of his doctrine regarding sacramental grace on his doctrine regarding consent to grace in the moment of sacramental justification. One knows of his teaching that, for the justification of a conscious adult, there is requisite in the very moment of justification an act of the free will, a consent to grace, which pertains to the substance of justification (wherein St. Thomas distinguishes: *infusio gratiae, motus liberi arbitrii in Deum, motus liberi arbitrii in peccatum, consecutio gratiae*).¹⁴⁶ And this holds for sacramental justification as well.¹⁴⁷ What is more, according to Cajetan, it holds also for second justification, the increase of sanctifying grace, whether sacramentally or extra-sacramentally: ". . . sanctificatio adultorum est per proprium actum liberi arbitrii tendentis in Deum: et similiter augmentum sanctificationis est per augmentum liberi arbitrii tendentis in Deum."¹⁴⁸ Perhaps a confrontation of the above positions of St. Thomas with his views on sacramental grace would shed valuable light on both subjects.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. I-II, q. 113; M. Flick, S.J., *L'attimo della giustificazione secondo S. Tommaso* (Rome, 1947), 11-154; H. Schillebeeckx, O.P., *De Sacramentale Heilseconomie*, Part I (Antwerpen 't Groeit, 1951), 566-579.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Flick, *op. cit.*, 155-200; Schillebeeckx, *op. cit.*, 579-619.

¹⁴⁸ Cajetan, *In III*, q. 34, a. 3: n. II (Leonine ed., t. 11, p. 348); cf. *In III*, q. 79, a. 1: n. III (Leonine ed., t. 12, pp. 219-220); cf. Schillebeeckx, *op. cit.*, 621-637.

Because of the high esteem in which Mother Church holds the *Doctor Communis*, we have endeavored to ascertain his position on the intimate nature of sacramental grace. However, great though the authority of St. Thomas may be, that authority would not suffice to put the nature of sacramental grace beyond all doubt, even if the Angelic Doctor's exact position on the matter were surely known. Therefore, whatever may be thought of the pretensions of the various theories to reflect the mind of St. Thomas, it would still remain to judge their validity as answers to the objective question: What is the nature of sacramental grace?

This paper, a mere survey, cannot really attempt such a judgment. In lieu of such an undertaking, we shall do two things: (1) emphasize the important fact that, despite the welter of theological opinions, there is an area of agreement: sacramental grace at least *involves* a right to receive at apt moments the special help of actual graces proportioned to the proper end of the sacrament; (2) indicate some of the major reasons for and against the position: sacramental grace *consists* in that title to receive such graces (and other divine boons), i.e., does not add anything else to sanctifying grace, such as a distinct habit or disposition, or some modal perfection of sanctifying grace.

AREA OF AGREEMENT

Since the seventeenth century the view of sacramental grace which owes its inspiration to Cajetan has been the *sententia communior* of theologians. Its closest rival, the modality theory, dates from about the same era, and, as was previously pointed out, likewise admits that sacramental grace entails the right to receive at opportune moments actual graces which are necessary or useful for attaining the sacrament's proper end. Further similar admissions can be met among the few modern adherents of Peter of Palude.¹⁴⁹ We may say, then, that since the seventeenth century, at the latest,¹⁵⁰ there

¹⁴⁹ Leeming, *op. cit.*, 28-29; Merkelbach, *op. cit.*, p. 40, n. 35. Billot is silent on this point.

¹⁵⁰ One gathers from Brazzarola, *op. cit.*, *passim*, that until then the common opinion (at least among non-Thomists) was that which saw only a distinction of reason between extra-sacramental grace and the grace of the

has been almost universal agreement that the *jus ad auxilia actualia* belongs to the notion of sacramental grace.

This fact is worth emphasizing because too many authors fail to bring it out, either at all, or at least with sufficient clarity. F. Connell, C.S.S.R., is an exception, Puig de la Bellacasa, S.J., is another, and doubtless there are several more.¹⁵¹ But in perhaps the majority of dogmatic manuals the fact is obscured, sometimes by an over-simplified summation of the opposing theories,¹⁵² sometimes by the manner in which the author argues for his preferred view. Most frequent offenders here are of the school of Cajetan; what is more, in failing to mention that other theories admit the aforesaid *jus*, and in then concluding to their own view by reasoned elimination of the others, not only do they obscure the area of agreement, but, in addition, they create the impression that the *jus* is only probable, a conclusion depending on the merely probable refutation of the rival theories.¹⁵³

Despite these oversights on the part of some, the fact itself remains: there is almost universal agreement that sacramental grace involves a right to obtain special actual graces when needed to further the proper end of a sacrament. Neveut is one of the few dissenters.¹⁵⁴ Surprisingly enough, his rejection of the above position came after *Casti connubii* had authoritatively vindicated that common opinion, explicitly for the sacramental grace of Matrimony, sacraments. Whether this common opinion patterned itself after the view of Biel, or after that of St. Bonaventure, is not clear. If the latter was the case, we may recall that according to D. Soto, Suarez, and Wiggers, St. Bonaventure's theory of sacramental grace was implicitly that held by the school of Cajetan.

¹⁵¹ Cf. F. Connell, C.S.S.R., *De Sacramentis Ecclesiae*, t. 1 (Bruges, n.d.), p. 83, n. 76; Puig, *op. cit.*, p. 92, n. 161.

¹⁵² Cf., e. g., F. ab Abárzuza, O.F.M.Cap., *Manuale Theol. Dogmaticae*, Vol. III (Apud Padre Las Casas, Chile, 1947), p. 28, reducing the opinions to these simple alternatives: "utrum . . . sit aliquid actuale, an habituale."

¹⁵³ Cf., e.g., Lennerz, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-69, nn. 280-281; J. De Aldama, S.J., in *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, IV (Madrid, 1951), p. 45, n. 46; C. Pesch, S.J., *Compendium Theol. Dogmaticae*, t. IV, ed. 5 (Freib. im. Br., 1936), pp. 18-19, n. 20.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Neveut, *art. cit.*, p. 285, note 12 (n. 4°); for the difference between the right to special actual graces which the sacraments impart, and the right to actual graces which is connatural to anyone in the state of grace, cf., e.g., De Aldama, *op. cit.*, p. 46, n. 48.

implicitly—*ex paritate rationis*—for the sacramental graces of the other sacraments.¹⁵⁵ The Encyclical declared: “*jus denique iis concedit ad actuale gratiae auxilium toties impetrandum, quotiescumque ad munera huius status adimplenda eo indigent.*”¹⁵⁶

The word “*impetrandum*” in the foregoing passage calls for some comment. The passage stands in a context which Leeming sought to exploit as confirmation of his view that sacramental grace involves not only a right to special actual graces but also a distinct habit. To achieve that purpose this theologian found it necessary to interpret “*impetrandum*” in such wise that the sentence is no longer a confirmation of the *jus* as commonly conceived and upheld (*jus ad auxilia proxime sufficientia*):

“*Jus illud de quo in ultimo loco agit Summus Pontifex, aliquid minus est quam jus in quo gratiam sacramentalem consistere dicunt theologi. Hoc enim est jus quod effectum exercet citra petitionem ex parte possessoris, illud vero est jus ‘ad impetrandum’ quod scilicet effectum non producit nisi petitione a conjubius facta.*”¹⁵⁷

Vermeersch advanced the same interpretation of “*impetrandum*.”¹⁵⁸ However, as Puig de la Bellacasa and De Aldama have pointed out, in the vocabulary of theology and of ecclesiastical documents the verb “*impetrare*” can also mean “*obtain*,” abstracting from whether this be done by prayers or by other means.¹⁵⁹ That such is its meaning here can hardly be doubted, especially since even without sacramental grace spouses have a right to pray for divine assistance.

Leeming is more plausible when he turns to another matter and observes that *Casti connubii* seems to tell against the theory of extrinsic connection, which would allow sacramental graces to those

¹⁵⁵ Cf. J. Umberg, in L. Lercher, *Institutiones Theol. Dogmaticae*, Vol. IV/2, Pars prior (Innsbruck, 1948), p. 182, n. 239.

¹⁵⁶ Pius XI, Litt. Ency., “*Casti connubii*,” Dec. 31, 1930; *DB*, n. 2237.

¹⁵⁷ Leeming, *op. cit.*, 29.

¹⁵⁸ A. Vermeersch, S.J., “*Annotationes ad Encycl., ‘Casti Connubi,’*” *Periodica*, XX (1931), 50; cf. Vermeersch-Bouscaren, *What Is Marriage?* (New York: The America Press, 1944), p. 29, n. 76: “The Encyclical thus attributes a peculiar efficacy to the prayer of the parties to obtain what is necessary or useful to them in every situation in which they may find themselves.”

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Puig, *op. cit.*, p. 96, note 17; De Aldama, *op. cit.*, p. 46, note 7.

who receive a sacrament validly but with an *obex gratiae* (De Smet, Van Noort). For the Encyclical states:

"Cum igitur sincero animo fideles talem consensum praestant, aperiunt sibi sacramentalis gratiae thesaurum. . . . Hoc enim sacramentum, in iis, qui obicem, ut aiunt, non opponunt, non solum permanens vitae supernaturalis principium, gratiam scilicet sanctificantem, auget, sed etiam peculiaria addit dona, bonos animi motus, gratiae germina, naturae vires augendo ac perficiendo, ut coniuges non ratione tantum intelligere, sed intime sapere firmiterque tenere, efficaciter velle et opere perficere valeant, quidquid ad statum coniugalem eiusque fines et officia pertinet; ius denique iis concedit ad actuale gratiae auxilium toties impetrandum, quotiescumque ad munera huius status adimplenda eo indigent."¹⁶⁰

AREA OF DISAGREEMENT

We may conclude, then, that it is the common, and certain,¹⁶¹ teaching of theologians that sacramental grace entrains a right to receive at suitable moments special actual graces needed to further the proper end of a sacrament. But does sacramental grace *consist* in that title, adding nothing more to sanctifying grace? The schools of Peter of Palude and of Diego Nuño reply in the negative. Among other arguments, they invoke the Magisterium.

Thus Ferland, for one, appeals, against the school of Cajetan and in behalf of the modality theory, to the Council of Trent.¹⁶² One must reply, however, that, according to A. Michel, basing himself on Cavallera's studies of the Council of Trent, the Synod "did not dream of intervening in the subject of the opinions sustained by the diverse schools," with reference "to the nature of sacramental grace and to the causality of the sacraments in the production of grace."¹⁶³

Further, as we have already noted, Leeming sought to find con-

¹⁶⁰ *DB*, n. 2237; cf. n. 2238; cf. Leeming, *op. cit.*, 31.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Puig, *op. cit.*, p. 93, n. 162; Hervé, *op. cit.*, p. 430, n. 442, 3°.

¹⁶² Ferland, *op. cit.*, 438.

¹⁶³ C. Hefele, H. Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles*, t. X/1, par A. Michel (Paris, 1938), 207; Michel quotes F. Cavallera, S.J., *Bulletin de Toulouse*, 1915-1916, pp. 28 sq., 66 sq.

firmation of his conception of sacramental grace in the passage quoted above from *Casti connubii*. However, his argument hinges mainly on his implausible interpretation of "impetrandum."

Appeal is also made to the same passage of *Casti connubii* in behalf of the modality theory, by Hervé, seconded by Bertetto.¹⁶⁴ Hervé himself, however, concedes that the passage can be reconciled with the view that sacramental grace consists in the right, intrinsically connected with sanctifying grace, to obtain opportune actual aids.¹⁶⁵ It is not inconceivable that the Encyclical's "ius denique iis concedit . . ." can mean: "In short, or to sum up, it imparts the right. . . ." Umberg gives a good commentary on the passage from the point of view of the school of Cajetan.¹⁶⁶

Other objections against the latter school, of a speculative nature, can be seen in the various authors. As to arguments against those who contend that sacramental grace involves something more than the title to opportune actual aids, namely, either a special and distinct habit, or a modal perfection of sanctifying grace, one finds a good presentation in Puig de la Bellacasa.¹⁶⁷ He reasons that the added element would be either (1) some permanent principle (absolute or modal) of supernatural operation, or (2) some disposition diminishing concupiscence. Contending that the disjunction is adequate, and tacitly conceded by adversaries, Puig asserts that neither supposition can be admitted. Not the former, because with habitual grace (sanctifying grace, the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost), man is already endowed with all that he needs in the way of physically permanent principles of supernatural operation ("Adverte . . . nos non reicere nisi principia alia *physice* permanentia: nam ius, quod asserimus in thesi, permanet certe moraliter"). Not the second supposition, because neither the Council of Trent, on Baptism (*DB*, n. 792), nor *Casti connubii* on Matrimony, gives any hint that these sacraments diminish concupiscence; on the contrary, they seem

¹⁶⁴ Hervé, *op. cit.*, p. 432, n. 442, 3°, d.; Bertetto, *art. cit.*, 412.

¹⁶⁵ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁶ Cf. L. Lercher, *Institutiones Theol. Dogmaticae*, Vol. IV/2, Pars altera (Innsbruck, 1949), p. 360, n. 763.

¹⁶⁷ Puig, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-97, n. 165.

to insist that concupiscence remains as before; and if such is the case with Baptism and Matrimony, the same is to be said—*ex paritate rationis et proportione servata*¹⁶⁸—for the other sacraments.

CONCLUSION

It does not fall within the province of this paper to pursue the above debate any further. Our purpose throughout has been the limited one of ascertaining the present-day state of the question regarding the intimate nature of sacramental grace, so that others, better qualified, may carry on from there.

In our opinion, their initial task should be that of seeking to determine, not the precise import of the general conclusions of St. Thomas on the nature of sacramental grace, but rather the validity of his premises.

For instance, his abiding premise that the sacramental graces of all seven sacraments are intended as remedies for sin or its consequences. The premise is indubitably true at least for some sacraments; but is it unquestionably valid for all seven? The answer to be given to this question would require a careful study of the Church Fathers. Some of them did indeed lay stress on the sacraments as remedies for the defects consequent upon sin. But is such teaching necessarily Tradition; and, if so, is it necessarily Tradition reaching to all seven sacraments, and reaching to them so far as their sacramental graces are concerned? In evaluating the relevant Patristic utterances one should not forget that the Fathers lacked an explicit or reflex consciousness of the *numerus septenarius* of the Christian sacraments.

Further, much light still needs to be shed on what may be termed the "pathology" of sin. The teaching of St. Thomas on sacramental grace presupposes his doctrine as to "defects caused by sin," "wounds of sin,"¹⁶⁹ "remains of sin." What were his precise views on such matters, and what certainty do those views enjoy?¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸Cf. *ibid.*, p. 97, note 18, regarding the Eucharist.

¹⁶⁹"Vulnera" not only of original sin but also of actual sin; for the difference between the two, cf. R. Bernard, O.P., *Le Péché (Somme Théologique: Les Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes)*, II (Paris, 1931), 304, 349.

¹⁷⁰For example, St. Thomas is said to have conceived the "remains of

These are but a few of the questions which await exploration by that gifted theologian of whom our introduction spoke. Rather, the task is one for several such theologians. At the same time there is also a task for the pastor and the catechist. It should not be thought that these must remain idle, until the professional theologians announce the results of their further researches in the field of sacramental grace. On the contrary, even now there is much on this subject which those charged with the care of souls can and should bring home to the faithful, in the interests of an "ever greater and more intense utilization of the efficacy of the sacraments, and for a refluorescence of Christian life and sanctity."¹⁷¹

Thus, it is certain that the Christian sacraments are not simply "instruments of grace"—they are seven "precision-instruments of grace": each of them has an end all its own, and to that special end each gives a grace all its own. Such, in effect, is the teaching of the Encyclical "Mystici Corporis Christi": in His infinite goodness the Saviour of mankind instituted seven different sacraments so that "by so many consecutive, graduated graces" all the varied needs of His Mystical Body might be generously provided for.¹⁷² If pastor and catechist were to inculcate and unfold this truth more diligently than heretofore, that would go a long way towards correcting the widespread underestimation of the power and purpose of the Christian sacraments, which we noted at the outset with Dom Ralph Russell.

In elaborating the above truth pastor and catechist could follow the lead given by Pope Pius XII in "Il meno." There, we have seen, the Holy Father emphasized that after the *opus operatum* there remains, as it were, an *opus operandum*: fruitful reception of a sacrament does not conclude the Christian's duty—it is still up to him to co-operate with the power that the sacrament gives. . . .

To bring out this point it would be necessary to insist, with a

sin" as consisting in some preternatural physical infirmity, whereas with St. Bonaventure the Scotist school considers them as something psychic; cf. J. Umberg, in L. Lercher, *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, ed. 3, Vol. IV/2, Pars altera (Innsbruck, 1949), n. 659.

¹⁷¹ To quote Bertetto, *art. cit.*, 413.

¹⁷² Pope Pius XII, Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (June 29, 1943), *AAS*, XXXV (1943), 201-202 (N.C.W.C. translation, nn. 18-20).

growing number of modern theologians,¹⁷³ on the distinction between the effects of the sacraments and their proximate ends,¹⁷⁴ with appropriate stress on the fact that the latter are achieved only by free co-operation with the sacramental grace peculiar to each sacrament.¹⁷⁵ Relevant here are these signal words of Pope Pius XI: "Since . . . men do not reap the full fruit of the sacraments . . . unless they co-operate with grace, the grace of matrimony will remain for the most part an unused talent hidden in the field unless the parties exercise these supernatural powers. . . ." ¹⁷⁶

Another thing worth impressing on the faithful is the importance of conserving or regaining the state of grace, not only for its own sake, but also in order to be assured of sacramental grace. For, according to the more probable opinion, upheld by the majority of theologians, sacramental grace is contingent upon the possession of sanctifying grace.

Finally, as to sacramental grace itself, its intimate nature may as yet elude accurate analysis, but this much is certain and should

¹⁷³ Cf. *supra*, note 121.

¹⁷⁴ Detailed instruction would be called for on the effects and the ends proper to each sacrament, so far as agreement obtains on these matters. There are some disputed points; for example, against Kern, J. Umberg contends that the remission of the whole of temporal punishment is not an effect of Extreme Unction but pertains rather to its proximate end; cf. Lercher, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV/2, Pars altera, nn. 655, 661, 662.

¹⁷⁵ An attempt has been made along these lines in an excellent textbook for French secondary schools, edited by Ch. Baumgartner, S.J., *La vie de la grâce et les sacrements* (Lyons, 1948), 198: "The particular end envisaged by each of the sacraments cannot be attained completely at the moment of its reception. The end is, one may say, *à longue échéance*. For example, the end proper to Baptism is to make us sons of God, not only on the day of our Baptism, but during the whole of our life and into eternity. . . . It is necessary, therefore, that the sacrament make its effect felt beyond the instant in which it is received. Sacramental grace designates this persistence of the sacrament which brings to the soul special graces conformed to the end envisaged by each. The sacramental grace of Baptism, for instance, consists in the ensemble of actual graces which, throughout the course of his life, assists the Christian to remain faithful to his baptismal vows."

¹⁷⁶ Encyclical, *Casti connubii* (Dec. 31, 1930), AAS, XXII (1930), 555; cf. *ibid.*, 583-584; English translation in *Five Great Encyclicals* (New York: The Paulist Press), 89, 111.

be preached in a season and out of season: conveying a right to special actual graces, sacramental grace guarantees to us God's unfailing assistance proportioned to the sacramental end to be attained. Or, as Pope Pius XII put it in "Il meno," the sacraments give us not only "newness of life" but also the power to act in conformity with that life; which is to say, with St. Thomas Aquinas: "Deus perfecte in sacramentis homini providet."¹⁷⁷

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DIGEST OF DISCUSSION ON THE THEOLOGY OF SACRAMENTAL GRACE:

Father Francis Connell, C.S.S.R., of Holy Redeemer College, Washington, D. C., asked a series of questions as to the possible influence of Peter Lombard's theory about Matrimony on medieval notions of sacramental grace.

In replying to these queries, Father Shea pointed out that the problem as to the nature of sacramental grace emerged only after clarity had been gained—around the beginning of the thirteenth century, and therefore subsequent to Peter Lombard—about the nature of habitual grace, involving sanctifying grace as something perfecting the essence of the soul and distinct from the infused virtues and gifts.

The speaker agreed with Father Connell that Peter Lombard, for one, believed that Matrimony did not confer grace, that it is exclusively a remedy for sin (cf. *4 Sent.*, d. 2). He remarked, however, that Peter Lombard extended the idea of remedies for sin to all seven sacraments, viewing them as the means used by the divine Good Samaritan to bind up the wounds of sin. Father Shea added that one finds a similar approach in practically all theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (for some exceptions, cf. footnote 25), including St. Thomas, especially in his Commentary on the Sentences (cf., e.g., his Prologue to the Fourth Book).

Continuing his remarks on this occasion, the speaker recalled that the idea of sacraments as remedies for wounds caused by sin

¹⁷⁷ In *4 Sent.*, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1, ad 5.

goes back beyond Peter Lombard, and Hugh of St. Victor, to St. Augustine especially. St. Thomas inherited this idea, and it comes to light when, e.g., he says in the Commentary on the Sentences: if something is not necessary in the very nature of things to produce a certain effect, and yet is used to produce that effect, this is a sign that there must be some defect in the subject destined to receive the effect in question; now sacraments are not necessary in the very nature of things in order that grace be produced in us, and yet God uses them for that purpose; this, therefore, is a sign that there are defects in man—defects, wounds caused by sin (cf. *In 4 Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 1). Father Shea was of the opinion that one ought to investigate thoroughly the nature of these defects as understood by St. Thomas; his theories on the “pathology” of sin served as premises for his theology of sacramental grace.

Father Edward Hanahoe, S.A., of Graymoor, Garrison, N. Y., asked whether validly and sacramentally married non-Catholics can receive the sacramental grace peculiar to Matrimony. Father Shea answered that he could think of no reason why such non-Catholics, if they received the sacrament validly and fruitfully, could not obtain the sacramental graces proper to the sacrament. He added, however, that he could see problems with regard to some other sacraments, e.g., Confirmation.

Father John Baptist, C.P., of St. Joseph's Monastery, Baltimore, proposed this question: Is there a distinction between the grace of the virtues and the grace of the sacraments? This distinction might help to show what sacramental grace is. The grace of the virtues is opposed to sin inasmuch as sin is an inordinate act. The grace of the sacrament is opposed to sin in a different way.

The questioner no doubt had in mind the teaching of St. Thomas that the grace of the virtues is opposed to sin in so far as it is an inordinate act, whereas sacramental grace is opposed to sin in so far as sin wounded the natural good of the potencies (cf. *De veritate*, q. 27, a. 5, ad 2, ad 3; *S. Th.* 3, q. 62, a. 2, ad 1, ad 2). Father Shea judged that the above question comes back, in the final analysis, to the matter which he said needs further exploration: What are those wounds caused in the faculties by sin; what is the nature of this injury done to the faculty. . . ? In this connection the speaker

adverted to the dispute between the Thomistic school and the Scotistic school on the nature of the "remains of sin." The former looks upon the *reliquiae peccati*, which Extreme Unction is meant to correct, as a kind of physical *inhabilitas corporis et animae*, an *inhabilitas* of the body for being moved by the soul, and of the soul for moving the body. With St. Bonaventure the Scotistic school regards the remains of sin not as some kind of preternatural physical infirmity but as consisting in certain psychic acts or dispositions (cf. J. Umberg, in L. Lercher, *Instit. Theol. Dogm.*, ed. 3, IV/2/2, Innsbruck, 1949, n. 659).

Father Paul Palmer, S.J., of the Jesuit Seminary, Toronto, Canada, in the course of a series of questions and remarks, observed that the present discussion on the Scholastic tradition could be supplemented by a study of the Fathers and of the liturgy—does the liturgy of the sacraments portray the grace peculiar to each? Also, he felt that there had been a tendency in the treatment of sacramental grace to diminish the part played by the sacramental character, which distinguishes three sacraments.

Father Shea assured Father Palmer that there had been no intention of discounting the importance of the sacramental character in sacramental theology. He explained that, in talking about sacramental grace, theologians have in mind, not all the effects of sacraments, but rather an effect within the sphere of the *res tantum*. Nor, it would seem, is that effect the ultimate effect, the *res tantum* itself, but rather something underlying the *res tantum*. The whole question as to the nature of sacramental grace has been this: What is the ontological nature of that thing which produces those effects necessary in the Christian life? For example, St. Thomas, in S. Th. 3, q. 62, a. 2, speaks of sacramental grace as a certain divine aid *ad consequendum finem sacramenti*; that *finis* of which he speaks would be those effects which he says, in the same article, are necessary in the Christian life. According to his way of putting it, those effects are not the sacramental grace but rather the result of that sacramental grace. The sacramental grace itself is the *auxilium*; that *auxilium* is given to achieve the effects which are necessary in the Christian life. What is the ontological nature of that *auxilium*, considered *in communi*: this has been the problem before the minds of

those who discuss sacramental grace. They ask, for instance: Can we always think of sacramental grace, considered *in communi*, as a thing to be found in certain modal perfections in the sanctifying grace of Baptism, of Confirmation, etc.? In conclusion, Father Shea agreed with Father Palmer that a careful study of Tradition would be useful and necessary, in order to evaluate the premises of the sacramental theology of the Middle Ages; the importance of such a study is emphasized in the conclusion of the paper which was read.

Father Gerard Owens, C.S.S.R., of St. Alphonsus Seminary, Woodstock, Canada, asked: Have you any clear demonstration how the mode may be distinct from the habit? These two theories seem very similar. Perhaps some of the theologians who upheld the theory of mode were unwilling to assign any habit and hence too this way out.

In reply, Father Shea observed that there is a great practical difference between the two theories. If sacramental grace is a modality of sanctifying grace, then it cannot exist without sanctifying grace. But if it be a habit, Leeming and some others say that this habit can survive the loss of sanctifying grace, and thus the sacramentally married can have the benefit of the sacramental grace peculiar to Matrimony even if they be in the state of sin.

Father Shea acknowledged that some authors do not seem to see much difference between the modality theory and the habit theory; e.g., Hervé associates Billot's view with the modality theory. Similarly, Pègues, in his Commentary on the Third Part of the *Summa Theologica*; on one page this author says that St. Thomas held sacramental grace to be a modal perfection of sanctifying grace; some pages later, the same author adopts Billot's presentation of sacramental grace—presumably, as concordant with the teaching of St. Thomas. As to his own opinion, Father Shea believed that one should differentiate sharply between the theory that sacramental grace is a modality of sanctifying grace, and the theory that it is a distinct habit or disposition; the difficulties involved in more or less identifying the two theories could be gathered from a study of the sharp clash between Father Brazzarola and Father Crowley, in their respective dissertations on the nature of sacramental grace according to the mind of St. Thomas.