



Brandon Wanless

St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John Paul II on the State of Original Innocence

Introduction

In his *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*,¹ Pope St. John Paul II set out to explicate the teaching of Pope St. Paul VI’s encyclical on human reproduction, *Humanae vitae*. To this end, John Paul II follows the lead of Jesus Christ himself when the Lord spoke in dialogue with the Pharisees regarding the indissolubility of marriage, taking as his justification the normativity of the creation account in the book of Genesis: “From the beginning it was not so...”²

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¹ St. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline, 2006). Hereafter, citations directly from John Paul II’s text will be listed as follows: *TOB* “General Audience”：“Paragraph” (e.g., *TOB* 18:2). Citations from Michael Waldstein’s “Introduction” or “Index” to *TOB* hereafter will be listed, e.g., as: Waldstein, *TOB*, 106.

² Mt 19:3–9 (RSV-CE).



Commenting on this, John Paul II says, “When Christ appeals to the ‘beginning,’ he asks his interlocutors to go in some way beyond the boundary running in Genesis between the state of original innocence and the state of sinfulness that began with the original fall.”³ Christ points mankind to this beginning to see the original intention for the proper relationship between man and woman experienced in that pristine state of original innocence before the Fall. Even in our current fallen state, that original state of man and woman operates as the norm and image for marriage for man and woman throughout history.

St. Thomas Aquinas in the Theology of the Body

John Paul II consciously takes as established the teaching found in the Catholic tradition regarding that original state of mankind referred to as “original justice.” He explicitly notes that he is operating with that doctrine as previously defined: “Theology and also the Church’s magisterium have given these fundamental truths a form of their own.”⁴ In his footnote, he quotes two sources, the Council of Trent (the magisterial source) and Adolphe Tanquerey’s *Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae* (the theological source). The reference from the Council of Trent is taken from the decree concerning original sin, which defines that “the first man, Adam [...] was constituted” with a certain “holiness and justice” which, by directly disobeying God, he “immediately lost.”⁵ Tanquerey, utilizing a very systematic approach, integrates formal magisterial teaching with the wisdom of the Fathers of the Church and usually ends with a speculative *ratio* derived from St. Thomas Aquinas

³ *TOB* 4:1. Cf. 13:2: “One must remember that all the analyses we are carrying out here are connected, at least indirectly, with precisely these words.”

⁴ *TOB* 18:2.

⁵ *TOB* 18:2 (n. 29), quoting Council of Trent, Session V, Canon 1, DS 788.

to explicate the reasons for the doctrine. While it is disputed how dependent the Council of Trent is on Aquinas in its definition of original justice, Tanqueray is quite explicit on this matter. From this it can be said that John Paul II, at least to some degree, implicitly and effectively presupposes the teaching of Aquinas foundational for his own with regard to original justice.

In his *Theology of the Body* catecheses, John Paul II explicitly references Aquinas a handful of times, each time as a distinct authority regarding anthropology (51:6, 66:6), the virtues of purity (54:2) and continence (130:1), and sacramental theology (93:5, 98:7).⁶ Although he recognizes Aquinas as an authority worthy of mention, John Paul II does not wish to put to use the method of the medieval Doctor in his meditations, for example, on the body-soul relationship. He states:

Without entering into the structures of human interiority by means of the subtle distinctions provided for us by systematic theology (especially beginning with Thomas Aquinas), we limit ourselves to a synthesis of biblical teaching that allows us to grasp in an essential and sufficient way the distinction and antithesis between “flesh” and the “Spirit.”⁷

This quotation captures what is largely the *modus operandi* of John Paul II in *The Theology of the Body*: the pontiff deliberately decides to eschew an account according to the categories of systematic theology in favor of a penetrating biblical exegesis.⁸

In his account of original innocence in the first chapter of *The Theology of the Body* (“Christ Appeals to the ‘Beginning’”), John Paul

⁶ Cf. Waldstein, *TOB*, 722.

⁷ *TOB* 51:6.

⁸ It is worth noting that his choice of method should not necessarily be interpreted as an inference by the pope that the systematic account of the theological tradition, as exemplified in Aquinas, ought to be understood to be unbiblical.

II makes no reference at all to Aquinas. In fact, following his emphasis on the “biblical teaching,” John Paul II also seeks to draw out the *experience* of man in the state of innocence inherent in Genesis 2, again independent from the explicit categories of the Scholastics. He writes:

Theology has built the overall image of man’s original innocence and justice before original sin by applying the method of objectivization specific to metaphysics and metaphysical anthropology. In the present analysis, we are trying rather to take into account the aspect of human subjectivity; subjectivity, moreover, seems to be closer to the original texts, especially to the second creation account, that is, the Yahwist text.⁹

Whereas the preceding theological tradition’s exegeses of the creation accounts have been nearly always objective in character, contemplating the definitive (and static) reality of man in his original state, John Paul II, not rejecting but presuming this objectivity, seeks to discover the dynamic experience of that same man (and his wife) with an analysis of his subjectivity, that is, Adam’s experience as a man in relation to God and to Eve in innocence.¹⁰ Again, this method guides the pontiff’s stated objective of establishing an “adequate anthropology” from which we can derive a full vision of God’s plan for human sexuality in the light of *Humanae vitae*.¹¹

⁹ *TOB* 18:1, his emphasis. Cf. 15:4, quoting Gen 2:25: “The biblical expression ‘did not feel [shame]’ directly points to ‘experience’ as a subjective dimension.”

¹⁰ It must be noted that objective/subjective is not to be confused with interior/exterior. The Patristic and Scholastic accounts of original innocence examine both the interiority of Adam before sin and his relation to creation exterior to himself, as will be clear in St. Thomas’s account.

¹¹ Regarding “adequate anthropology,” see *TOB* 13:2 (n. 23).

By way of comparison, in his account of original innocence, Aquinas follows the Patristic tradition and emphasizes the objective justice that was a gift of supernatural grace. John Paul II, on the other hand, builds upon this tradition and yet goes beyond it, by exploring the subjective experience of man and woman in the state of original innocence. The question at hand is in what way and to what degree does the late Holy Father integrate the theology of original justice as exemplified in Aquinas. My purpose here is to first explore the correspondence between their two accounts, while then demonstrating that in going beyond Aquinas, John Paul II's teaching is yet faithful to his scholastic predecessor, fleshing out the experiential realities of man in original innocence while presuming the objective account provided by Aquinas. After detailing the account of the first man in his original prelapsarian state offered by Aquinas, I will turn to John Paul II's account in *TOB* to examine how he both aligns with Aquinas and develops the Thomistic account. In so doing, I also hope to provide something of an implicit defense of John Paul II's identity as a Thomistic thinker, even if the Polish pope's methodology is markedly different than that of the Angelic Doctor.

The Thomistic Account of Original Justice

In his account of human history vis-à-vis the Incarnation, Aquinas notes that there are three fundamental states of human existence: “innocence, sin, and glory.”¹² The first state of human existence—original innocence—he typically refers to as “original justice.” For

¹² St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III a, q. 13, a. 3, *ad* 2. Trans. Laurence Shapcote, Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas, vols. 13-20 (Green Bay, WI: Aquinas Institute/Emmaus Academic, 2012). Hereafter: *Summa theologiae*. III 13.3 *ad* 2.

Aquinas, the justice inherent in the primitive prelapsarian state of human innocence concerns the relation both of man to God and of the parts of man within himself, as opposed to the justice of human interrelations of commutation, distribution, or with reference to the common good of society.¹³ In his treatise on justification, Aquinas defines this state of justice as “a certain rectitude of order in the interior dispositions of a man, in so far as what is highest in man is subject to God, and inferior powers of the soul are subject to the superior.”¹⁴ As a true Aristotelian, Aquinas does not consider this a “justice” properly speaking (as interrelations of human beings) but as “metaphorical,” precisely as the various “parts” of the human person are interrelated, as if considered to be like persons themselves,¹⁵ in a relationship of the governing to the governed: the mind and will govern the concupiscible and irascible sensitive appetites, and the soul perfectly governs the body.¹⁶ Moreover, such a state of justification, though in keeping with man’s nature, was not the product of natural causes but was a preternatural state and the effect of supernatural grace.¹⁷ Since the higher

¹³ Cf. *Summa theologiae* II–II 58.2 *resp.*

¹⁴ *Summa theologiae* I–II 113.1. Cf. *Scriptum super Sententiis*, Book IV, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, qa. 1, *resp.*; *De veritate* q. 28, a. 1, *resp.*

¹⁵ See *In III Sent.* 33, 3.4.1 *resp.*

¹⁶ See Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, Book V, Ch. 11 (1138b, 10–13). Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, Book V, Lecture 17, 1106–1107. For a thorough treatment of Aquinas’s use of “metaphorical justice” in his theology, see especially Brandon L. Wanless, “St. Thomas Aquinas on Original Justice and the Justice of Christ: A Case Study in Christological Soteriology and Catholic Moral Theology,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 90 (2016), 201–216. Cf. J. Mark Armitage, “A Certain Rectitude of Order: Jesus and Justification According to Aquinas,” *The Thomist* 72 (2008), 45–66.

¹⁷ See *Summa theologiae* I 100.1 *ad 2*: “This grace would not have been natural [...] but would have been conferred on man immediately on his receiving a rational soul.” See also I 95.1, esp. *ad 5*; and I–II 113.1. Cf. *TOB* 97.3.

does not negate the lower, grace presupposes and ennobles nature in original justice.

Though ordered towards mankind's original plan as a species, Aquinas's primary point of reference is most especially the first man himself in his individuality.¹⁸ For Aquinas, the stress is on the state of justice as a rectitude of order among the parts of the human person, ultimately rooted in man's rectitude of order to God in mind and will. Man is neither simply the soul nor simply the body, but the hylomorphic unity of both body and soul as mutually dependent form and matter constituting one whole being.¹⁹ Just as all the parts of the human person are integral to the person, so too ought those parts be integrally related unto each other in a proper order, and it is this order that occupies the Thomistic focus with respect to that original state of innocence. Thus, Aquinas asserts that there was no "rebelliousness" on the part of the passions or on the part of the body, since, as he says, "no passion could arise in the body that would in any way conflict with the soul's dominion over the body."²⁰ In fact, Aquinas posits that "in that state the passions of the soul existed only as consequent upon the judgment of reason." The superior parts of man served as an imperturbable master over the inferior parts, governing them as a regnal administrator, with the lower parts exercising obedience to the higher, as if each were quasi-autonomous persons in their own right, and as if the whole

¹⁸ Contrast over twenty articles dedicated largely to prelapsarian man in his individuality versus about a dozen on woman, the offspring, or human relationships in *Summa theologiae* I, qq. 90–102.

¹⁹ See *Summa theologiae* I 75.4 resp: "It is clear that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body." Cf. I 89.1.

²⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, Book I, ch. 186. Trans. Cyril Vollert, ed. Michael Bolin, et al., in *Opuscula I: Treatises*, Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas, vol. 55 (Green Bay, WI: Aquinas Institute/Emmaus Academic, 2018). Hereafter: *Compendium theologiae* I.186.

human person were some common good of their social functioning.²¹ Precisely because of this perfect governance of soul over body, the body would have been prevented from corruption and even death entirely. Though death is natural to man insofar as the corruptible material body is concerned, death would have been unnatural to man in the state of original justice because of this perfect, graced subjection of the body to the immortal soul. Aquinas explains: “For man’s body was indissoluble not by reason of any intrinsic vigor of immortality, but by reason of a supernatural force given by God to the soul, whereby it was enabled to preserve the body from all corruption so long as it remained itself subject to God.”²²

At the root of this rectified state of original integrity stands the rectitude of the human will. Aquinas writes: “Now the whole order of original justice consists in man’s will being subject to God: which subjection, first and chiefly, was in the will, whose function it is to move all the other parts to the end.”²³ The state of original justice is a state of justice according to the rectitude of order within man himself, effected by the rectitude of order between man and God; as the mind and will are perfectly subjected to God, so too the lower appetites and the body can be perfectly subjected to the superior powers of the soul. The “justice” in the state of original innocence, for Aquinas, is principally the giving of what is due in the subordination of man’s will to

²¹ See *Summa theologiae*. I 96.2 *resp.* “Over the sensitive powers, as the irascible and concupiscible, which obey reason in some degree, the soul has mastership by commanding. [...] But of the natural powers and the body itself man is master not by commanding, but by using them.” Cf. *Sent. Libri Ethic.* V, 17, 1106–1107.

²² *Summa theologiae* I 97.1 *resp.*, emphasis added. Cf. I 97.2.

²³ *Summa theologiae* I–II 82.3 *resp.* With respect to original sin as the very privation of original justice, Aquinas goes on to say: “Accordingly the privation of original justice, whereby the will was made subject to God, is the formal element in original sin; while every other disorder of the soul’s powers, is a kind of material element in respect of original sin.”

God: “owing to the submission of man’s will to God, man referred all things to God as to his last end, and in this his justice and innocence consisted.²⁴ The dynamic at work in the centrality of the will under God and over the passions can be best be termed an ordered self-mastery. Aquinas will even call this a self-possession, insofar as “possession denotes undisturbed ownership.”²⁵ The end result of this “harmony of original justice”²⁶ is a “complete peace of mind” in the constitution of man and woman in original innocence.²⁷ Yet, it must be kept in mind that this is no merited state of justice in Aquinas’s account; the original man is created simultaneously in a graced state, and the divine grace of original justice is a gratuitous gift first and foremost responsible for the rectitude of order of man’s mind and will to God, and the trickle-down effect seen in the just interrelation of man’s own ontological make-up.²⁸

²⁴ *Compendium theologiae* I.186. See also *Summa theologiae* I 95.1 *resp.*: “For this rectitude consisted in his reason being subject to God, the lower powers to reason, and the body to the soul; and the first subjection was the cause of both the second and the third [...]” Cf. *Super epistolam B. Pauli ad Galatas lectura*, ch. III, l. 3 (130–131).

²⁵ *Summa theologiae* II–II 136.2 *ad* 2.

²⁶ *Summa theologiae* I–II 82.1. Cf. I–II 82.2.

²⁷ *Compendium theologiae* I.186.

²⁸ See esp. *Summa theologiae* I 95.1 *resp.*: “But the very rectitude of the primitive state, wherewith man was endowed by God, seems to require that [...] he was created in grace. [...] Now it is clear that such a subjection of the body to the soul and of the lower powers to reason, was not from nature; otherwise it would have remained after sin. [...] Hence it is clear that also the primitive subjection by virtue of which reason was subject to God, was not according to nature, but according to a supernatural gift of grace.” Translation slightly amended. Cf. I–II 109.3.

John Paul II on Original Innocence and the “Ethos of the Gift”

Pope John Paul II’s exegesis of man in original innocence from Genesis functions as part of his formation of an “adequate anthropology,” that is, an integral and holistic vision of man—in man’s objective and subjective dimensions—in reference to all three states mentioned by Aquinas: innocence, sin/grace, and glory. John Paul II also refers to “the gift of original innocence” as “what man was then” before original sin “through the gift of grace.”²⁹ Contrasting that state of innocence with what we know after sin, he says: “It is a different measure of ‘spiritualization’ that implies another composition of inner forces in man himself, another body-soul relation, as it were, other inner proportions between sensitivity, spirituality, and affectivity.”³⁰ Though he does not explain those relations and proportions, John Paul II seemingly presumes and indeed hints at the “inner” interrelationality of the Thomistic account detailed just above. The pontiff at the very least agrees with Aquinas in that the hinge-point of this justification of the first man was rooted in the will: “This innocence seems to refer first of all to the interior state of the human ‘heart,’ of the human will.”³¹

Likewise, in his account of original justice, Aquinas clearly defines the state of innocence as a perfect ruling of the lower parts of man by that which is highest in him, amounting to a stable sense of perfect

²⁹ *TOB* 18:3. Cf. 16:4: “Original innocence speaks above all about the gift of grace”; and 96.5.

³⁰ *TOB* 18:2.

³¹ *TOB* 16:4. John Paul II continues: “At least indirectly, it includes the revelation and discovery of human moral consciousness—the revelation and discovery of the whole dimension of conscience—obviously before the knowledge of good and evil. In a certain sense, one should understand it as original righteousness.”

self-mastery. John Paul II speaks similarly of the “interior freedom” of the original man. He asks: “Is this freedom a freedom from ‘sexual drive’? The concept of ‘drive’ already implies an inner constraint.” Instead, in man’s awareness “of the procreative power of his own body and of his own sex, man is at the same time free from the ‘constraint’ of his own body and his own sex.”³² This freedom from constraint is a direct result of self-mastery, which itself serves as a freedom for the gift of self. John Paul II goes on: “Here we mean freedom above all as self-mastery (self-dominion). Under this aspect, self-mastery is indispensable in order for man to be able to ‘give himself,’ in order for him to become a gift.”³³ The “freedom of the gift” radically demands self-mastery and self-possession; freedom is for the sake of self-donation. Whereas Aquinas details the precise nature of that self-mastery in terms of an objective justice of rightly ordered parts of man, John Paul II goes further to denote the finality of that self-dominion located precisely in the relational experience, not only of Adam to God, but especially of the man to his bride.

According to Aquinas, that ordered perfection of man in original justice was also the proximate source of man’s original beatitude. He writes: “Man was happy in paradise, but not with that perfect happiness to which he was destined [...] [but] so far as he was gifted with natural integrity and perfection.”³⁴ John Paul II, on the other hand, speaks of man’s peace of mind as manifest in the very relationship between Adam and Eve. He says: “They see and know each other, in fact, with all the peace of the interior gaze, which creates precisely the fullness of the intimacy of persons.”³⁵ Thus, the pontiff speaks of original beatitude relationally, as the result of personal communion:

³² *TOB* 14:6, emphasis original.

³³ *TOB* 15:2, emphasis original.

³⁴ *Summa theologiae* I 94.1 ad 1, quoting St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* XI, 18.

³⁵ *TOB* 13.1.

This relationship [of reciprocal gift in communion of persons] is precisely the fulfillment of “man’s” original solitude. In its origin, such a fulfillment is beatifying. Undoubtedly, it is implicit in man’s original solitude, and precisely constitutes the happiness that belongs to the mystery of creation made by love. [...] When the “male” man [...] says, “This time she is flesh from my flesh and bone from my bones” (Gen 2:23), these words in some way express the subjectively beatifying beginning of man’s existence in the world.³⁶

The shame-less, peaceful gaze of purity manifests the integrity of man. And in the communion of persons in mutual self-gift is found man’s original happiness.

John Paul II acknowledges a certain happiness resulting from the very integrity of man alone with God, but he posits a fuller beatitude in man’s unity with woman,³⁷ following the magisterial *Gaudium et Spes* 24:3.³⁸ He says:

Though man [in original solitude] existed in this situation of original happiness, the Creator himself and then also the “man” emphasize that the man is “alone,” instead of underlining the aspect of the world as a

³⁶ *TOB* 14:2–3.

³⁷ This relation between man and woman in no way supplants the relation to God. Instead, as Michael Waldstein once put it in “Body, Soul, and Christian Theology” (course lecture, Ave Maria University, Ave Maria, FL, November 20, 2014): “the relation to God is present within the relation between man and woman.”

³⁸ *Gaudium et Spes* 24:3, as quoted at *TOB* 15:1 in n. 25: “Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when he prays to the Father, ‘that all may be one... as we are one’ (Jn 17:21–22) and thus offers vistas closed to human reason, indicates a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the union of God’s sons in truth and love. This likeness shows that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self (cf. Lk 17:33).” This text is deeply influential throughout all of John Paul II’s *TOB*.

subjectively beatifying gift created for man [...] For the first time there clearly appears a certain lack of good, “It is not good that the man” (male) “should be alone.”³⁹

The point of this declaration by God, according to John Paul II, is that man was made to live in a communion of persons according to mutual self-gift. He writes: “In fact, the gift reveals, so to speak, a particular characteristic of personal existence, or even of the very essence of the person.”⁴⁰ Man’s fulfillment exists, according to John Paul II, not only in the perfect harmony of his individual person, but in relation to another in a communion of persons.

Moreover, according to John Paul II, this communion of persons was brought about in the first man and woman by mutual self-gift through their very bodies. God’s gift of original innocence is ordered toward a wholly pure gift of self, according to the “spousal meaning of the body,”⁴¹ in which masculinity and femininity are teleologically ordered to each other in their sexuality. John Paul II says:

At the roots of this [reciprocal] experience [of the body] must be the interior freedom of the gift, united above all to innocence; the human will is originally innocent and thus furthers the reciprocity and the exchange of the gift of the body according to its mas-

³⁹ *TOB* 14:1, quoting Gen 2:18. This seemingly rubs against what Aquinas says at *Summa Theologiae* I 95.2: “Nor was any good wanting which a good-will could desire to have then [...] neither had he passions in respect of good not possessed.” John Paul II does acknowledge a prior belonging to God in “man’s original virginal value.” See *TOB* 10:2.

⁴⁰ *TOB* 14:2, emphasis original.

⁴¹ *TOB* 13:1: “The original meaning of nakedness corresponds to the simplicity and fullness of vision in which their understanding of the meaning of the body is born from the very heart, as it were, of their community-communion. We will call this meaning ‘spousal.’”

culinity and femininity as the gift of the person. Consequently, the innocence attested in Genesis can be defined as the innocence of the reciprocal experience of the body [...] This exchange constitutes, in fact, the true source of the experience of innocence. We can say that inner innocence in the exchange of the gift consists in a reciprocal “acceptance” of the other in such a way that it corresponds to the very essence of the gift; in this way, the mutual gift creates the communion of persons.⁴²

Since original innocence conditions the spousal meaning of the body and the essence of the mutual gift of self, John Paul II is able to say that “holiness has entered the visible world” through the human body. “Original innocence, connected with the experience of the spousal meaning of the body, is holiness itself, which permits man to express himself deeply with his own body, precisely through the ‘sincere gift’ of self.”⁴³ Fundamentally, then, to John Paul II original innocence was a gift of holiness given to man and woman that enabled them to participate in the inner life of God through their radical gifts of self to each other in purity of heart. This is what he calls the “ethos of the gift” that serves as the basis for a truly adequate anthropology.

Conclusion

Pope John Paul II’s “adequate anthropology” presupposes the preceding theological tradition and, I argue, especially Aquinas’s objective account of man in his ontological composition in right order of “jus-

⁴² *TOB* 17:2–3, emphasis original. Cf. *TOB* 16:5: “The beatifying consciousness of the meaning of the body [...] is conditioned by original innocence.”

⁴³ *TOB* 19:5, citing *Gaudium et spes* 24:3.

tice” and subordination. But, in order for a Catholic anthropology to be truly adequate, John Paul II wishes to integrate the subjective and relational—some would even assert, phenomenological—dimensions of the prelapsarian anthropology so as to make clear the iconic normativity of the male-female sexual relationship that was “from the beginning” in reference to 20th century confusion regarding the sexual relationship articulated in *Humanae vitae* and subsequently so widely rejected. In building upon the Thomistic account, John Paul II neither merely continues the objective anthropology nor radically departs therefrom; instead, it seems that he sees in the tradition’s objective account the parameters both necessary and complementary to the subjective-relational account often presupposed and desired in contemporary anthropology and morality.

Beyond John Paul II’s explicit citations of Thomas Aquinas in his *Theology of the Body*, there are obviously several points of agreement between the two with respect to the doctrine of original innocence. John Paul II follows Aquinas in affirming that the state of original innocence involved a different relation of body and soul which resulted from a supernatural grace, primarily located in the human will, and from which relation a peace of mind resulted and led to an original beatitude specific to that state. The reality of “self-mastery” in John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body* can be said to be equivalent to the state of original justice in Aquinas. John Paul II focuses on self-mastery not because he sees it as an end in itself, as the Stoics and Immanuel Kant had thought.⁴⁴ No, instead, John Paul II goes further: the gift of self-

⁴⁴Michael Waldstein, in *Glory of the Logos in the Flesh: Saint John Paul’s Theology of the Body* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2022), 696, puts it this way: “Freedom of the gift implies self-mastery, not being swept away by passion. One can truly say *yes* if one can say *no*.” In an earlier draft of this text, “Contraception and Reason: St. John Paul’s Theology of the Body” (unpublished manuscript, Department of Theology, Ave Maria University, Ave Maria, FL, 2014), Print, 438 (n. 27), Waldstein

mastery in original justice is also a self-possession, oriented toward the loving gift of oneself, enabled by the body through its spousal meaning. For the pope, the sacramentality of the body manifests the invisible mystery of divine life, that is, the Trinitarian communion of persons, to the visible world.

John Paul II moves from the doctrine of original justice as portrayed in the theology of Aquinas—a “metaphorical” justice of rectitude within a singular man—to his own theology of original innocence as a disposition toward interpersonal self-gift. He presupposes a relational justice, of course, but his account goes beyond simply what is just, and extends to the “ethos of the gift,” which is an ethos of love, modeled in the very fact of creation. This ethos of the gift is more than what is owed to another in justice and more than the innocence of a conscience untainted by evil; it captures, rather, the magnanimous generosity found in man and woman in their original dynamically lived holiness.⁴⁵

wrote: “The freedom of the gift is the freedom of the person to give himself or herself. In order to be free to give oneself, one must have self-possession and self-mastery, because one can only freely give what one effectively possesses. [...] Self-possession and self-mastery, however, are not sought primarily for their own sake, but for the sake of the gift. In Stoic and Kantian ethics, self-possession and self-mastery are almost the center of the highest moral perfection; in John Paul II, love is higher.” Cf. *Glory of the Logos in the Flesh*, 526–528.

⁴⁵ The author would like to express his personal gratitude to Michael Waldstein for his inspiration and assistance with this research, as well as to one of the anonymous referees who offered extremely helpful comments particularly regarding the shape and emphasis of my argument.



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SUMMARY

This article examines the relationship between the theologies of St. Thomas Aquinas and Pope St. John Paul II with respect to their accounts of the state of original innocence or “original justice.” The author contends that, in his “Theology of the Body,” John Paul II presumes and builds upon the Thomistic account by demonstrating their continuity of thought; the second contention is that the pontiff develops the Thomistic account by emphasizing the teleological nature of the self-mastery characteristic of the prelapsarian state as ordered toward self-gift as well as in the interpersonal dimension of that primitive beatitude.

Keywords: Pope St. John Paul II, St. Thomas Aquinas, Theological Anthropology, Original Innocence, Original Justice, Theology of the Body, Gift of Self, Metaphorical Justice

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