

Perceiving the Image of God in the Whole Human Person

Mark K. Spencer
University of St. Thomas, MN

One of the most striking Biblical claims is that we human persons are made in the image and likeness of God. Genesis 1:25-27 tells us that, whereas the animals are made “according to “their kinds,” God resolved to make human persons “according to” (or “towards” or “in”), in His words, “Our image and likeness.”¹ This is coupled in verse 26 with the resolution to set us in dominion over all other living creatures, and in verse 27 with the creation of man and woman. The New Testament² develops this claim: Christ *is* the image of the invisible God, whereas we are made “according to” this image, (Col 1:15, 3:10). What this image of God in us is has been a perennially debated in the Christian tradition, but accounts of the image of God have been used to support a variety of anthropologies and ethics. Inadequate accounts of the image have often led to or reinforced inadequate anthropologies and ethics. I here outline an account of the image of God that seeks to overcome those inadequate views, and I shall do so by synthesizing some apparently conflicting strands of thought from the Christian tradition.

In the Western tradition, following Augustine, the image is generally seen as belonging to the human soul, not the body. An image of God, Augustine reasons, must represent God as He is in Himself. God is a Trinity of consubstantial Persons, so He will be imaged by something three-fold in us, where the three are of one substance. In God, the Father begets His Word, and with and through that Word spirates the Spirit, but all three are of the divine substance. In God’s image, when the mind knows itself or knows God (and such knowledge is always contained in memory), it expresses this in an interior word, which leads to love for self or God. But all three—mind or memory, word, and love—are of the same substance, that of the soul.³ There are reflections of God in the body and in our relationships to things other than God, but these do not image God; the image only belongs to what is highest in us, that by which we are *capax Dei*.⁴

¹ In Greek: κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν. In Latin: *ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*. In Hebrew, the key words are *besalmenu*, from *selem*, image, and *kidmutenu*, from *demuth*, likeness.

² Hans Urs von Balthasar in *Theo-Drama*, v. 2, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 317-20, claims that the idea of the image of God does not seem to have had much direct influence in the Old Testament, aside from a handful of texts.

³ Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 9.4.4-7, p. 28-30; 12.4.4, p. 84; 14.12.15, p. 153-4; 14.14.18-20, p. 156-8. See Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* (hereafter *DV*), q. 10 a. 1, for an argument that we image God as Trinity, not just as imaging the perfect image, the Son. All Aquinas citations are from www.corpusthomicum.org.

⁴ Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis* (hereafter, *In Sent.*) I d. 3 q. 3 a. 1 ad3; *Summa theologiae* (hereafter *ST*), III q. 4 a. 1 ad2. Francisco Suárez says it is the view of the “saints” that we image God in that by which we overcome all bodily things, at *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* I d. 2 q. 4 n. 13. All Suárez citations are from www.salvadorcastellote.com. The claim that we image God only in the “highest” part of the soul, whereby we are receptive to and contemplate God, is found in many sources: e.g., Philo of Alexandria (see D.T. Runia, “God and Man in Philo of Alexandria,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 39 [1988]: 48-75), in the medieval mystics, and in contemporary Thomists (see e.g. Andrew Woznicki, *Metaphysical Animal*, [New York: Peter Lang, 1996], 65-68).

Other Fathers, such as Gregory of Nyssa who sees the image in our freedom,⁵ also restrict the image to our souls, but this view has recently been challenged.⁶ Many now see the Bible as claiming that *man*, the whole human person, body no less than soul, images God not just in something in him or herself, but by relating to God and other persons; evidence for this is that in Genesis the image of God is linked to our relations involving dominion and sexuality.⁷ It is further reasoned that the writer of Genesis had no knowledge of the Trinity or the Incarnation, and so ‘the image of God’ cannot, at least in its primary meaning, refer to these;⁸ some worry that Augustine reads Christian dogmas into his account of the human person, rather than seeing the image as we actually experience it.⁹ From the New Testament it is reasoned that if Christ *is* the image Who makes visible the invisible God, then we who are made *according to* this image must in a way similar to the Incarnate Christ make God visible—but that would involve our bodies, the visible part of us, in the image. Furthermore, Christ reveals that God is a communion of Persons—and so we image God best not alone, in our souls, but in a communion of persons.¹⁰ Rejecting the Augustinian approach is further motivated by examining how we are presented to ourselves in experience, as considered by the phenomenologists. The Biblical claim, it is supposed, expresses something perceivable in persons. We perceive the other as made in the image of God when we see his or her dignity¹¹ or mysterious uniqueness. But if the image of God were just in the soul, then these things could not be perceived by others, as in fact they are. Finally, many reject the Augustinian approach by contending that it undergirds an inadequate, dualist anthropology, on which I am primarily my soul, and the body is a mere aid (or prison) to the soul or imitates God only through the soul.¹² Such a view seems irreconcilable with the centrality of the body in the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Resurrection.

My goal is to outline a metaphysics in which these views *are* reconciled and synthesized; on my view, the Augustinian image in our souls is the essential core to the image, but it is also

⁵ Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, c. 16 and John Damascene, *On the Orthodox Faith* II c. 12. These citations are from www.newadvent.org. cf. John Meyendorff’s introduction to Gregory Palamas, *The Triads* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1983), 14, 18. All citations from the Fathers, unless otherwise indicated, are from the versions on www.newadvent.org. These Greek thinkers are followed in contemporary times by, e.g., Balthasar in *Theo-Drama*, v. 2, 326-7, who sees us imaging God, Who is infinite freedom, in our finite freedom.

⁶ Contemporary thinkers distinguish three models for theories of the image of God: substantial models (e.g., Augustine’s, on which the image of God is something in us), relational models (on which the image is in our relation to God or others), and functional models (on which the image of God is in something that we do, e.g., have dominion.) See Olli-Pekka Vainio, “*Imago Dei* and Human Rationality,” *Zygon* 49 (2014): 121-34; Ryan S. Peterson, *The Imago Dei as Human Identity* (Warsaw: Eisenbrauns, 2016). My account includes each of these within a single image.

⁷ Consider, e.g., the views of Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann (see Dominic Robinson, *Understanding the “Imago Dei”*, [Burlington: Ashgate, 2011], 31-2, 48, 129, 133, 138), and of G.C. Berkouwer (see Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], 63) and Hoekema’s own view at *Image*, 75-80.

⁸ David Ferguson, “Humans Created According to the *Imago Dei*,” *Zygon* 48 (2013): 439-53.

⁹ Thomas Cajetan directly suggests that we know the image of God is an image of the Trinity by starting with the dogma of the Trinity and then finding its image in us, rather than perceiving that image directly: see *Expositio super summam theologiam* v. 5, *Opera omnia Thomae Aquinatis*, I q. 93 a. 5, (Rome: Leonine edition, 1889), 406.

¹⁰ For these claims, see the section on phenomenological accounts of the image below.

¹¹ Cf. Gen 9:6 and James 3:9.

¹² See Augustine, *Trinity*, 14.19.25, p. 164-5. For an argument that Augustine, in his account of the image, forgets our animality and presages Cartesian dualism, see the phenomenologist Emmanuel Falque, *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb*, trans. George Hughes (New York: Fordham, 2016), 89-90.

present in our bodies and relationships, such that it is perceivable in and belongs to the whole person. In working out this synthesis, I build especially on the work of Thomas Aquinas who, more than others in the tradition, lays a groundwork for seeing the image in the whole person. This synthesis will avoid three¹³ problematic anthropologies that many Christian thinkers have held; they are problematic because they are phenomenologically inadequate—that is, they fail to fully cohere with and explain our experience. The first problematic anthropology is any dualism in which the image of God is only in the soul; such a view fails to grasp how the human person is given experientially as a holistic unity. The second is any personalism on which the image of God is in the whole person to the exclusion of any hierarchy between soul and body; this fails to grasp how the person is given as a hierarchical unity. The third is any hylomorphism on which soul and body have a hierarchical unity, but there are only causal or signifying relations between soul and body, and where what is in the soul cannot also be in the body; such a view fails to grasp the other sorts of relations between our souls and bodies that are given in experience.

To the end of offering a synthetic, phenomenologically-adequate account of the image of God that can undergird a phenomenologically-adequate anthropology (and ethics), I first present Aquinas's view of the image of God in us. Second, I consider phenomenological objections to Aquinas's account. Finally, I present a synthesis between the Thomistic-Augustinian and the phenomenological accounts of the image of God.

Aquinas on the Image of God

Aquinas, following Augustine, holds that the human person is made, in the soul and especially in the operations mentioned above, according to and directed toward the image of God (*ad imaginem Dei*). The image of God is not our essence; rather, it flows from our essence, as the end or goal of the production of the human person, and is something in us, not something identical to us.¹⁴ An image comes from that of which it is an image and imitates it by sharing either its species or essence (as the king's son is the image of the king, and in this sense Christ alone is *imago Dei*) or one of the accidents typical of its species (as the image, or specific characteristics, of a king is on a coin, and in this sense we are *ad imaginem Dei*).¹⁵ Of course, God does not literally have accidents. But He does have intellectual being (*intelligere*), the highest “grade” or “ultimate difference” of being, not merely being (*esse*), or living being (*vivere*). Human and angelic persons share in this highest grade of being and have in accidental form the characteristics typical of this

¹³ Some contemporary thinkers link the *imago Dei* to evolutionary materialism (see, e.g., Johan DeSmedt and Helen DeCruz, “The *Imago Dei* as a Work in Progress: A Perspective from Paleonathropology,” *Zygon* 49 [2014]: 135-56), but that is independent of, not due to, their account of the *imago Dei*—that is, they try to fit an account of the *imago Dei* into an already adopted materialism. I don't consider this anthropology in this paper largely because it isn't a temptation for the traditions I'm looking at, or for the main Christian traditions.

¹⁴ Aquinas, *ST I* q. 93 pr.; *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* a. 11 s.c. 2. In this section, all references are to works of Aquinas, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁵ *In I Sent* d. 3 q. 3 a. 1 ad5; d. 28 q. 2 a. 1 ad3; *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 1; *ST I* q. 35 a. 1 and a. 2 ad3; q. 93 a. 1 ad2, a. 2, a. 6 ad1. Aquinas draws on Augustine, 83 *Questions*, q. 74. On Christ being the perfect image of God see *Summa contra gentiles* (hereafter *SCG*), IV c. 11; *Super II ad Corinthos*, c. 4 lect. 2; *In Col.* c. 1 lect. 4. Charles-René Cardinal Billuart argues that the human person is a true image, though an imperfect one: the “ad” in “*ad imaginem Dei*” signifies infinite distance (see *Summa sanctae thomae*, v. 2., *De opera sex dierum* diss. 3 a. 5, [Paris: Palmé, 1872], 115).

grade, such as powers, habits, and acts of intellect and will,¹⁶ and our share in God's intellectual "light" whereby we render what is potentially intelligible actually intelligible, manifest goodness, and reflect divine beauty.¹⁷

This participation in God's mode of being gives us not only the general "likeness" to God that all beings have insofar as they have being and its properties, but also a share in His image, which is like a "picture" of God in our souls.¹⁸ We first share in this image in the substance of our soul; Aquinas argues, following Gregory of Nyssa and John Damascene, that here we image God's substance. Just as God is substantially intelligence, freedom, immortality, and pure goodness, so our souls share in intelligence, freedom, immortality, and goodness.¹⁹ Through this share in the image, we "speak" of God by our very being. We second, but more fully, image God in acts of knowing and loving ourselves and God, acts to which our souls are directed; Aquinas argues, following Augustine and Hilary of Poitiers, that these constitute the image of the Trinity.²⁰

To know anything fully, we must express our knowledge in a word, an interior enunciation of what we have grasped pre-conceptually.²¹ When I grasp extra-mental creatures, that which is

¹⁶ *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 2; d. 17 q. 1 a. 1 ad2; *ST I* q. 93 a. 2; *DV* q. 10 a. 1 ad5; *Quaestiones disputatae de potential Dei* (hereafter *DP*), q. 9 a. 5; *Compendium theologiae I* q. 75. Cajetan, *In I ST*, v. 5, 408 argues against Duns Scotus, *In I Sent* d. 3 q. 5 (who argues that there is no distinction between image and trace, because both reveal God only according to common concepts, not according to proper species) that what is special about the image of God is that it reveals God according to ultimate grade of being, not God's proper species.

¹⁷ *Super De divinis nominibus* (hereafter *In DDN*), IV, lect. 18; *Super Psalmos* (hereafter *In Ps.*), 35 n. 5; *Super Romanos*, c. 2 lect. 3.

¹⁸ *In I Sent* d. 3 q. 3 a. 3 ad4; *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 2 ad1 and a. 4; *ST I* q. 93. *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 1 ad4 says that the image in us does not have equality of equal parts (*aequalitas aequiparantiae*) with God; that is, the image in us is not a picture of God that exactly matches what He is like, as a little picture images a large man. Rather, it is an equality of proportion (*aequalitas proportionis*): as the parts of the image are related, so the divine persons and nature are related. cf. *ST I* q. 93 a. 1 co. and ad3. a. 1, drawing on Augustine, 83 *Questions*, q. 74.

¹⁹ Cf. Wisdom 2:23. *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 2 ad3&5; *Quaestio disputata de anima*, a. 14 s.c. 1; *ST I* q. 93 a. 5, following Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* c. 16 and John Damascene, *On the Orthodox Faith* II c. 11, 12, 30. See also *ST I* q. 93 a. 9 ad4. *In IV Sent* d. 15 q. 1 a. 2 ad2 emphasizes how we are in the image of God insofar as we are free lords of our acts, but *In I Sent* d. 3 q. 3 a. 1 rejects the idea that free choice alone is the image of God in us; cf. Suárez *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* (hereafter, *QDA*) III d. 12 q. 2 n. 8. On the incorruptibility of the soul as imaging God, see *ST I*, q. 93 a. 9, following Augustine, 83 *Questions* q. 51, and *De quantitate animae* 2.

²⁰ *ST I* q. 93 a. 5, following Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* V c.8 and Augustine, *Trinity* 9.4.4, p. 28. This view is held by most scholastics. It led to the link in many scholastic treatises between debates over the image of God and debates over the way in which the powers and essence of the soul are related. See, e.g., John Duns Scotus, *In II Sent*, d. 16 q. un., (Paris: Vives, 1893), 45-6, who argues that the powers are formally distinct from but really identical to the soul, just as the Persons are related to the divine essence, and the response on behalf of the Thomist view that the real distinction between powers and soul despite the real identity of Persons and divine essence, in John Capreolus, *Defensiones divi Thomae*, v. 1, (Turin: Cattier, 1900), I d. 3 q. 3 a. 2 s. A, p. 189-97. On Capreolus' view, the image of God is not the soul plus its powers, but the "mind," which contains as parts the three powers of memory, intellect, and will.

²¹ *SCG IV* c. 11. See Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 193, on whose reading, we image God only in our "intelligible processions," e.g., of inner word from understanding and of love from that, not in "operational processions." In the latter, operations are caused by one another; in the former, they proceed from one another on account of intellectually grasping the operation. The word is not just caused by understanding but occurs upon grasping the understanding: see *Verbum*, 199-205. Cf. Fred Lawrence, "Lonergan's Retrieval of Thomas Aquinas' Conception of the Imago Dei: The Trinitarian Analogy of Intelligible Emanations in God," *ACPQ* 83 (2009): 363-88. On Lonergan's view (see *Verbum*, 183-188), Aquinas

grasped and expressed is of a substance different from me. But in grasping and expressing *myself*, that which is expressed, the word, and that which expresses, are all of one substance.²² The soul's habitual tendency to actual self-knowledge, which can be called a "memory" of the self, is identical to the soul: to be a human soul is to have this tendency.²³ This tendency can be actualized by reflecting on any act of understanding; I thereby become aware of myself as an existing subject performing this act of understanding;²⁴ this is a genuine, though imperfect,²⁵ awareness of myself. I then express this self-awareness in an interior word, which is one with the substance of my mind. This utterance gives rise to love for myself, as understood by myself and expressed in that word. My mind, my word, and my love are all distinct, yet, like the persons of the Trinity, they enter into one another: for I love my love and my word and my mind, and know and remember each as well.²⁶ Each of these are really united to one another by being of the one substance of my soul, but they are also one insofar as knower and known are one, and lover and beloved are united.²⁷ This Trinitarian image is permanent insofar as I always have powers to perform these acts—but the image is primarily present when I actually perform them.²⁸

This image of God is furthermore something toward which I am dynamically oriented. As a sign, it enables discovery of what it signifies.²⁹ The image of God, since it involves my ability to reflect on myself, enables me to come to belief in (though not knowledge of) the Trinity,³⁰ and it

holds that knowledge is not first of all, as it is for Plato or Scotus, contact with or vision of extra-mental reality, but an actualization and perfection of the mind, and only on that basis a contact and vision, though these are all one in the case of self-knowledge. This is questionable both as an interpretation, given Aquinas's Platonic sources, and on phenomenological grounds, as we shall see below.

²² Augustine, *Trinity*, 9.2.2, p. 25-6; 9.4.5, p. 28-9.

²³ DV q. 10 a. 8. See Therese Scarpelli Cory, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), 42-6: in his early *In I Sent* d. 3 q. 4 a. 5, Aquinas follows Albert, *Commentarii in Sententiarum* (hereafter, *In Sent.*) (Paris: Vives, 1893), I 3.H.29, in positing a constant supra-conscious act of self-knowing, not only a habitual orientation to self-knowing. Aquinas rejects this view, which is based on a reading of Augustine, *Trinity*, 14.4&6, p. 142-4, at ST I q. 93 a. 7 ad4.

²⁴ ST I q. 87 a. 3; Augustine, *Trinity* 10.10.16, p. 56. See Cory, *Self-Knowledge*, 101-6.

²⁵ ST I q. 93 a. 7 ad2. Augustine, by contrast, seems to say that we can have perfect self-knowledge, though this requires that we first search for ourselves at *Trinity* 9.4.7, p. 30; 9.12.18, p. 39; 10.7.10-11, p. 52-3.

²⁶ Augustine, *Trinity* 9.5.8, p. 30-1.

²⁷ ST I-II q. 28 a. 1.

²⁸ ST I q. 93 a. 4; a. 7, following Augustine, *Trinity*, 14.7, p. 146-7. For this reason, the image of God is present but obscured, since not actualized, in those who are asleep, in the mentally disabled, and in children; see ST I q. 93 a. 8 ad3. Cajetan, *In I ST* v. 5, 410 argues that powers are parts of the image not *qua* powers, but only insofar as they are directed toward these acts. Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, v. 3, 173-8 argues that the soul's presence-to-self is there even in the embryo, as seen, he says, in its community with its mother.

²⁹ *In I Sent* d. 28 q. 2 a. 1 and q. 2 a. 2; ST III q. 60 a. 2. See Heather Erb, "From Rivulets to the Fountain's Source: Image and Love in Aquinas's Christian Anthropology", in Peter Aguiar and Therese Auer, eds., *The Human Person and a Culture of Freedom* (Washington: AMA/CUA, 2009). I am directed toward the true Image, the Son, but to be in or toward the image of the Son is to be in the image of the Father, and thereby of the Trinity; see ST I q. 93 a. 5 ad4. An image joins together (*conveniet*) itself and its exemplar; see *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 1 ad3; *In III Sent* d. 1 q. 2 a. 2. Similar claims are made outside the Thomistic tradition, e.g., by Bonaventure, *In II Sent* d. 16 a. 1 q. 1, (Quaracchi, 1885), 394-6.

³⁰ ST I q. 93 a. 5 ad3; Augustine, *Trinity* 15.6.10, 177-8. See Suárez, *QDA* III d. 14 q. 6 n. 2 on how we intuit this likeness in ourselves, and in other persons, and so come to imperfect knowledge of God. On how the angels come to knowledge of God through knowing the image of God in themselves, see ST I q. 56 a. 3.

orients me to love God.³¹ Likeness causes love: a likeness of quality (here, likeness of grade of being between God and me) causes love of friendship, that is, willing goods to the other; a likeness of inclination (here, given in the dynamic orientation of my powers to deeper knowledge and love) causes love of concupiscence, that is, willing the other as a good to myself.³² This orientation to God in the image is a source of human dignity,³³ which should lead us to honor human persons (or, rather, their most excellent parts and characteristics) with the honor of *dulia*, that this honor paid to the image may redound to God's glory.³⁴

The fullest image of God in me arises when I am intellectually acquainted with God, and utter a word expressing this acquaintance (*notitia*), which issues forth in love for God.³⁵ Since knowledge involves union with the known, and love results in unity with the beloved, this trinity of acts, which are consubstantial with my mind, unite me to God, and make my happiness the same act as God's, namely, the happiness that is identical with contemplation.³⁶ But, following Ambrose, Aquinas observes that the perception of this image in me and the ability to be thereby raised to God are obscured by sin (though not eliminated).³⁷ For this reason, the coming of the perfect image of God, Christ in the Incarnation, was necessary to renew and elevate the image into a more perfect likeness to God through grace and charity, and to renew our ability to see the image.³⁸

Everything described so far belongs to the primary image of God in us. The angels are in this image more perfectly than we, for they more perfectly share in intellectual being, can naturally more perfectly know themselves and God, and are more capable of bestowing goodness on others.³⁹ But Aquinas thinks that there are four ways in which we image God that angels do not, albeit in a secondary sense of "the image of God."⁴⁰ Here, he moves toward finding an image of

³¹ *Super Mattheum*, c. 22 lect. 2&4. Some of the Fathers, e.g., Athanasius, saw the image of God as dynamic not just in the individual, but historically: it is seen in the context of the movement from fall to salvation to eschaton; see T. Camelot, "La théologie de L'image de Dieu," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 40 (1956): 456.

³² *ST I-II* q. 27 a. 3.

³³ *In III Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 2 qc. 2; *ST II-II* q. 175 a. 1 ad2. It is also this which makes idolatry such a great sin: idolatry is a failure to perceive the image of God in us, and instead try to create this image elsewhere; see *In II Sent* d. 16, q. un. a. 1 ad1; *In II Sent* d. 9 q. 1 a. 2 qc. 2 ad2; *In Isaiam* c. 2 lect. 2. See Is. 40:18. See also Aquinas's sermon "*Homo quidam erat dives*," pt. 2. See also Richard Lints, *Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2015).

³⁴ *In III Sent.*, d. 33 q. 3 a. 4 qc. 1 ad2; *ST II-II* q. 19 a. 3 ad1; q. 44 a. 7; q. 103 a. 3 ad3; *In Isaiam* c. 11.

³⁵ *ST I* q. 93 a. 8, following Augustine, *Trinity* 9.11.16, pp. 37-38.

³⁶ *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 2. cf. *In II Sent* d. 26 q. 1. a. 2 ad5.

³⁷ *Catena aurea* on Luke 9.

³⁸ Cf. Eph. 4:24. See *In I Sent* d. 17 q. 1 a. 5 sc. 2; *ST I* q. 93 a. 4; *In Ps.* 7 n. 2. On the image allowing us to be raised to grace, see *ST I* q. 93 a. 4 and a. 9; *I-II* q. 113 a. 10; *III* q. 9 a. 2; q. 23 a. 1. By being in the image of God, we are capable of coming into contact with God, and our nature can be assumed by a divine Person; see *In I Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 s.c. 1; *In III Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1; *ST III* q. 4 a. 1 ad2. Following Irenaeus, Aquinas says that grace and charity give us a far greater likeness to God than the natural image. Irenaeus thinks that the "image" is a state of immaturity, while Christ comes to bring us to the fuller "likeness": see Robinson, *Imago Dei*, 13-4, and also Augustine, *Trinity*, 14.14.18, p. 156.

³⁹ *ST I* q. 93 a. 3; *In IV DDN* lect. 18; *In Ps.* 8 n. 5.

⁴⁰ *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 3 *ST I* q. 93 a. 3. At least early in his career, Aquinas saw the Trinitarian image of God more in us than in the angels because the powers are more distinct in us than in them; see *In I Sent* d. 3 q. 3 a. 1 ad4. Many

God in the whole person, including the body, and here he takes into account Genesis's link of the image to our dominion over lower creatures and to sexual difference.

The first of these secondary images of God in human persons is that the child comes from and is in the image of the parent, and the two share human nature (see Gen. 5:3), just as the Son is begotten of and is the image of the Father, and both have the divine nature.⁴¹ Aquinas, unlike some Eastern theologians like Gregory of Nyssa,⁴² links our imaging of God to our animal and sexual bodies⁴³—though in this first secondary image, the image is in relations among persons, not in the body as such. Aquinas makes this link by joining together the claim that we are “microcosms” or “little worlds,” images of the universe or greater world (the “macrocosm”), to the claim that we are in the image of God. The human person is a microcosm first insofar as we contain the elements and the natures of mixed bodies, plants, and animals. But second—and here lies the parallel—we are images of the universe, insofar as the soul is in the body as its ruler just as God is in the world

thinkers in the Western Christian tradition have seen angels in some way as having the image of God to a greater extent than we do, but there are important dissenting voices in the Eastern tradition. Gregory Palamas, *150 Texts*, c. 62-64, in *Philokalia*, v.4, trans. G.E. Palmer (New York: Macmillan, 1983), 374-76, sees us as more in the image of God by nature (though the good angels are more in the likeness of God by grace) since we have sense perception in addition to intellect, can make sensible the insensible things of God, and have dominion. Nikolai Berdyaev argues that we, by our dynamic creativity image God more perfectly than the angels, who, like the animals, are static insofar as they do not develop what they are able to do: see his *The Meaning of the Creative Act*, trans. Donald Lowrie (New York: Collier, 1962), 71, 80-83. But in line with the tradition, he holds that that by which we are in the image of God is that by which we are capable of God—by which he means able to act creatively with God; see *Creative Act*, 118-21, 229. On his view, the whole person as creative is the image of God; see *Creative Act*, 125-26.

⁴¹ *In I Sent* d. 3 q. 3 a. 1 ad4; *ST I* q. 93 a. 3. See Albert, *In II Sent* d. 16 a. 3, p. 289.

⁴² On Gregory's view (*Making of Man*, c. 16-17), following Genesis, since the animals are made according to their kinds but we are made according to the image of God, the image of God in us, which is freedom, is entirely different from our animal, sexual bodies. On this view, we were originally spirits, and our animality and sexuality were given to us in anticipation of the fall. By the latter, we are microcosmic images of the material world, and this is an indignity, since it is a resemblance of what is lower than we are, whereas the image of God in us is the source of our dignity. Other Eastern thinkers (e.g. Palamas, *Triads* I.i.22, 29-30; Berdyaev, *Creative Act*, 172ff.) follow Gregory on sexuality, but not in his view of our status as microcosms; for example, Berdyaev (*Creative Act*, 56-68) sees us as the meeting point of free divinity and the necessity of nature, the image of God and the uniting of all the forms of nature, mediating creatively between the two. Some of the Eastern Fathers, such as John Damascene, also embrace our role as microcosms; see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei* (Princeton: Princeton, 1990), 171. More recently, Christos Yannaras, in *Person and Eros*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007), 97-99, has criticized the scholastic use of the microcosm concept as rationalistic, rather than aesthetic. But recent scholarship on the role of the aesthetic in Aquinas shows this to be not the case: see, e.g., Oliva Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe According to Thomas Aquinas* (State College: Pennsylvania State, 1992); Gilbert Narcisse, *Le Raisons de Dieu*, (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1997). Yannaras (*Person and Eros*, 48-50) also criticizes the scholastic-Augustinian account of the image of God for reducing the image to only certain elements of the person, rather than, as on Gregory Palamas' model, involving our whole personal uniqueness, body and soul. See Gregory Palamas, *150 Chapters*, c. 63, in *Philokalia*, v. 4, 375; *Triads*, I.i.20, 28. But others read Palamas as seeing the image of God purely in the soul, not in the body or the whole person, though they recognize that the whole person is called to be in relation to God; see Adrian Agachi, *The Neo-Palamite Synthesis of Father Dumitru Stăniloae*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2013), 32-33, 116. I am sympathetic to this latter critique, though I think the Augustinian view can be preserved in a more holistic context; Yannaras goes too far in the direction of the second anthropology mentioned above.

⁴³ See Sirach 17:1-14.

as its ruler.⁴⁴ Our animal nature, though not directly an image of God in us, plays a role in that image insofar as it is ruled by the soul. This is the second way in which we image God in a way that the angels, who lack bodies, do not. This image of God in us flows from the primary image: the soul substantially images God by its freedom, intelligence, and ability to manifest goodness, and these are shown in the soul's rule over the body (and further by its rule over lower creatures.)⁴⁵ It is thus possible for the primary image, which is in the soul, to be manifested beyond itself, in the body and in our relations to the world.

The third secondary image also has to do with sexual difference. Paul (1 Cor. 11:7-9) says that man is the image and glory of God, because he (in Adam) comes from God and is made for God, while woman (in Eve) comes from, is made for, and is the glory of the man. Aquinas (and scholastics in general) interpret this to mean that there is a way in which man images God that woman does not.⁴⁶ This doesn't seem to me to be the best reading of the text: Paul never says that the man has the image of God in a way that the woman does not, but only says that man is the image and glory of God, and that woman is for man and his glory; this is consistent with both being the image and glory of God (see Ps. 8:5-6). This text is consistent with, for example, Erich Przywara's phenomenologically-motivated reading, on which each sex is a unique way of being in the image of God.⁴⁷ The important thing to take from an account of this third secondary image is the claim that the difference in sexes, and the orientation to communion and procreation that this involves, can be seen imaging God. This further moves us toward a holistic account.

The fourth way in which we distinctively image God has been explicated by Russell Hittinger.⁴⁸ Part of the primary image of God is our tendency to manifest goodness. We do this, in part, by forming communities, such as families and states, that further diffuse goodness, and so image God. Aquinas, following Augustine, rejects the idea that the primary image of God consists

⁴⁴ *De motu cordis*; *In II Sent* d. 1 q. 2 a. 3 s.c. 2; *ST I* q. 91 a. 1; I-II q. 17 a.8 ad2. We must be careful in considering this microcosmic image, for some try to read off the history or structure of the macrocosm from the history or structure of the microcosm, and this reasoning is generally faulty; see *In II Sent* d. 14 q. 1 a. 1 ad2; d. 17 q. 3 a. 1 ad5; *DP* q. 3 a. 18 ad10; q. 5 a. 6 ad8

⁴⁵ *ST I* q. 96 a. 1; II-II q. 66 a. 1. We have these images as unique persons each willed for our own sake; see *SCG III* c. 111-3. Balthasar (*Theo-Drama*, v. 2, 331-2) argues that one way we image God is that we correspond to the divine idea of each of us, which has to do with the unique vocation for which God has made us.

⁴⁶ *ST I* q. 93 a. 4 ad1. The scholastics tend to read this text as meaning that while men and women equally have the primary image of God, men exercise the powers of that image more vigorously (Albert, *In II Sent* d. 16 a. 4, p. 290) or men are the efficient cause in propagating children while women just provide the material cause, or that man rules woman but not vice versa (see Aquinas, *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 3; *ST I* q. 93 a. 4 ad1; *In I Cor* 11:7 lect.1-3). On Albert's view (ibid), Adam contains the image of God in a way no other human person does, as the effective principle of all other human beings. Following standard scholastic biology of procreation, Albert holds that the man is the effective principle in procreation, while the woman is merely the material recipient of the man's action. Eve is thereby also an image of God in a way no one else is, as the material origin of the propagation of all other human persons. Every man is the image of God in a distinct way, as the effective principle of the propagation of human beings, and indeed every woman is the image of God in a distinct way as the material principle of that propagation. Most of these claims are, I think, experientially indefensible.

⁴⁷ Erich Przywara, "Imago Dei: On the Theological Message of Max Picard," trans. John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart, in *Analogia Entis*, 561-2.

⁴⁸ F. Russell Hittinger, "Toward an Adequate Anthropology: Social Aspects of *Imago Dei* in Catholic Theology," in Thomas Howard, ed., *Imago Dei* (Washington: CUA Press, 2013).

in a community, for Genesis says that each person is made to the image, and the image is described prior to any account of communities.⁴⁹ But our orientation to community, and communities themselves, image God in a secondary way, flowing from the primary image.⁵⁰

These secondary images of God have a good deal to do with the body, but Aquinas insists that in each case, the image of God is, strictly speaking, in our soul—perhaps the soul in relation to the body, but not in the body as such. The human body, like all physical things, just bears the “trace” (*vestigium*) or “likeness” of God. Physical things reveal God as effects reveal their cause, as sharing in the transcendental properties of being, and as corresponding to the divine ideas.⁵¹ Even at this level, there are, as Augustine puts it, “trinities”: for example, the transcendentals *unum*, *verum*, and *bonum* reflect the Father as unified origin, the Son as Word or truth proceeding from that unity, and the Spirit as the goodness of love proceeding from both.⁵² There are further “trinities” in bodily acts: for example, in how the seen object “begets” its “word,” the sensible species, in our sense powers, and in how the will then ties the two together by its loving attention; and there are similar “trinities,” for example, in memory, imagination, and in knowledge of extra-mental things. But these are mere traces of the Trinity, not true images, for the parts of the trace are not consubstantial, nor does love in these cases arise from the word.⁵³

But the human body contains signs of the image of God in our souls. The human body is proportioned to the soul, and is ordered to facilitating and expressing knowledge and love (which, at least insofar as they are directed to self or God, belong to the primary image), as is seen, for example, in the upright posture of the body,⁵⁴ in organs like hands and vocal organs that are adapted to the expression of reason (including of self-knowledge),⁵⁵ in our faces, which can manifest the life that God has breathed into us,⁵⁶ and, as Albert claims, in the beauty of the human body which exceeds the beauty of all other physical things.⁵⁷ The body and its acts, and the soul and its acts, are never physically (that is, in their nature) one; rather, acts of soul actualize powers in the soul, while bodily acts actualize bodily powers. But acts of body and soul can be “morally” one—that is, willed as one, given one meaning by reason, and experienced as a unity. In this way,

⁴⁹ Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 12.5.5, p. 85 (followed by *ST I* q. 93 a. 6 ad2) mentions the view that image of God is in the family, not the individual: the father images the Father, the child the Son, and the mother the Spirit. But this fails for the reasons given in the text, as well as for the reason that this would make us image the Spirit as principle of the Son.

⁵⁰ One example of this image is that just as the human soul images God’s rule over the universe insofar as the soul rules the body, so also the king in his kingdom is an extension of this image; see *De regno* I c. 13.

⁵¹ *In II Sent* d. 16 q. un. a. 2 ad2; *ST I* q. 93 a. 6.

⁵² *ST I* q. 45 a. 7. Compare to the view of David Schindler (*Heart of the World, Center of the Church* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 275–311) on which each created being is identical to relations of being from (*esse ab*) God, being in (*esse in*) itself, and being ordered towards (*esse ad*) others; these three relations, distinct from one another, but all identical to or contained within the one being, are seen as a likeness of the Trinity.

⁵³ *ST I* q. 93 a. 6 ad4; a. 8 ad2; *DV* q. 10 a. 7; Augustine, *Trinity*, 11.2-8, p. 62-75.

⁵⁴ *ST I* q. 93 a. 6 ad3, following Augustine, 83 *Questions*, q. 51.

⁵⁵ *ST I* q. 76 a. 5; q. 93 a. 6 ad3.

⁵⁶ *SCG* II c. 85.

⁵⁷ Albert, *In III Sent.*, d. 15 a. 3, p. 271.

for example, acts of will and willed bodily acts are one. But none of this makes intellectual or volitional acts bodily, or to make the image of God present in the body.⁵⁸

The best we can do on the Thomistic view is to perceive a likeness or sign of the image of God in the body.⁵⁹ Images, as the Thomistic commentators Francisco Suárez and John of St. Thomas say, following Aquinas,⁶⁰ are signs, which operate by bringing one's attention to that which they represent. First, a sign conveys its own proper species to a cognitive power, and this actualizes the power—for example, I see the shape of the words on the page. Second, my attention is conveyed to the meaning and reference of the sign. A sign does not efficiently cause me to turn my attention to the represented object, nor do I reason from the sign to what it signifies. Rather, a sign works by “objective causality,” acting as an extrinsic formal cause, conforming my cognitive power to what it signifies through a grasp of its meaning.⁶¹ In this way, seeing another's human body can render me aware of the image of God in his or her soul, and thereby render me aware of God—though being in a sinful state will obscure this perception.

The Augustinian-Thomistic view that the image of God in itself is found in the soul, and only signs of it in the body, can support either the first or third of the anthropologies considered above—that is, dualism or (as is the case in Aquinas) a hylomorphism on which body and soul are only connected by causal or signifying relations. Such anthropologies have the ethical implication that our highest act, contemplation (and perhaps love) of God, is only in the soul, the body only assisting the soul, or receiving an “overflow” of happiness from the soul insofar as the soul perfectly rules the body, or being united to God not in its own right but through medium of the image of God in the soul.⁶² But these claims are phenomenologically questionable.

The Phenomenology of Perceiving the Image of God

I turn now to some phenomenological accounts of perceiving the image of God in ourselves and others, which call into question key aspects of the Thomistic account. When considering phenomenological accounts, one must try to find the experience described in one's own

⁵⁸ *ST I q. 3 a. 1 ad2*. There is a strong desire in some of Aquinas's commentators to avoid any question of making a bodily *image* of God; see e.g. Vincent-Louis Gotti, *Theologia scholastico-dogmatica*, v. 1, t. 10 q. 1 dub. 6 s. 2, (Venice: Ex Typographia Balleoniana, 1786), 521. For Patristic and Philonic worries about this, but also for some Patristic-era claims that the image is found in the body not just the soul, see Walter Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man According to Cyril of Alexandria* (Woodstock: Woodstock College Press, 1957), 12-19.

⁵⁹ This view is emphasized more in Aquinas's early works, even to the point of denying that the body merely has a trace of God, but rather claiming that it has a *similitudo imaginis*, though in later works, e.g., *ST I q. 93 a. 6 ad3*, it is said that the human body represents God as trace. For the earlier view, see Aquinas, *In II Sent d. 16 pr.*; *In III Sent d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 qc. 1 ad2*. The reasoning in the latter text is that the body's *esse* is that of the soul (a view retained in later works, e.g., *ST I q. 76 a. 1 ad5*), and so, by its being, it has something more than merely a trace of God. I think this reasoning is sound, and my view recovers this early Thomistic view to some extent.

⁶⁰ *ST III q. 60 a. 2*.

⁶¹ Suárez, *QDA II d. 5 q. 2 n. 5*; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus*, (Paris: Vives, 1883), *Logica* p. 2 q. 21 a. 1, p. 559-66; a. 2, p. 568-76; a. 5, p. 592.

⁶² *In III Sent d. 2 q. 2 a. 1 qc. 1*; *In IV Sent d. 49 q. 4 a. 5 qc. 2*; *ST I-II q. 4 a. 5 ad4*. On Aquinas's view, the grace brought in Christ restores the image of God in our souls, not somehow also in our bodily sensitive powers; see *Super Epistolam ad Colossenses*, c. 3 lect. 2.

experience; some of these experiences befall us in a way that underlies normal conscious awareness, or befall us only if we adopt the right attitudes toward reality. But careful accounts of experience ought to constrain anthropology: if some experience cannot fit with a given anthropology, then the latter requires amendment.

We can seek an experience of the image of God by asking where we find the Infinite in human persons. This approach is taken by Emmanuel Levinas, who perceives the image of God in the face of other persons.⁶³ In seeing the other's face, we find (or should find) ourselves under infinite responsibility to serve the other. We cannot *know* the image as, for example, an icon or effect of God that allows knowledge of God. This is because every act of knowledge reduces the known to an actualization of the knower; knowledge would reduce the Infinite to a finite, controllable concept in me.⁶⁴ But in the expressivity of the other's face and acts of speaking,⁶⁵ I encounter what is unpredictable and unconceptualizable—that is, what is Infinite, a “trace” of God—to which I must respond, before which I am responsible. I experience myself as being in the image of God, called to the Infinite, in receiving this call to infinite responsibility. All these experiences are bodily: I encounter the Infinite in the look and speaking of the other, in his suffering, hunger, and bodily vulnerability. I find myself called not in cognitively grasping an ethical duty, but in feeling my call to aid the other bodily.⁶⁶ Contrary to the first problematic anthropology, dualism, I experience my directedness to the Infinite not just in my soul, but in my body too, and not in self-cognition or love, but in being ethically called by and to another.

On similar grounds, Tina Beattie⁶⁷ contends that the Thomistic account of the image presupposes that the soul can perfectly well know and express itself, apart from the body. But my intellectual self-awareness only arises out of my ever-changing sensory life, which always exceeds words. My willing and loving are always subject to bodily vulnerability, though not (as Aquinas holds) as if they were distinct acts from my bodily acts, but as single incarnate acts of willing and loving.⁶⁸ There is an infinite excess in our bodily self-awareness, willing, and feeling; if we image

⁶³ Emmanuel Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 106-7; Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne, 1998), 93-97, 140-152; and Emmanuel Levinas, “‘In the Image of God’ According to Rabbi Hayyim Volozhiner,” trans. Gary D. Mole, in *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, (London: Continuum, 2003), 158. Those familiar with early phenomenology, especially that of Husserl, may object to the views presented here, on the grounds that phenomenology shows that all meaning is constituted by a transcendental consciousness that is prior to the body. But Levinas and others show the falsehood of that view especially by appealing to experiences of the Infinite and the image of God in human persons.

⁶⁴ If Lonergan (see note 21 above) is correct in his reading of Aquinas on knowledge, then Aquinas cannot account for encountering the image of God. However, I contend that a Thomistic view can provide such an account, and that Lonergan is wrong in his reading.

⁶⁵ There's an implicit revision of Augustine here: the image of God is in physical, exterior *speaking* rather than in the interior word itself; see Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 48-51.

⁶⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, “The Ego and Totality,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 39; *Otherwise*, 53-56.

⁶⁷ Tina Beattie, *Theology After Postmodernity* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 276-80, 291-93, 302. She is not a phenomenologist, but she builds on that tradition, especially in her appropriation of others influenced by that tradition, such as Lacan and Irigaray.

⁶⁸ See also Levinas on experiences of aging, torture, and other instances of bodily ways that willing is affected, at *Otherwise*, 51, and “Ego and Totality,” 39.

God where we are open to the infinite, it is not in finite thoughts that are inadequate to the richness of bodily awareness, but in our flesh.⁶⁹

The discovery of the image of God in the infinitude of one's flesh or in the face of the other can, however, occur in a cognitive way, as Jean-Luc Marion argues against Levinas. Knowledge does not always reduce the other to one's self-actualization or to finite concepts.⁷⁰ Rather, I can be cognitively aware of the other's face as an "icon," which "saturates" or exceeds all that I could conceptualize about the other; to know in this sense is not primarily to find oneself actualized by the other, but to make contact with the inexhaustible richness and depths of the other. The image of God, the Infinite in the human person, appears in the incomprehensible depths of the other, which appear in analogy to the incomprehensible depths of God.⁷¹ It also appears in sensing myself, in the inseparable intertwining⁷² of myself as object and myself as consciously aware, which is how my ever-changing flesh is given to me; this infinitely exceeds all that can be expressed in words, and so I am mysterious to myself, or, in Augustine's words, a "great question to myself." Marion also follows Augustine on the image of God to describe the experience of remembering, knowing, and loving myself. But he argues that the image does not involve adequate self-understanding and love; rather, it involves seeing that I cannot be grasped in any finite image or concept. Rather, I can only be fully grasped and loved by God. To be in the image of God is to entrust myself to God; it is to be defined by lack of definition by myself.⁷³

According to these phenomenologists, the experience of the image of God is of the impulsion toward the Infinite in us, which is simultaneously bodily, transcendent, and inward. The relation between interior and exterior aspects of the image is not given as a causal or signifying relation: the fleshly image does not signify a distinct interior image, nor is it caused by the latter. Rather, a single image appears in matter and in sensory and intellectual acts.

⁶⁹ Emmanuel Falque (*Wedding Feast*, 146-47) similarly reasons that our call to what is highest is a call to the Resurrection, which is bodily.

⁷⁰ That Thomism too should think of knowledge first as a contact with the other as such, rather than a self-actualization (as we saw Lonergan argued above) is seen especially in the Thomistic account of the experience of beauty given by Piotr Jaroszyński, *Beauty and Being: Thomistic Perspectives*, trans. Hugh MacDonald (Toronto: PIMS, 2011), 171-188.

⁷¹ Jean-Luc Marion, *In Excess*, trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud (New York: Fordham, 2004), c. 5; Marion, *Negative Certainties*, trans. Stephen Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 43-44.

⁷² The concept of "intertwining" to express the difference-in-unity of the objective and subjective in us is from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Alphonso Lingis, trans., *The Visible and the Invisible*, (Evanston: NWU, 1968).

⁷³ Marion, *In Excess*, c. 4; *Negative Certainties*, 47; Marion, *In the Self's Place*, trans. Jeffrey Kosky (Stanford: Stanford, 2012), 252-260. Prior to Marion, Erich Przywara developed this idea of the image of God in my incomprehensibility; the image appears in my finding myself in a similarity-in-difference of being in an analogy to God, in being "suspended" in an experienced tension between similarity to God and to lower creation, and between man (who, as Genesis says, is a tension between the dust of the earth and the in-breathing of God) and woman (who, as Genesis says, is a tension between being taken from man and being built up into a home by God). By experiencing myself never stably and always in tension, I find myself in an upward-and-downward movement, dynamically impelled towards God, but also sent by God to the world. This tensional image receives its fulfillment in the Crucified Christ in union with Mary, where the heights of the image are found in turning to what is lowest. See Przywara, "Imago Dei," 558-69.

These experiences, though, point us toward the second anthropology considered above, a personalism without differentiation or hierarchy of soul and body is considered. This leads to an ethics on which our highest act is a bodily act of perception or of ethical action, without a privileged role for the intellect. But this, too, is experientially inadequate, as is seen by further phenomenological work. Dietrich von Hildebrand shows that what is perceived exteriorly and by interior conscious acts can in some cases be linked, as the Thomists thought was always the case, by signification, representation, or symbolization, in which case the sign and that which is signified are given as distinct from one another.⁷⁴ But this, as we have seen from the other phenomenologists, is not how we perceived the image of God; rather, I perceive the Infinite directly in the face of the other and in my own flesh. Von Hildebrand accounts for this: instead of being signified, interior acts can be directly “expressed” in the facial features and bodily acts of persons. I do not see another’s facial expression and then infer his or her sadness or joy. Rather, the exterior appearance and the interior act or state are given as one thing seen from two sides, but with a hierarchical structure, the interior “side” of the single phenomenon given as objectively more fundamental than the exterior.⁷⁵ The experience of expression is evidence against the second and third anthropologies (anti-hierarchical personalism and hylomorphism with merely causal or signifying relations between soul and body). The person is given as having a bodily surface and spiritual depths: though there is unity or intertwining between the two, the relation between them is hierarchical. The two are not sundered as in the case of dualism, but they also are not merely causally related or related by signification, for they are given as one. To reconcile the Thomistic and phenomenological views of the image of God, we need to bring this phenomenon of expression into the Thomistic account.

Two philosophers who built on both Thomism and phenomenology can help us with this task. John Paul II understands being created in the image of God as first to be in relation to God, to transcend as a person the merely physical order even in one’s body, and to be given knowledge of and freedom to choose the good.⁷⁶ All of this is to be open to forming a communion of persons with others, just as God is a communion of persons. We image God by forming communions, which is first made possible by the structure of the body as masculine and feminine; for male and female bodies to join together in the right contexts is to renew the image of God. To be made in the image of God is to be aware that one is structured, as a whole person, both in body and soul, as a gift for another.⁷⁷ Here, an image that is interior, in our freedom and intelligence, itself becomes exterior, expressed in the body’s orientation to communion: one image, the orientation to communion, is present in both, in a hierarchically-arranged way, rather than the body being merely a sign of the image. The body *is* the expression of the person’s presence and self-gift.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Aesthetics*, v. 1, trans. Brian McNeil (Steubenville: Hildebrand Project, 2016), 157-64.

⁷⁵ Hildebrand, *Aesthetics*, 59-60, 170-73, 209-12. He argues that such phenomena are found not only in human persons but in the sacramentality and beauty of the sensory world as well.

⁷⁶ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* 2.4-5, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline, 2006), 135-36; 5.5, 149-50.

⁷⁷ John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, 9.2-5, 162-65; 13.3-4, 180-81; 21.7, 214. John Paul II is not endorsing the familial image of God rejected by Augustine and Aquinas. There are parallels here to Levinas’s finding the image of God in our being infinitely for-the-other.

⁷⁸ John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, 6.3, 152; 13.2, 179; 27.2; 27.2-4, 239-44; 32.1, 257.

John Paul II follows Aquinas in thinking that we have the image in that in us whereby we are *capax Dei*, but on his view that means the whole person, body and soul: in the Resurrection, the body will share entirely in the soul's divinization.⁷⁹ But even now, in perception formed by chastity we are capable of seeing the image of God in the gift-character of our own and others' bodies. Indeed, it is only through perceiving the body that we can have certainty about the image of God.⁸⁰ Through virtue and grace we can have the perceptual experiences described by Marion and Levinas but go beyond the incomprehensibility of the other to communion with him or her.

Before John Paul II, Edith Stein also saw the image of God as coming to fruition in self-gift and communions of persons.⁸¹ But Stein also provides experiential evidence for the Augustinian image in us, in a way that anticipates Beattie's objections. The experience of memory out of which the word of self-knowledge proceeds is best characterized as an experience of feeling.⁸² Fundamentally and constantly, I am aware of myself through bodily self-sensing and, on that basis but rising above the body, intellectual self-awareness arises, coupled with an emotional mood that colors my awareness of myself.⁸³ This simultaneously bodily, intellectual, and emotional feeling of myself gives rise to the word of knowledge by which I express myself (and the act of willing myself), but my articulation of myself to myself is always an articulation of myself as a great mystery. The Augustinian image is consistent, Stein shows, with the opacity and bodiliness of my self-knowledge highlighted by Beattie and others: I can express my awareness of myself to myself without this implying having an adequate concept of myself.⁸⁴ This image is further found in the structure of the whole person. The soul is first the formal cause of the body, and this requires that it take to itself pre-existent matter. But, subsequent to this causal relation, the soul, where the "I" is first contained, expresses itself in the body. This expression is like the proceeding of the Word from the Father. After it has formed this bodily life, the soul can give rise to "spirit," that is, spiritual (that is, intentional) acts through the body in the world, ultimately aiming at communion with other persons, including God. This is an image of the proceeding of the Spirit through the Word.⁸⁵

A Thomistic-Phenomenological Synthesis

I turn now to outline my synthesis of the foregoing. This synthesis will be a revision of the Thomistic view such that it better fits the phenomenological data. On Aquinas's view, the soul is a subsistent entity, with its own act of existence (that is, its own actuality by which it exists). In

⁷⁹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman*, 67.1-5, 391-3. In this view, John Paul II's view comes close to that of some Greek Fathers, who held that the body can be "spiritualized," made to share in God's life, and the sense can be transformed to know and love God. See the texts from Nyssen and Palamas cited above, and, in connection with iconography, Pelikan, *Imago Dei*, 96, 179. John Paul II is not the only Thomist to move in this direction; see the treatment of "intellectualized sense" in Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, trans. J.F. Scanlan (New York: Scribner, 1930), 162. See also the texts from the phenomenologist Emmanuel Falque cited above.

⁸⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman* 12.5, 176; 27.2-4, 239-44; 57.3, 353.

⁸¹ Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, trans. Kurt Reinhardt (Washington, D.C.: ICS, 2002), 465-66.

⁸² Stein, *Finite*, 455.

⁸³ Stein, *Finite*, 371, 455.

⁸⁴ Stein, *Finite*, 449-57.

⁸⁵ Stein, *Finite*, 427, 448, 462-63.

informing matter, it communicates this act of existence to the body, such that that body is the same substance and being as the soul. I have argued elsewhere⁸⁶ that acts of the soul can be physically (that is, in their nature) related to acts of the body as form to matter, such that they compose a single act; other things besides existence can belong to the soul and then be communicated, with their same numerical identity, to the body. In many cases, sensory acts just actualize bodily powers, and intellectual acts just actualize the intellectual power. But the body and its powers and acts stand in a relation of obedience to the soul and its powers and acts such that the former can, in some cases, be taken up by and participate in the latter such that they form just one act.⁸⁷ My body can come to share more perfectly in the soul's proper mode of being (*intelligere*) than it does merely by the soul's formal causality. For example, when I am struck by the unique beauty of an artwork, or of a person I love, my sensory and intellectual grasps of that entity are experienced as an inseparable unity, and the meaning of the artwork or the inner life of the other person appear expressed (or *a fortiori* "incarnated," the intelligible made fully sensory) in their sensible features. This is not an experience of a merely moral union between my intellectual and sensory awareness of the beautiful other, nor of a moral union between the meaning or inner life of the other and the other's sensible features. Rather, the two in both cases are best explained as related by formal and material causality, and, furthermore, by expression. The intellectual side of the act, by which I grasp and express the interior meaning of the other, is also experienced as expressed in the sensory, whereby I grasp the sensible incarnation of that meaning, so that there is just one act. The object of this act appears as a unity of intelligible meaning and sensible expression of meaning, and so a single object is grasped, with a hierarchical structure.

This is how the Augustinian image of God in the mind can be present in the body, and this is the groundwork for my synthesis of Thomism and phenomenology on the image of God. My primary experience of the image of God (and my chief and constant experience of myself in general) is in me as a holistic unity. As Stein said, whenever I am awake, I am, at an underlying level, holistically aware of myself. Just by reflecting on my underlying self-awareness (which is always vulnerable and imperfect), I can bring it to fully conscious self-awareness. This explicit self-awareness is both bodily and intellectual, and it is not (as Marion insists) reducible to conceptual content. Yet, it is a sort of "word," an expression of myself to myself, proceeding from an underlying "memory." Bringing this underlying self-sensing "memory" of myself to explicit expression in my act of self-awareness and self-sensing can then give rise to self-love or an affirmation of myself as aware of myself. These acts are consubstantial with me, and not only in the sense that they are contained in and directed to my substance. Rather, while my accidents can be understood as actualities distinct from my substance, they can also be understood as further

⁸⁶ See my "What is it Like to be an Embodied Person? What is it Like to be a Separated Soul?"

Angelicum 93 (2016): 219-246. Here also I argue for another claim necessary for this account, that the human intellect can grasp the intelligibility of material particulars as such, rather than just universals, essences, or immaterial things, and I argue that the Thomist ought to hold this, and has good grounds for holding this. I have also argued that, in order to argue that the soul separated from the body after death and prior to the Resurrection is still a human person, the human essence likewise belongs to the soul in itself and then is communicated to the body. See my "The Personhood of the Separated Soul," *Nova et Vetera* 12 (2014): 863-912.

⁸⁷ This is a development of Aquinas's view in *ST* I q. 77 a. 7 and I-II q. 56. a. 4 ad3. See my "Habits, Potencies, and Obedience," *Proceedings of the ACPA* 88 (2014): 165-180.

intrinsic modifications of my one personal mode of being, the mode of *esse* that is *intelligere*.⁸⁸ This is especially the case with those acts that are single soul-body acts, as these acts are. The image of God in my whole person is a way that I exist and understand as a whole person.

To be aware of myself in this personal way is also to be open to others, especially God, since *intelligere* is a mode of being entirely open to the world. In my holistic self-awareness and self-love, I can be aware of and express the presence of God not just intellectually but also in my body. This occurs most perfectly in liturgy.⁸⁹ When I perform liturgical acts well, with full attention, I experience my intellectual self-awareness and openness to God fully incarnated in my bodily acts. To walk in a procession, for example, is not first to have an intellectual movement toward God and then to enact signs of that movement in my bodily walking; rather, it is to move toward God with my body, to incarnate the movement of my intellect in my bodily walking. To kneel is not to present a bodily symbol of an interior attitude of reverence, or a bodily reminder to myself that I should adopt a certain interior attitude—the bodily posture and sensory experience is not a sign or effect of a distinct intellectual act. Rather, the intellectual and bodily acts are performed and experienced as a single act, the former expressed and incarnated—made bodily present—in the latter.⁹⁰

Reflecting on my holistic self-awareness, which is already a Trinitarian image, I become aware of the pure Augustinian image in my soul. The Augustinian image is not an attempt to conceptually comprehend anything bodily (contrary to Marion's, Beattie's, and Levinas's worries); rather, it is an intellectual grasp of myself as intellectual agent, though I do achieve this grasp after reflection on my bodily self-awareness. When I find the Augustinian image, I find that it is the true foundation of the holistic Trinitarian image of which I was first aware.⁹¹ Although phenomenologically, I am first aware of my holistic bodily-intellectual "memory" of myself giving rise to a self-awareness or "word" about myself, which then gives rise to a love for myself, I would not be aware of this triad of acts unless I were an intellectual being, capable of reflecting on myself in a meaningful way. The triad of acts in my mind tends to express itself in the body (as Stein said). The Augustinian trinity of acts in the mind, and the trinity of acts in the body, are related on this view both as form to matter and by expression, such that they are a single holistic personal trinity of acts of self-awareness and of openness to God.

⁸⁸ See the sources from the Thomistic tradition, especially from the Existential Thomists (most especially William Carlo, *The Ultimate Reducibility of Essence to Existence in Existential Metaphysics* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966)), cited in my "Created Persons are Subsistent Relations: A Scholastic-Phenomenological Synthesis," *Proceedings of the ACPA* 89 (2015).

⁸⁹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman* 117b.3, 614. For an account of how our bodily activity and expressivity can lead to a liturgical or sacramental attitude to all creation, consider Jean-Louis Chretien's contention that our dominion over creatures is best expressed in the sheltering that our bodily speech and action can provide to them; see Christina Gschwandtner, "Creativity as Call to Care for Creation? John Zizioulas and Jean-Louis Chrétien," in David Brian Treanor, et. al., ed., *Being-in-Creation*, (New York: Fordham, 2015), 106-111.

⁹⁰ See Martin Mosebach, *The Heresy of Formlessness*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), c. 7.

⁹¹ This foundational status of the image in the soul suggests that the soul after death and prior to the resurrection will have the image of God in this foundational sense, though not as it is meant to exist fully, expressed in the body. This parallels my reasoning in "Separated Soul": the separated soul is a person, but not a person in his or her proper, embodied state.

This self-awareness is oriented to express itself, and *intelligere*, the mode of being of persons, is oriented to what is other: I am thereby both receptive to what is other, and I tend to manifest my understanding in what I make and do, and in communities I form. The image of God in me gives rise to my tendency to communion with other persons, as was recognized by both Aquinas and John Paul II. But neither of them recognized that these communions image God by being extensions of the image of God in the person. Just as the image of God in the mind expresses itself in acts of the body, so it expresses itself in acts of the community. When we are in a communion together, we can be aware of ourselves as a community; this awareness can express itself in the acts we perform toward each other, and these acts issue forth in love for one another. The image of God in me, in which I am aware of myself and tend to manifest myself, comes together with the image of God in others, such that we together can experience ourselves as a communion of persons imaging God, expressing the image in each of us as individuals in our communal acts.⁹² This is fulfilled liturgically: in communion with Christ, it is not only the case that the image of God is repaired in me, but I participate in the perfect image that Christ is, by acting together with others in liturgical acts.

This image of God is perceivable by others: when I look virtuously at another person I should see the image *expressed* in that person's body and acts.⁹³ When I see a person *as person*, I see that person's body not as having physical being like other physical things, with a mere causal trace of God, but as directed to and to some extent participating in, *intelligere* and the communions that flow from it. To see another person as person is to see interiority expressed in that person's face, to see him or her as animated by at least the possibility of self-awareness, self-expression, and self-love. This is to see the physical face itself, as Levinas says, as the expression of a depth that calls me to what is higher, since that depth is a directedness to God. The Augustinian image of God, the basis of our dignity, appears on the face of the other, no less than in my own flesh, and in both calls me to responsibility, belief, and worship.

The various aspects of Aquinas's primary image of God appear in the whole person. I am not just a participant in God's *esse*, *intelligere*, freedom, immortality, or goodness in the substance of my soul; rather, I, this whole person, participate in those attributes, though in a hierarchical way: my soul participates in them primarily, and then (fully in a state of glory, and in a more fragmentary way *in via*) communicates these to the body, such that they are more or less perceivable there. We do not just see signs of them in the body; rather, to see the expressivity of another's body just is to see that other's intellectual mode of being. Likewise, the Trinitarian image of God is first in the soul and then is communicated to and visible in the body. Furthermore, what

⁹² On how the personal mode of being tends to form communities, see my "The Metaphysics of Justice: The Category of Artifacts and Free Cooperative Causality," *The Heythrop Journal*, forthcoming.

⁹³ This is not to say that I will see it in any case, even if I lack the concept of the image of God. As the recent spiritual perception literature has made clear, seeing certain aspects of reality, even those aspects that are iconic and cannot be summed up in concepts, requires that I have the right concepts. See John Greco, "Perception as Interpretation," *Proceedings of the ACPA* 72 (1999): 229-37; Sameer Yadav, *The Problem of Perception and the Experience of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

Aquinas called the secondary images of God are, on my view, extensions of the primary image: the soul's rule over the body is founded in the proceeding of the image of God from soul to body; the begetting of children, the relation of sexual difference, and the founding of communities are extensions of our orientation to communion, which is part of the primary image. There is just one image of God in us, expressed in many facets of our lives.

Rightly understood, there is no conflict between the various views of what the image of God in us is. The image of God is within me *and* in my relatedness to others; it is graspable in experience, without any knowledge of Christ, but is more perfectly grasped and expressed with Christ. The image of God rightly understood shows that I am not just my soul; rather, I am a single person who is a unity of body and soul, though my soul is higher than my body and relates to my body not just causally but by expression as well. This anthropology grounds an ethics on which our highest act is predominantly in the soul, but also comes to be, as the numerically same act, in the body: it is a holistic but hierarchical act of self-knowledge and love, self-gift and coming to communion with others, and knowledge and love of God. Such an act is contemplative (as on Aquinas's account of the beatific vision as our highest act), but communal and bodily, too. Again, the closest we come to such an act in this life is in liturgical acts; unlike on Aquinas's view, the highest act of which I am capable, for which I should strive, and which should orient my ethics, is an act that is contemplative, loving, and expressive of that contemplation and love in my body, sense perception, and relationships. These do not just belong to the accidental "well-being" of my highest act, as on Aquinas's view of how bodily acts add to the beatific vision, but to its essence: contemplation of God with the mind itself extends into the body.⁹⁴ Reflecting more deeply on this anthropology and ethics should, I hope, lead us to a better understanding of ourselves and of our relation to God in which body and soul each take its proper place.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ This view of our highest act being liturgical has echoes in the Eastern Christian tradition (see the citations of Palamas above), and has roots even in Neo-Platonists like Iamblichus and Proclus. For a recent defense of this position, though one that wrongly (I think) rejects self-awareness from our highest act, see Paul Griffiths, *Decreation*, (Waco: Baylor, 2014).

⁹⁵ This paper was the main paper at the 2017 Metaphysics Colloquium at St. Anselm College. I am grateful to Kevin McMahon and Montague Brown for organizing that colloquium, to Seamus O'Neill and Lawrence Feingold for their reply papers, and to all the participants for their comments and objections.