

IS THERE STILL A PLACE FOR CHRIST'S INFUSED KNOWLEDGE IN CATHOLIC
THEOLOGY AND EXEGESIS?

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It seems to me that questions arising from the reading of Scripture require a theological account of Christ's knowledge which can itself then shape a speculative exegesis, and that this was the approach of Thomas Aquinas. In this way, beyond the divine knowledge which pertains to Jesus' divine nature, Aquinas also attributed to the earthly Christ three forms of knowledge in his human mind. These three are beatific knowledge, infused knowledge, and acquired knowledge.¹ The first, the knowledge had by the blessed, is the supernatural intuitive knowing of the divine essence enjoyed by the saints and angels in heaven, our fullest participation in divine knowledge.² The second, infused knowledge, is a more conceptual knowledge supernaturally imprinted onto Jesus' human mind, the kind of knowledge had naturally by angels, and exercised by disembodied human souls.³ The third is knowledge empirically acquired through experience, the kind that is natural to bodily human beings.⁴

Aquinas wanted to clinch the fact that Christ must have had each of these three kinds of knowledge while on earth in terms of how each uniquely contributes to the perfection he needed in order to be our Savior, such that each kind of knowledge has its own particular argument for its presence in his mind. However, although theologians today largely differ from Aquinas in the details, only the reality of Christ's acquired knowledge seems currently

¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 9, a. 4.

² *ST* III, q. 10.

³ *ST* III, q. 11.

⁴ *ST* III, q. 12.

to hold universal consent among theologians, the hesitations of other scholastic positions having long given way. However, the reasons Aquinas gives for which the earthly Christ had beatific and infused knowledge have been not only rejected in recent years by opponents of his teaching, but those reasons have also been reconsidered, adjusted, nuanced or amended by those working more in tune with Aquinas's scheme. The need for Christ's infused knowledge has been defended most recently by Philippe-Marie Margelidon, who helpfully traces the historical development of Aquinas's thinking on infused knowledge, as well as covering the objections standardly put against Aquinas's account.⁵ However, when I myself argued in favour of the need for Jesus' beatific knowledge in a recent book, I noted that my own argument seemed to undermine the rationale now often given for infused knowledge. I stated, however, that it was not my intention to reject Christ's infused knowledge, and that the latter deserved a proper consideration of its own from the point of view of the Catholic theologian.⁶ My purpose here is to clarify and extend my argument about beatific knowledge, and then reconsider the case for infused knowledge in that light.

Taking his cue from 1 John 3:2 - 'We shall see him just as he is' - Aquinas recognised this eschatological knowledge as the fulfilment of our natural desire to know the essence of God, such that this beatific vision is the formal core of our ultimate beatitude.⁷ Though we had lost the way to this vision through the Fall, the way there was restored to us through the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ. Aquinas argued that the Savior himself enjoyed the knowledge of the blessed for the saving purpose of sharing that same beatifying knowledge with us. In other words, our heavenly beatific vision will have been caused by his beatific vision, the members of his body benefitting from what the Head of the body enjoys pre-

⁵ Philippe-Marie Margelidon, "La science infuse du Christ selon saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 114 (2014): 379-416.

⁶ Simon Francis Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father? Christ, Salvation and the Vision of God* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 154-5.

⁷ *ST I*, q. 12, a. 1.

eminently.⁸ Now one respect in which Aquinas's argument has been criticised concerns the necessity it ascribes to the presence of this vision in Christ's mind before his death and glorification. Aquinas's opponents are generally happy to allow that Christ attained to vision in the next life, and that his beatific vision in heaven is the cause of our heavenly beatific vision. What they do not accept is that his beatific vision need be present already on earth in order for his beatific vision to be the cause of ours.⁹

I suggest that we can understand more recent defenders of Aquinas's position to be providing a response to this objection through their careful unpacking of Aquinas's terse statement that Christ's vision is the cause of ours, in the context of more modern concerns with the theology of revelation. This approach can be found, for example, in both the classical neothomist commentary of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange¹⁰ and the contemporary theological scholarship of Guy Mansini.¹¹ Such interpreters expand on Aquinas's teaching in terms of how we journey through faith in this life to vision in the next, taking the earthly Christ's beatific vision as involved in bringing us to faith, as well as thereby to vision. But, more than that, they envisage Christ's vision as not simply involved in bringing to faith us who live subsequent to his life, death and resurrection, but as involved in bringing the disciples to faith during the teaching ministry of his earthly life. In this way Thomists can see the beatific vision as having a key role in explaining how the earthly Christ could be the Teacher of divine realities of which knowledge cannot be acquired through the natural human route, but which Christ's teaching nevertheless revealed to the faith of his disciples, and so to us, leading us all to share ultimately in his own vision of the Father.

⁸ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 2.

⁹ E.g., Jean Galot, "Le Christ terrestre et la vision," *Gregorianum* 67 (1986): 429-50 (434).

¹⁰ Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Our Savior and His Love for Us* (St Louis MO and London: Herder, 1951), 143-71.

¹¹ Guy Mansini, "Understanding St. Thomas on Christ's Immediate Knowledge of God," *Thomist* 59 (1995): 91-124.

I shall now clarify why the beatific vision can play such a role in Christ's work of revealing and teaching, and in so doing introduce the question of the role of infused knowledge. Since patristic times, the Savior has been vindicated as Revealer through the divine knowledge provided by his full divinity received through being eternally begotten by the Father.¹² It is because he is divine, and possessed of divine knowledge, that he is at bottom able to reveal divine realities to the disciples. This has meant that any signs of extraordinary knowledge in the Gospels, such as the Son's knowing or having seen the Father, were normally referred by patristic exegesis to divine knowledge, and while Aquinas's exegesis is not so restrictive, his biblical commentaries, under Augustine's influence, betray something of a tendency to do the same.¹³ Given, however, that Christ teaches the disciples these divine mysteries in a human way, making use of his human mind in teaching instead of the human mind somehow lying idle, we need to ask about the line of revelatory continuity between the divine knowledge in Christ's divine mind and his human acts of teaching: how do we get, or how did *Christ* get, from one to the other?

Thomists can suggest that the beatific vision provides a certain continuity between the divine and human minds.¹⁴ It can achieve this because the beatific vision is itself our highest participation in the divine knowledge. Whereas in our natural knowledge, on Aquinas's account, the act of knowing takes place on the basis of an intelligible *species* abstracted from sense data, there is no such *species* that can deliver knowledge of the infinite God, on account of the fact, among other things, that the *species* is finite and limited. But if the beatific act of knowledge cannot take place by means of a finite *species*, God instead gives himself, his own

¹² E.g., Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarii in Ioannem*, 1.10; Augustine of Hippo, *Tractatus in Ioannem*, 40.5.

¹³ See *Lectura Super Ioannem*, 1.11.217-19; 3.5.534-35; 6.5.947; 8.4.1216.

¹⁴ Gagne, *Did the Saviour See the Father?*, 71-102/

essence, to the minds of the blessed as the basis for knowledge of the divine essence.¹⁵ So the blessed know God by the same means that God knows God, and in this they imitate God himself, who knows himself by his own essence. Moreover, just as God knows everything else by knowing himself perfectly, by knowing his power, by knowing all he can do, so he knows all that through his divine essence, and when the saints receive this same divine essence as *their* means of knowledge, they too have knowledge of God's creation in some measure in their knowledge of the divine essence.¹⁶ Thus in the beatific vision, it is God's own means of knowing himself and more that is shared with the saints, and so Christ in his human mind will likewise know the divine essence and in the divine essence all that he needs to know about creation.¹⁷ Thus it is by the beatific vision that his divine knowledge is communicated to his human mind, on the basis of which his human teaching of the disciples about divine realities can take place.

However, it is far from clear that the beatific act of vision in itself explains this line of revelatory continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching in its entirety. This is because, in addition to the need for continuity across divine and human minds, there is also need for continuity across knowledge that is inexpressible and knowledge that is expressible. What I mean is that Jesus' teaching is communicated in human language, categories, images and narratives, all of which must presuppose a communicable knowledge somehow proportionate to the workings of his human mind. The beatific vision, however, though it supplies the human mind with knowledge of divine things, does so according to Aquinas in a way transcendentally disproportionate to the workings of the human mind.¹⁸ Hence in the seventeenth century the commentator Jean Poinsot (John of St Thomas) added his own

¹⁵ *ST* I, q. 12, aa. 2, 4.

¹⁶ *ST* I, q. 12, aa. 8-9.

¹⁷ *ST* III, q. 10, a. 2.

¹⁸ *ST* III, q. 11, a. 5 ad 1. See also Joannis a S. Thoma, *Cursus Theologicus in Summam Theologicam D. Thomae*, vol. 8 (Paris: Vivès, 1886), q. 9, d. 11, a. 2, n. 15 (315).

explanation of Christ's infused knowledge by way of his teaching needs to Aquinas's argument to infused knowledge from the mind's required perfection, together with another argument of his own from Christ's meritorious acts, which were said to be largely of a kind to require regulation by a supernatural knowledge beyond the beatific vision.¹⁹ Though Poinso counted Aquinas's argument from perfection as the 'best' one of the three,²⁰ perhaps regarding it as straightforwardly best in terms of proof, he seems nevertheless to have regarded his own arguments as at least having the advantage of being clearer in regard to the actual workings of knowledge and meritorious activity in Christ's earthly life.

It may have been a desire to follow Aquinas in presenting a single argument for each kind of knowledge that later motivated Garrigou to reduce Poinso's number of arguments from three to one. While Garrigou recognised the role of infused knowledge in regard to Christ's merit, he simply omitted to make it an argument for the presence of this knowledge in Christ's soul.²¹ Moreover, while he agreed that infused knowledge answered to Christ's teaching needs, he presented this not as a distinct argument for this knowledge but merely as a clarification of Aquinas's own argument from perfection.²² Thus, as Aquinas's argument to Christ's beatific knowledge was unpacked by Garrigou and other twentieth-century theologians in relation to Christ's teaching mission, as we have already noted, so Aquinas's argument to infused knowledge from required perfection was unpacked by Garrigou in terms of Christ's teaching needs. However, despite Garrigou's attempt at fidelity to Aquinas, it has been the case that, since the last century, Aquinas's own argument from perfection has been eclipsed by versions of Poinso's argument from Christ's teaching needs, set in terms of the inexpressibility of beatific knowledge and the expressibility of infused knowledge. Infused

¹⁹ Joannis a S. Thoma, *Cursus Theologicus*, vol. 8, q. 9, d. 11, a. 2, nn. 3-5 (312-3).

²⁰ Ibid., q. 9, a. 2 (296).

²¹ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior: A Commentary on the Third Part of St. Thomas' Theological Summa* (St Louis MO and London: Herder, 1950), 476-7.

²² Ibid., 355-7.

knowledge thus provides an expressible knowledge for Christ's teaching, which beatific knowledge, since it is inexpressible, cannot provide.²³

Margelidon objects that Aquinas never says that the beatific vision is deficient in terms of expressibility, concluding that infused knowledge cannot be invoked to remedy any such deficiency.²⁴ However, while it is true that Aquinas does not say anything about any deficiency in the beatific vision, it is true that for him beatific knowledge is not *in itself* expressible in a creaturely way. For Aquinas, when we ordinarily make an act of knowledge, we express it in a mental word, a fruit as it were of the act of knowing.²⁵ Thomists distinguish the *species impressa* by which we make the act of knowledge, of which we have already spoken above, from the *species expressa* which arises in our own act of knowledge. However, arguments against the finite *species impressa* having any role in beatific knowledge also count against any finite *species expressa*: none of the finite mental words our finite minds can produce can ever adequately express the infinite God. Though we may know God in heaven by vision, it is thus a *wordless* intuitive gaze that never enables us to express the infinite God adequately or say who or what he is in human terms. And because everything else that is known in the beatific vision is known in the divine essence, all that knowledge is as such inexpressible too. It is this inexpressibility of beatific knowledge that undergirds the modern Thomist argument that infused knowledge is required to give limited, finite expression to what Christ otherwise knows inexpressibly. Equipped with this supernaturally

²³ E.g., Alexandre Durand, "La science du Christ." *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 71 (1949): 497-503.

²⁴ Margelidon, "La science infuse du Christ," 408.

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I.153, IV.11.

infused knowledge, Christ is then more or less able to teach his disciples the secrets of the kingdom of God.²⁶ Such an argument was made, for example, by Jacques Maritain.²⁷

In my argument for Christ's beatific vision, as already noted above, I appeared to undermine such a place for infused knowledge. I did this by giving an alternative account of the continuity between inexpressible and expressible knowledge, which I derived from Thomas himself rather than from any Thomist.²⁸ While Margelidon is right to say that Aquinas nowhere says that the beatific vision is inexpressible, that is because, while the act of beatific knowledge is inexpressible *in itself*, much of its content can be expressed through further acts that draw on beatific knowledge. In the *Summa theologiae* Aquinas says that any of the blessed, "seeing God, can form in himself, from the very vision of the divine essence, the likenesses of things that are seen in the divine essence ... However, such a vision whereby things are seen through *species* of this kind thus conceived is different from that vision by which things are seen in God."²⁹ This means that acts of forming such *species* and acts of knowledge through these *species* are acts distinct from beatific knowing itself, though dependent upon it. And so when Aquinas attributes the beatific vision to the earthly Christ later in the *Summa*, he implicitly attributes to Christ the power to draw finite *species* from his beatific knowledge. He had already made this explicit in the *De veritate*, where he says that the soul of Christ "from the fact that it sees in the Word is able to form for itself likenesses of the things it sees."³⁰ This means that the beatific vision brings with it the power to derive expressible knowledge from what is seen in the beatific vision inexpressibly. So while this does not mean that Christ can form expressible knowledge adequate to the inexpressible

²⁶ I say "more or less" because there is the further issue of what acquired knowledge and the imagination add to communicability. Cf. Jacques Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* (New York: Herder, 1969), 103.

²⁷ Ibid., 72-3, 89-97, 104.

²⁸ Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father?*, 100-2.

²⁹ *ST* I, q. 12, a. 9 ad 2.

³⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 20, a. 3 ad 4.

essence of God itself, it does mean he can form expressible knowledge of finite realities seen beatifically in God. It is this power then that can equip him more or less with communicable teaching, including suitable analogies based on creaturely realities for communicating knowledge of God to faith. But if this power comes with the beatific vision, as Aquinas holds it does, that would seem to undermine the argument that infused knowledge is required precisely for the very same purpose of rendering the inexpressible expressible, of ‘translating’ one to the other.

Of course it might be possible to turn this the other way around, and argue that if Christ already has infused knowledge in order to translate inexpressible knowledge into expressible, then there is no need to invoke any power by which he can draw finite *species* from his beatific knowledge, or at least not to invoke any actual use of this power. Margelidon does not exactly make this argument, but its perspective would seem to be consistent with his approach, as well as with that of Poinso³¹ and possibly even Aquinas himself who, as far as I can see, never employs Christ’s ability to form *species* from the vision in his exegesis. Margelidon certainly recognises that Aquinas attributed this ability to Christ, but does not draw my conclusion that this creates problems for vindicating Christ’s infused knowledge, and it may be that Margelidon supposes that Christ never actually used this ability to form *species*. Margelidon regards infused knowledge as contributing in a complementary fashion something the beatific vision as a matter of fact does not actually contribute, that is, communicability, but this is not to make up for any alleged deficiency in the vision.³² So, if Christ, unlike the rest of the blessed, already had a full panoply of infused *species* ranging across the whole of creation, as Aquinas, Poinso and Margelidon suppose he did, then that would seem to render superfluous his undeniable ability to form *species* from the beatific

³¹ Joannis a S. Thoma, *Cursus Theologicus*, vol. 2 (1883), q. 12, a. 3, n. 1.

³² Margelidon, “Le science infuse du Christ,” 408-9.

vision. So one could argue that, since Christ already has infused knowledge from conception, he has no need to use his ability to form *species* from the vision, just as I myself have suggested that if he has this ability, he will not need infused knowledge, at least not for the specific purpose of rendering the inexpressible expressible.

One objection to this whole picture would be that these two accounts of finite *species* in Christ's mind are in fact not alternatives but rather come down to the same thing. What I mean is the view, taken by Marie-Joseph Nicolas, that the *species* formed from Christ's vision and his infused *species* are identical, and not to be distinguished.³³ This view seems to be based on what Aquinas says immediately after his comment about Christ's ability to form *species* in the *De veritate*: "just as one who sees something in a mirror sees the reality through the form of the mirror – this was treated more fully in the question on angels."³⁴ The reference is back to Aquinas's treatment of angelic cognition earlier in the *De veritate*.³⁵ Nicolas seems to suppose that Aquinas is claiming that *species* formed by Christ are equivalent to angelic *species*, and because he elsewhere speaks of infused *species* in terms of the knowledge natural to angels,³⁶ that he is thereby treating the *species* formed by Christ as identical to his infused knowledge. Aquinas, however, teaches such equivalence nowhere in the text. There is nothing more than a point of comparison between Christ's knowledge of divine realities through *species* and angelic knowledge, where both are thought of along the lines of knowing something in a mirror. So there is no suggestion by Aquinas that *species* formed by Christ from the vision are identical with his infused *species*, and we must therefore still address the question whether infused *species* make his ability to form *species* superfluous, or vice versa.

³³ Marie-Joseph Nicolas, "Voir Dieu dans la 'condition charnelle'," *Doctor Communis* 36 (1983): 384-94 (386n5).

³⁴ Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 20, a. 3 ad 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 8.

³⁶ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3; q. 11, a. 4.

I suggest that my direction of argument is to be preferred, because of the fact that Aquinas's account of Christ's power to draw communicable *species* from his vision better fills in a revelatory line of continuity drawn from Christ's divine knowledge to his human teaching than does Aquinas's account of infused knowledge. This difference between the two sets of *species* can be illuminated by whether or not Christ's human will is engaged in their formation. Now all of the blessed have the power to will to form *species* from their vision, and so in the case of Christ his human will is engaged in this succession of acts, just as his human will is also engaged in the subsequent use of these *species* all the way down to their employment in teaching. In contrast, Aquinas sees Christ's infused knowledge not as the fruit of his human willing or knowing, but as divinely infused into his mind at his conception, not humanly but only divinely formed.³⁷ So while those *species* humanly formed on the basis of the beatific vision exhibit continuity with the beatific vision, those *species* formed only divinely through infusion do not. Christ's ability to form *species* from his vision therefore has the advantage of making a surer contribution to an explanation of the revelatory line of continuity all the way from Christ's divine knowledge through to his human teaching.

To clarify: this means that, while Christ's ability to form *species* humanly depends on his vision, his infused knowledge does not as such depend on his vision, but each is a distinct effect in Christ's mind caused by divine power. There is no sense for Aquinas in which the human act of beatific knowledge causes infused knowledge. The nearest he comes to saying something like this is when he puts the objection to the reality of Christ's infused knowledge that, as a knowledge inferior to beatific knowledge, it cannot co-exist with it, since inferior knowledge is a *preparatory* disposition towards the superior, and when the superior is present the inferior is dispensed with.³⁸ Aquinas answers that while the imperfect as a disposition to

³⁷ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3.

³⁸ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3, obj. 2.

perfect knowledge is *sometimes* preparatory to it, the disposition can also exist together with the perfect as an effect *following from* perfection, such that sometimes imperfect knowledge can co-exist with perfect knowledge. But although Aquinas uses this to rebut the objection that infused knowledge cannot co-exist with the more perfect beatific knowledge, he does not transfer any relation of cause and effect that might appear in his analogies to the case in hand. He certainly concludes that infused knowledge is confirmed by the more perfect beatific vision, but he never makes any suggestion that one is the cause of the other.³⁹ For Aquinas, beatific and infused knowledges are distinct effects of the same divine cause, and without any causal continuity between them that could contribute to an explanation of the revelatory continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching. The same can be observed in the commentaries of Poinset and Garrigou: though Garrigou regarded beatific knowledge as presupposed to infused knowledge in the context of their roles regarding Christ's merit, such that infused knowledge could be spoken of here as a "quasi-property" of beatific knowledge, he never treated infused knowledge as an effect caused by the beatific vision.⁴⁰

More recent theologians who have neglected Aquinas on Christ's ability to form *species* from his vision have sometimes discerned a weakness in their account of the continuity between Christ's beatific vision and his teaching, and have wanted to shore it up by introducing a causal relationship between beatific and infused knowledge. Bernard Leeming spoke of a widespread idea of Christ's infused knowledge as "connaturally consequent" upon his beatific vision, as though the presence of the beatific vision meant an automatic cascade of this knowledge into the form of infused *species*.⁴¹ Nicolas introduced a kind of causal relationship between beatific and infused knowledge by his conflation of infused *species* with

³⁹ *ST* III, q. 9, a. 3 ad 2.

⁴⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior*, 476-7.

⁴¹ Bernard Leeming, "The Human Knowledge of Christ," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 19 (1952): 135-47, 234-53 (140).

those derived from the vision.⁴² But, most important of all, Maritain employed the notion of instrumental causality, envisaging God as causing infused knowledge in Christ's mind but through the instrument of his beatific vision.⁴³ Now should Maritain's theory give a better explanation of the continuity at issue than my employment of Aquinas's account of Christ drawing *species* from his vision, we should have reason to prefer Maritain's theory over my proposal. However, while my account includes the engagement of Christ's human will in this line of continuity from beatific knowledge to human teaching, as we have seen, there does not seem to be the same place for his human will in Maritain's theory. Maritain allows for no possibility of a succession of distinct free acts of formation of *species* from beatific knowledge, in which the human will is engaged, but instead the formation of the whole panoply of infused *species* all at once is an almost automatic consequence of divine causation of the single act of beatific vision, without any particular engagement of Christ's human will. There may be a continuity provided by instrumental cause and effect here, but it seems to me to fall short of the continuity afforded by the engaged human will of Christ. Furthermore, a succession of acts of "translation" over time by the earthly Christ surely better fits a historical development of his communicable knowledge in the light of his beatific vision. Maritain deals with this progress by making the infused *species*, caused all at once at Christ's conception, and initially located along with the beatific vision only in a quasi-Freudian supraconsciousness inaccessible to Christ's consciousness, made gradually accessible to his consciousness according to need over time by, again, the divine will alone, without engagement of Christ's human will in the process.⁴⁴ Thus it seems to me that Maritain's making the beatific vision an instrumental cause of infused knowledge fails to yield the same continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching that Christ's humanly drawing *species*

⁴² See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 396.

⁴³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, 100-3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 101. See also the critique by Nicolas, "Voir Dieu dans la 'condition charnelle'," 388-9.

from his vision does. But if the latter account is to be preferred, it makes it difficult to see how making the inexpressible expressible can be the precise reason for the presence of infused knowledge in Christ, even where the latter has been instrumentally caused by the beatific vision.

Having stated why I think Christ's beatific ability to form *species* from his vision weakens a rationale often now given for his infused knowledge, I want to ask whether there might be another way in which infused knowledge might be needed by our Savior. One possibility might be Poinset's other argument that infused knowledge was required for much of the regulation of Christ's meritorious acts of charity. However, it seems to me that if my argument so far is successful, then Christ's ability to derive *species* from his vision would likewise undermine any argument that infused *species* were required for this very reason, since *species* derived from the vision can equally well fulfil the same role in supplementing beatific knowledge in this respect. Anything infused *species* can do, *species* drawn from the vision can do too. To find our answer we need to look further than Poinset's contribution.

Another possibility would be to revisit why Aquinas himself thought Christ needed infused knowledge, but when we do this we find that there are also problems with Aquinas's rationale and wider account, which of course explains why recent Thomists have shifted their attention to an argument from teaching needs. Aquinas argues that the perfection of the Savior's mind requires the infusion of *species* covering the whole of the knowledge to which Christ's mind is in potency, not only that of which he could naturally acquire knowledge, that is, scientific knowledge, but of that to which his mind is in obediential potency, such as knowledge of human hearts and the future.⁴⁵ Problems are often found in the absolute character of perfection Aquinas thinks is required here, and others have wondered whether a dynamic, developmental account would be more appropriate to the native character of the

⁴⁵ *ST* III, q. 11, a. 1.

human intellect.⁴⁶ I have treated this question elsewhere in connection with Christ's acquired knowledge.⁴⁷ The extent of knowledge which follows from Aquinas's account of perfection also gives the earthly Christ a complete general, scientific knowledge of all creation, with which many are uncomfortable because, unlike the more prophetic element in infused knowledge, this scientific aspect, while suggesting to some an almost mythical omniscience, does not seem to contribute directly to the needs of Christ's teaching and saving mission.⁴⁸ The fact that he also denies that he has prophetic knowledge of the timing of the last day (Mk 13:32) also sits uneasily with the fact that this is exactly the kind of thing that is expressibly known by infused knowledge on Aquinas's account, and there is much dissatisfaction with how Aquinas would deal with the issue exegetically.⁴⁹ That he seems to be motivated to attribute to Christ an expanse of *species* outdoing the infused knowledge of Adam (when there is much theological uncertainty today about Adam and his knowledge)⁵⁰ and also outdoing the knowledge of angels (when there is some dissatisfaction with how Aquinas treats the earthly Christ as able to know in the manner of non-bodily angels and disembodied human souls, which sits uneasily with the earthly Christ's embodied state, where sense and intellect, concept and image, always work together),⁵¹ makes theologians hesitant at the least.

It seems to me that all those questions require a further investigation that I cannot undertake here. What I want to do instead is to settle on a further reason for Christ's need of infused knowledge, at least of such knowledge as regards his teaching and saving mission, where infused knowledge has an advantage that cannot be usurped by Christ's ability to draw

⁴⁶ See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 398, 405-7.

⁴⁷ Simon Francis Gaine, 'Christ's Acquired Knowledge according to Thomas Aquinas: How Aquinas's Philosophy Helped and Hindered his Account', *New Blackfriars* 96 (2015): 255-68.

⁴⁸ See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 398-404.

⁴⁹ *ST* III, q. 11, a. 1; cf. q. 10, a. 2 ad 1. See Durand, "La science du Christ." 502. For my interpretation of this verse, see Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father?*, 156-8.

⁵⁰ *ST* I, q. 94, a. 3. See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 399-401.

⁵¹ *ST* III, q. 11, a. 4; cf. a. 2. See Margelidon, "La science infuse," 405-7.

species from his beatific vision, and which is also consonant with Aquinas's wider theology of Christ's grace.⁵² This solution lies in the fact that infused knowledge, unformed in our minds by ourselves, and obviously not derived from a beatific vision which we do not yet possess, would seem to be part of the charismatic life of God's people.⁵³ We find something like this featuring both in the prophets who preceded Christ and in the experience of the Church's members in this life, as attested in the lives of the saints.⁵⁴ Garrigou suggests that, given that some saints have experienced infused knowledge in this life, then we can suppose that it would have been a prerogative of Christ's soul on earth.⁵⁵ Thus, in his human mind the Body's Head would experience the presence of knowledge formed by the divine will only, underived by him humanly from his beatific vision, although this is not to say that this infused knowledge could not be confirmed and reinforced by *species* drawn from the vision. Now I have argued that the engagement of Christ's human will in the formation of *species* from his vision was needed for the revelatory line of continuity from his divine knowledge to his human teaching. But this does not mean that there can be no place in his life for a more passive reception of knowledge. Just as grace is operative as well as cooperative in regard to the human will,⁵⁶ even the human will of Christ, such that his will is both acting and acted upon, just as his salvation of us is brought about by both action and passion on his part,⁵⁷ so Christology may tease out the places of passivity as well as of activity in his knowledge. So, just as the beatific vision of the members of the Body depends on the beatific vision of Christ the Head and Savior, just as the sanctifying grace of the members depends on the sanctifying grace of the Head, so we may suppose that the infused knowledge in the minds of some members depends somehow on the fact of infused knowledge in the mind of the Head. The

⁵² *ST* III, qq. 7-8.

⁵³ *ST* I-II, q. 111, aa. 1, 4.

⁵⁴ *ST* II-II, qq. 171-4.

⁵⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christ the Savior*, 365-6.

⁵⁶ *ST* I-II, q. 111, a. 2.

⁵⁷ *ST* III, q. 1, proem.

reason he possesses infused knowledge would then be so that we might have it (just as with the beatific vision), though once present for that reason infused knowledge will inevitably contribute more generally to the knowledge enjoyed in his earthly life and to his teaching and saving mission (just as does his beatific vision), for example, to his knowledge of human hearts and the future, and to his meritorious acts of charity.⁵⁸

With that speculation, I want to conclude that there is place for infused knowledge in the human mind of Christ, just I have written elsewhere of the particular contributions of his beatific and acquired knowledge. His inexpressible vision of the divine essence provides a kind of illuminating horizon within which all expressible and communicable knowledge comes to be, whether derived from it, infused, or acquired. Should Christ draw *species* from the beatific vision in a line of continuity from divine knowledge to human teaching that can vindicate him as Revealer and Teacher, this will hardly rule out room for *species* supernaturally infused or naturally abstracted from sense data. Indeed all this knowledge of whatever source can only be mutually confirming, enriching and reinforcing, as Christ uses, compares and collates his knowledge from various sources for our benefit. Infused *species*, for example, which may not of themselves give rise to knowledge evident in itself, can thus benefit from the participated evidence and certitude that *species* drawn from the vision itself will firmly possess.⁵⁹ So Christ will be fully equipped for knowing in various ways, and because he knows what he teaches us, we can believe by faith what he teaches us. It is this theological framework which can then equip us to practice a speculative exegesis of Scripture in the tradition of Aquinas, by discerning in the picture of the Savior presented by the Gospels as a whole, and in particular passages, the contributions of various kinds of

⁵⁸ See Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas* (1956), §56.

⁵⁹ Cf. Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, 101-4.

knowledge to the human mind of one who teaches us humanly of the divine realities he was sent by his Father to reveal.