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Elevating and Healing: Reflections on *Summa Theologiae* I-II q. 109, a. 2

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In the *Summa Theologiae*, in the concluding section of the *prima secunda*, Thomas considers the extrinsic principles of human action [*principiis exterioribus actuum*], the law that instructs us in the right and the grace that assists us in the doing (*ST* I-II q. 90).[1] When he eventually asks about the necessity of that grace, about our ability to wish and do the good without its assistance [*velle et facere bonum absque gratia*], he makes a familiar move: he draws a couple of distinctions in order to account for the complexity of the matter at hand (*ST* I-II q. 109, a. 2).

Before sin, in the uncorrupted integrity of our humanity, we could not without grace do the good that exceeds our nature [*bonum superexcedens*], the good that follows from its gracious recreation and that comes through the use of infused virtue. We could wish and do the good proportionate to our created nature, above all the good of acquired virtue [*bonum virtutis acquisitae*]. But after the sin of our first parent, in the state of corrupted nature, we can no longer do what we once could in accord with the powers and capacities of our created humanity. Acquired virtue and the good it yields are still a possibility (*ST* I-II q. 63, a. 2; II-II q. 23, a. 7), and yet a person in this state cannot do all the good that is natural to her, "so as to fall short in nothing" [*ita quod in nullo deficiat*] (*ST* I-II q. 109, a. 2).[2] Most cru-

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[1] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947-48). Throughout, I modify this translation as needed in order to improve sense and clarity. All Latin texts cited and translated are from, *Opera omnia: Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia,* ed. Robert Busa (Stuttgart – Bad Canstatt: Fromman-Holzboog, 1980)

[2] Recent debate among exegetes has cast doubt on Thomas's seemingly straightforward affirmation of the possibility that the moral virtues might be acquired, connected, and counted as true apart from their elevation by grace and their ordination to the ends of charity. See, for example, Thomas M. Osborne Jr., "The Augustinianism of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 279-305. In a forthcoming book David Decosimo offers careful analysis of that debate and the various positions that have been staked out, and he gives exhaustive treatment of all the relevant passages in the *Summa Theologiae*, the commentaries, and the disputations. He concludes in a defense of that affirmation. See David Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

cially, she cannot honor her natural obligation to love God above all things (*ST* I-II q. 109, a. 3).

Implied but unstated in these remarks is the fact that the person who resides somewhere East of Eden and who has managed to acquire the moral virtues in some measure will be unable to do all that is good in proportionate to her created nature, and the source will be sin that generates a defect in those same virtues. Virtue, Thomas tells us, denotes the perfection of a power to act and perfection entails the ability to act at the natural limit of a power. A virtue that pushes a power to its limit will have, in a way, reached the limit of its ability to do the good. For of course, the good is done when a power to act is perfected and completed by a proper form, and this is precisely what a virtue does (*ST* I-II q. 55, a. 3). This tight conceptual coordination of virtue and power, where virtues perfect powers to act and where perfection regards acting at the limit of a power, implies that a virtue's limit is reached as a power's is and that a defect in virtue is nothing but the consistent failure to generate an act at the limit of the power in which it resides.

The solution, Thomas tells us, is grace, which not only elevates and ordains acts of acquired virtue to the ends of charity, to fellowship with God and all those who belong to God, but also heals the defects of virtue itself, the inconstancy of its act and the stunted range of its agency (*ST* I-II q. 109, a. 2). And, once healed and elevated, the virtues proceed with altered hopes and expectations about the conditions that call for their acts, an alternation that comes most vividly into focus among virtues specifically geared to our postlapsarian imperfections, virtues such as tolerance.

Elevating

We have a pretty good idea of how acts of acquired virtue can be elevated beyond their natural, temporal ends and ordained to the ends of supernatural charity, to union with God and neighbor. The analogy with the elevating and perfecting work of natural charity helps bring the idea into focus.[3] Imagine my college-age son enrolls in one

[3] The phrase is mine, not Thomas's. He reserves all talk of *dilectio caritatis* for the act of love that we have for God, that we extend to our neighbors for God's sake, and that we perform only as we have been recreated by the Holy Spirit and inclined by habitual form to precisely that act. Given the distinct object, formality, and origin of this love, this stipulation makes sense. Charity is indeed a *specialis amor* (*ST* II-II q. 23, a. 4). At the same time, Thomas insists that "charity is the friendship of man for God" that reproduces by analogy many of the formal features of the love that abides within the best kind of human friendships, not only mutual well-wishing and communion, but also the fact that participation in the friendship and sharing in its love is the good that is wished for the friend who is loved, loved for her own sake (*ST* II-II q. 23, a. 1; 25, a. 2). And while this love, unlike supernatural charity, assumes antecedent virtue in both the lover (as its source) and in the beloved (as its object), Thomas admits that its act can also come as gratuitous favor (*ST* II-II q. 23,

of my courses. In that setting, he's a student and I'm his professor, and he expects me to act in accord with the norms that govern those roles and the virtues that perfect participation in them. He doesn't want special treatment simply because he's my son. That would be unjust. Rather, in this setting, he wants the father-son relationship to fade from view and the student-professor relationship to determine our attitudes and actions. At the same time, he remains my son, and I don't [indeed I can't] stop loving him simply because he now occupies this new role and expects to be treated in accord with its normative demands. If it happens that I have acquired ordinary measures of both justice and natural charity, then we can assume that I will treat him justly in accord with the norms, requirements, and ends of the student-teacher relationship and then further ordain that just treatment to the ends of charity, to the love I have for him and the union I hope will abide between us in the household we share. I treat him justly, as I would any other student, and yet I do so, in part, because I love him, because of the hope I have for that union, that sweet fellowship with him, and because I believe this hope will be fulfilled on account of that love.

The gracious elevation of acquired virtue by supernatural charity works in roughly the same way. A just act in a good relationship, one that accords with its norm, requirements, and ends, will be elevated by grace beyond these natural realities to the ends of supernatural charity, to fellowship in the household of God. And, as in the case with natural charity, this gracious elevating, ordaining, and perfecting does not erase the just act, the virtue that produces it, or the temporal relationship in which it resides. All of these remain and constitute the material aspect of the act even as its formal aspect is now determined by supernatural charity. It remains an act of justice, full stop. But now that it is ordained to the ends of charity, to union and mutual well-wishing in the household of God, it is not only that. It can also be regarded as a work of love within this other social relationship. Indeed, formally and specifically, this is precisely what it is (*ST* I-II q. 18, a. 6; II-II q. 23, a. 8).

Fair enough, you might say, but Thomas also insists that grace elevates and perfects only as it infuses virtue, and not simply faith, hope, and charity, but also the moral virtues that correspond in due proportion to these three (*ST* I-II q. 63, a. 3). Presumably, it's these infused moral virtues that enable those who have been recreated by grace "to carry out acts of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious" (*ST* I-II q. 109, a. 2), and this generates a puzzle. What work, for example, will infused justice do when membership in the house-

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a. 3). And of course, natural love that comes as grace can, like charity, elicit love in kind from those who receive it. In turn that love can generate natural acts of mercy, alms deeds, forgiveness, and fraternal correction.

hold of God does not erase our other roles and relationships, when some measure of acquired justice is already at work, and when grace elevates and perfects its act? If the infused moral virtues come as grace does, then how will these two virtues—one acquired, the other infused—function in the same relationship, in response to the same circumstances that demand virtue's act?

Thomas answers this way: an act that stems from an acquired virtue, that honors the roles and requirements of a temporal relationship, and that proceeds under the direction of divine charity, "can be meritorious," that is, it can be offered in friendship to God and neighbor, "only when mediated by infused virtue" (*nisi mediante virtute infusa*).[4] Returning to our example, when I am obliged to recognize the excellent work that a student has done, when the norms of human justice and the requirements of the student-professor relationship demand it, and when, by grace, I am able to regard that person as both student in this class and beloved brother in the household of God, then I can treat him justly for love's sake only as my act is mediated by infused justice. In this act, acquired justice and infused justice work together. They generate a stereoscopic moral vision that respects the norms and requirements of two distinct relationships, one ordering the recognition of excellence to the proximate ends of justice within the student-teacher relationship, one ordaining that act and those ends to our final beatitude, to fellowship in the household of God that I hope to share with all those who belong to God, this student among others.

The reasons that warrant this reply are easy enough to identify; they emerge from what we already know. Justice is a creature of social relationships. Just acts set right those relationships as they deliver to each what each is due by right. But this means that the character of a social relationship—its roles, ends, and antecedent loves—determines the character of the virtue that perfects it, that habitually sets it right. So for example, the justice that sets right domestic relations within a household is different from the justice that sets right relations within a political community. It is directed to different ends. It generates materially distinct acts. And it assumes a distinct collection of roles. It follows that one must acquire both varieties in order to act justly in both social relationships. If we assume, as Thomas does, that all acts of justice, and so too the ends and purposes of all social relationships, should be ordered to the common good of the political community, to relations set right by political justice, then we must also assume that domestic and political justice will work together, the former perfecting the latter by directing its acts to ends that transcend its own (*ST* II-II q. 58, a. 7 and ad 1-3). Relations

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, trans. Jeffrey Hause and Claudia Eisen Murphy (Cambridge: Hackett, 2010), art. 10, ad. 4.

are set right within the household only as they are elevated beyond domestic purposes and ordained to the common good of the city. So it is with acquired and infused justice. Since they regard distinct social relationships, we can say that both are necessary in a Christian account of the moral life. Since infused justice sets right relations within the household of God on its temporal sojourn, and since the common good secured by its act is an imperfect participation of the final beatitude for which we all yearn, we can say the acquired justice elevated and perfected by grace will have its act ordained by infused justice beyond its own proximate ends to this common good, this foretaste of our final beatitude. Such is the distinct and yet coordinated work of infused and acquired virtues in the life of a wayfarer.

If this interpretation is right, if acquired and infused moral virtues can work together precisely because the acts and ends of one social relationship can be ordained to those of another, then we can imagine how the infused moral virtues might work on their own. If I have no antecedent relationship with the person I meet, if he is nothing but a stranger to me, and if, by grace, I am able to regard him as a fellow member of the household of God, then it will be *this* social relationship and *its* virtues—the infused virtues—that will determine my actions and set right this relationship. So too, if I have been unable to acquire the moral virtues in any meaningful measure, and if grace comes and the infused virtues set to work, they will do so on their own, without the mediation of the acquired virtues and without attention to the norms and requirements of the temporal relationships they would ordinarily set right. It is, after all, the acquired virtues that generate that attention, and it is precisely those virtues that I do not have. One can be a saint without knowing how to run a city. One can be holy in body without ordering its passions in accord with the norms and requirements of a natural relationship (*ST* I-II q. 63, a. 4). In each instance, we might say that the unmediated work of the infused virtues bears witness to the scandal of grace.[5]

HEALING

Turning now to the second effect of grace upon acquired virtue, the effect that regards the act itself, not the end to which it is ordained, things become somewhat murkier. Grace works on whatever grace finds, not erasing or replacing but perfecting and transfiguring, and whatever grace finds will always be imperfect in more than one

[5] The conceptual issues and exegetical difficulties surrounding the relationship between the acquired and infused moral virtues are many, and I have touched on just a few. They are also contested and largely unresolved in recent Aquinas scholarship. For a different interpretation see, William Mattison, "Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues?" *Theological Studies* 72 (2011): 558-85 and Angela McKay Knobel, "Can Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist in the Christian Life," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 23 no. 4 (2010): 381-96.

sense. On the one hand, it needs to be situated in a more perfect society and directed by charity to union with God and neighbor, but it also needs to be healed of its own deficits, frailties, and limits. As a consequence of Adam's fall, acquired virtue cannot always produce its act in every circumstance that demands it, and more often than not, it's sin's sources that get in the way. Disordered passions, corrupted judgments, and desires that deny our neighbor her just due—any one of these can confound even the virtuous. This is why they need assistance from the grace that heals this wounded nature and that enables them to generate the virtuous acts that they should perform and yet cannot without that help. This much is plain; this much Christians confess.

Less certain, but no less important, are the effects of that grace upon the ability of an acquired virtue to work at the limit of the power in which it resides. Virtues are perfections and among the acquired virtues perfection comes in degrees and so too the range of their agency. A virtue in the state of innocence would have its range determined by the power in which it resides. Its capacity to perfect would extend across the full range of that power's potential to act. That range would set the limit of that capacity. But this side of sin, that limit is fixed by insufficient capacity in the virtue itself, a defect that is sin's yield. At some point the virtue cannot produce its act, and not simply (or only) because sin haunts the soul, but because circumstances generate demands that cannot be met, even by those great in virtue. Faced with the horrors of war, for example, courage and judgment can fail, sometimes culpably, but sometimes not. At times, those horrors themselves are enough to make the virtuous fall short of what we can reasonably expect from them. We might desire their acts, long for their success, but we also confront the stunted range of their virtue now on display in these circumstances.

The defect is this: a virtue's ability to act falls short of the limit marked by the power in which it resides. Its own limit, now fixed by sin conspiring with circumstance, is reached before its power's is, and this in turn diminishes the constancy and range of its act. To get our minds around what this defect might entail, this disconnect between the sin-stunted limit of a perfection and that of the power in which it resides, I will consider a structural defect that afflicts tolerance, a virtue annexed to justice as one of its parts. To do this I must make two assumptions and offer one concession.

First, I assume that tolerance is in fact a virtue. Many contemporary critics doubt that it is, philosophers and theologians alike, and yet I'm inclined to think they are mistaken.[6] Our various social rela-

[6] Discontent with tolerance is widespread. For typical examples see Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2006), 121-6 and Barbara Herman, "Pluralism and the Community of Moral

tionships are divided and thus threatened by differences of various kinds, and the patient endurance of the tolerant is often the right response to these differences and threats. In some circumstances, with respect to some persons and objectionable differences, this act is clearly right and good. In some instances, failure to respond in this way is plainly unjust, and in most times and places the good denied in the injustice has a special importance. Without it, our various social relationships cannot be sustained; their peace and persistence cannot be secured. Since virtue is directed to the good, and since, as Thomas says, "wherever there is a special kind of good, there must needs be a special kind of virtue" (*ubi occurrit specialis ratio boni, ibi oportet esse specialem rationem virtutis*) (*ST* II-II q. 114, a. 1), it makes perfect sense to count tolerance among the acquired moral virtues.

Second, I assume that tolerance has a sibling, the forbearance that is annexed to charity as one of its parts. Both virtues perfect our response to objectionable differences of various kinds, and in the standard cases both respond with an act of patient endurance. And yet forbearance generates an act of love, not justice. Its good comes as gracious well-wishing, not as due, and it seeks union between lover and beloved despite the differences that divide them, not right relationship between members of a social relationship.[7]

The concession is this. While I assume that tolerance is a virtue and sibling to forbearance, Thomas does not. He does speak of the need for toleration's patient endurance in response to Jewish unbelief (*ST* II-II q. 10, a. 11), and, in his discussion of fraternal correction, he does refer to *acts* of forbearance, to charity's patient endurance of sin (*ST* II-II q. 33). Still, in neither case does he move beyond mere mentioning. He does not reflect on these acts, on their matter, objects, and ends, and he says very little about their social settings, circumstances, and limits. He does not consider their sibling relations, and he does not theorize either of them as a virtue.

So, in order to clarify Aquinas's remarks about the healing effects of grace upon acquired virtue, about the ability of the Holy Spirit to address a virtue's structural defects, I consider a virtue that he does not. I will leave it to others to decide whether my efforts remain faithful to his intention, whether my departures remain in his spirit.

Tolerance belongs to justice, and like justice it perfects our social relationships by giving to each what each deserves by right, in this

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Judgment," in *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue,* ed. David Heyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 60-80.

[7] The thought that acquired and infused virtues might be siblings, justice and charity above all, comes from the political theology of the Norman Anonymous (c. 1100). For commentary see Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 42-60.

instance the patient endurance of some objectionable difference, a difference that threatens the peace and persistence of that social relationship. The implication is that we tolerate our own, those who are bound to us in some way in a relationship of some sort: friends, family members, colleagues, congregants, fellow citizens, and all those with whom we share some sort of society. Even strangers are tolerated only as they occupy the role reserved for them in a specific social relationship. Tolerance emerges in these settings and operates in this company. This much is plain.

Yet in a recent essay, Michael Ignatieff insists that we can see the limits of tolerance, its tragic undoing, in precisely the social conditions assumed by its act.[8] In certain circumstances the problems of association posed by difference, problems we might expect tolerance to address, in fact ask more of the virtue than it can deliver. Put in a way that accents the paradox, the shared life and common identity that tolerance assumes and that human beings crave can, in certain circumstances, prevent the exercise of its attitudes and acts. We tolerate our own, no doubt, and yet at times it's precisely the minor differences of those close and familiar that we cannot endure. Well-known examples abound and they unfold in roughly the same way. Begin with peoples of different histories and religions nevertheless living together, united by language, proximity, and marriage: in modern Germany before the fascists came to power, where Jews were widely regarded as Germans among Germans; or in Bosnia-Herzegovina before the collapse of Yugoslavia, where Croats, Serbs, and Muslims lived together in the same towns and villages, spoke a common language, and pursued the same dream of modernization and advancement. The pattern is reproduced in Northern Ireland, Rwanda, and countless other places. Accommodation and tolerance are the norm, at least at the start, but then something happens that generates insecurity and fear: economic instability, political unrest, demographic shifts, and so on. Those who, until now, saw their neighbors as variations of themselves, suddenly see strangers, competitors, and aliens, each without an established place in the social order. Proximity looks like a threat, mixing with others a dilution of group power, and small, previously insignificant differences suddenly look large and important. Soon, demagogues emerge encouraging these fears with talk of ancient wrongs and offering comfort in a new identity based on blood, grievance, and fear of defilement by difference. It's a familiar story of narcissistic nationalism, but it's not the only one that needs telling. In some places, nothing dramatic happens at all, just slow, relentless modernization. Its "convergences and homogenization" tend to diminish whatever "objective" distinctions

[8] Michael Ignatieff, "Nationalism and Toleration," in *The Politics of Toleration in Modern Life*, ed. S. Mendus (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 77-106.

were once thought to matter, which in turn, on Ernest Gellner's famous account, only encourages individuals to accent the minor differences that remain and take refuge in groups and their collective fantasies. By these lights, nationalism is "a fundamentally modern attempt to reinvent forms of community and belonging and identity in the face of the loss of traditional expressions of these values in the course of modernization." [9]

Needless to say, in both of these circumstances, the tolerance and accommodation that once mediated relations among different individuals and groups withers and fades. And note, it is precisely the desire that makes tolerance possible, the desire to retain the company of one's own, that reduces the range of its act. In these circumstances, the object of this desire, the company one keeps, is pinched and as a result the tolerance that was once a public matter is now reduced to a virtue of clans and clubs. One might expect that it would remain in there, waiting for conditions that would once again permit a wider reach for its attitudes and acts, but Ignatieff encourages us to regard the intimate societies that give birth to tolerance as the locus of its undoing. When individuals united in all sorts of important ways nevertheless disintegrate into hostile, mutually intolerant groups, when minor differences are exaggerated, and when the neighbors we once counted among our own are now regarded as competitors and enemies, it's a familiar pattern that is reproduced. "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, 'I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord'. And again she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain tiller of the ground" (Gen 4:1-2). They are brothers united as brothers are and yet divided by minor differences that one exaggerates in order to secure his identity against the other.[10] Identities are formed only as comparisons are made, often invidious. They often ignore the individual humanity of the brother or sister, who is then cast among some fanciful, hostile collective. On Ignatieff's telling, so ends the tragic tale of tolerance. It tends to collapse under the weight of its own logic.[11] We tolerate our own, and yet in the most pressing circumstances we can neither recognize our own nor tolerate them as a result of that recognition.

Of course, as a virtue annexed to justice, true tolerance is designed to address precisely those problems of association that crop up across lines of difference, and presumably the tolerant display

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[9] Ignatieff, "Nationalism and Toleration," 94. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

[10] In Western Oklahoma, it's easy to confuse farmers and cowboys even as this is done at one's own peril. Even worse, call a cowboy a sheepherder and you are likely to lose some teeth.

[11] Ignatieff, "Nationalism and Toleration," 105.

their perfection most plainly when challenged by the most difficult problems. Only then do they act at the limits of their powers. Thus we can expect the tolerant to regard themselves and those with whom they share a life as individuals united by goods and activities held in common, not as faceless members of competing groups. So too, they will not be threatened by proximity, even in hard times. They will not draw tight the boundaries of identity and society by amplifying minor differences into membership criteria. If tolerance is a virtue, a real human perfection, then we can expect these responses from those perfected by it. At the same time we cannot discount the tendencies that Ignatieff spells out. We cannot deny that human beings tend to take refuge in group-identities, in fantasies of racial, ethnic, and gender difference, particularly when their lives and welfare are threatened in some way.[12] Tolerance needs to flourish because of these natural tendencies, and yet if Ignatieff is right, these tendencies conspire with circumstances of extremity that we can neither control or predict and generate problems of association that even the most tolerant among us cannot bear. In circumstances like these, tolerance cannot redeem us from moral collapse, from its own tragic undoing.[13] Like every other moral virtue this side of Adam's fall, it both emerges from our nature and bears witness to its inherited weakness. Like the others, it eventually reaches a limit set by sin and circumstance and fails to deliver when its act is most needed.

Disappointment and yearning follow; yearning for a world that does not conspire with our nature against our happiness and discontent with a virtue that fails to provide what it promises. More often than not, these sentiments find expression in our talk of the "end of tolerance" and in our desire for some other response to difference.[14] These are, of course, understandable sentiments and familiar desires, and yet I suspect they are evidence of virtue in absence, not tragedy's wisdom. Indeed, how can we be discontent with the virtues that fit us for our life in this world, tolerance among the others, or yearn for a world that did not require their cultivation without hating that life,

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[12] Of course these identities and differences exist and of course they matter. The point is that our account of their reality and importance can be false, and this falsehood can be used to justify injustice.

[13] How do we describe agency at its limit? We expect an act of tolerance in precisely circumstances like these, and yet, given the social logic of tolerance, it is precisely circumstances like these that push tolerance to its limit. Is the failure to act a moral fault, an unfortunate occurrence, or an uncertain combination of agency and accident? Bernard Williams' "Moral Luck" remains the classic statement of this puzzle. See his *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 20-39.

[14] To Ignatieff's credit, he avoids this talk even as he admits that our need for a secure identity can conspire with minor differences close at hand to demand of "old Adam and Eve a redemption beyond their powers." Is this a sigh of resignation at toleration's limits? Hope's desire expressed in a groan? I can't tell. Ignatieff, "Nationalism and Toleration," 105.

without resenting that world? Isn't this response to the incapacities of imperfect tolerance, this resentment and yearning, just nihilism in disguise, just contempt for our life, its virtues, and the world we find ourselves in? Looking back on tolerance that failed, shouldn't we resist this response and reply instead with a shrug?

With this thought in mind, consider the difference that grace can make. If grace not only elevates but also heals, then tolerance *sub gratia* will not simply be elevated to charity's end, it will also have its deficits repaired and its act extended beyond the limit set by sin conspiring with circumstance. We should find the tolerant succeeding in those circumstances of extremity where they would otherwise meet their tragic undoing precisely because their deficient virtue can reach no further. We should find them responding well, neither denying recognition to those they once counted their own, nor exaggerating the importance of minor differences, nor drawing the boundaries of their moral community along the lines of group fantasy. Resisting these temptations, they will neither regard the merely objectionable as the dangerously intolerable, nor deny those who deserve toleration's patient endurance.

Now caution is required here so as not to confuse one virtue, one effect of grace, for another. The claim is not that grace heals tolerance, that it extends virtue's act beyond the constraints set by sin and circumstance, only as forbearance steps in, takes over its tasks, and endures what the tolerant cannot. The claim is not that love is enough when justice is required and nevertheless fails. It can't be, for as I noted above, tolerance and forbearance regard different matters, intend different ends, and thus produce different acts. When tolerance falls short of the limit set by the power in which it resides, as welcome as forbearance might otherwise be, its act is not what is required. What's needed is an act of patient endurance ordered to the ends of the tolerant, an act that cannot be offered in the circumstances we are considering precisely because they prevent the tolerant from regarding some of their fellow citizens *as* citizens, as members of a shared community, members who deserve tolerance in circumstances like these. What's needed is the ability to regard them in this way, as those who can expect our endurance as a requirement of that political relationship and for the sake of its common goods, above all the common good of the relationship itself. What's missing is love for those goods and the reasons to act that come with this love.

Rather, the claim is that the grace of God that Christians confess generates love of this kind and reasons of this sort. After all, this grace belongs of Christ, it animated all of His temporal relations, and those relations were distinguished by His willingness to befriend the outcast and the unclean. Its love was extended to precisely those who had been denied recognition in the relevant moral and political communities. When that same grace comes to us, it animates and

extends the range of our love in much the same way. Circumstances might conspire with our fears and exaggerate minor differences between our selves and others. Together they might pinch back our love and shorten the boundary of our political community, excluding those who once were members and drawing the outer limit of our political tolerance. Yet grace tempers these effects. Even in circumstances of extremity, it quickens and extends our regard. It recreates our loves, not only elevating them beyond their temporal horizon but also extending their temporal reach. It directs our loves to the once excluded, and returns the excluded to their rightful place in the social relationship that our mutual tolerance once sustained. Once God's love has restored that relationship, tolerance can once again emerge and sustain what grace has restored. Its act will be ordered to its proximate ends and then further ordained to friendship with God and the tolerated. It will be an act of patient endurance offered beyond the limits of tolerance for God's sake. And note, in the case that Ignatieff discusses, the relationship restored by love will not be a love relationship, not exactly, not principally. Its desire for union, for a shared life, and for the well-being of the other will be there, but it will be weak. If it's a friendship, it's the kind that abides among fellow citizens, that generates the love they have for the political society they share.[15] It's the kind that makes political tolerance possible, but in this instance, its origin is divine and its substance gracious.

The pattern is familiar. Love precedes justice just as covenant precedes law. It does not overcome justice; it does not replace its demands. Rather, love sets the stage for justice, in this instance by healing the antecedent social relationship that tolerance assumes, that is the arena of its act. In circumstances that typically trip up those who possess tolerance in some measure but who have not been recreated by the Holy Spirit, charity's love extends the range of its just act. It enables the tolerant to resist narcissistic fantasies of group identity, to recognize their own across differences that divide, and to act justly in response to those differences. With this recognition secured by charity and with a supernatural end now governing their actions, they offer their patient endurance to those who deserve it, love's correction and forbearance to those who sin, and just coercion to those whose sins harm others or dishonor God (*ST* II-II q. 33). Since each of these acts is ordered to the ends of charity—forbearance immediately, tolerance through the mediation of its proximate ends—it makes sense to say, as Aquinas does, that charity is the form of the moral virtues in those recreated by the Holy Spirit

[15] For reflection on friendship's love in democratic politics see Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) and Martha Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

(*ST* II-II q. 23, aa. 7-8). In this instance, charity informs tolerance, not by altering the essence of what it does, "but rather by way of efficient cause" (*ST* II-II q. 23, a. 8, ad. 1). Charity not only directs those acts to a supernatural end, and thus brings tolerance to its perfection (*ST* II-II q. 23, a. 7), but it guarantees the social conditions that make tolerant acts possible.

ALTERED HOPES

The healing effects of grace upon acquired tolerance extend its horizontal range, while the elevating effects ordain its act beyond its proximate ends to fellowship with God and all those who belong to God. Taken together, these effects alter the hope with which the tolerant proceed. The tolerant endure the differences that divide persons and communities, social relationships of all kinds. They suffer the effects of those differences and divisions, and yet after sin and without grace they do not always yearn to overcome the conditions that call for this act. Some of the differences that divide one person from another or that threaten the peace and persistence of a community are here to stay, or so they assume. In some cases, it would be foolish to think these differences will pass. Indeed, in some cases, it may even be unjust to hope that they will. False hope can create a distorted image of the relationship that the tolerant endeavor to set right, and this in turn can corrupt virtue's act. The act might be due, it might be an obligation that follows from the roles and requirements of the relationship in question, and yet false hope might hold it hostage to an expectation that the tolerated cannot meet.

Consider the case of your grandfather's brother, your aged Uncle Halvor. Raised in rural Minnesota among Scandinavians like himself, he now resides in a Minneapolis nursing home under the care of various nurses and aides, most of them Somali and Hmong. Frustrated by his many losses and suspicious of those who care for him, he spends the day cursing his condition, spouting racist bile, and wallowing in self-pity. You hardly know him and have no desire to befriend him, but you visit him nevertheless and endure what you despise. If you have acquired ordinary measures of tolerance, then you will offer both the visit and the endurance as due, as just requirements of the family relationship that you cannot forsake. At the same time, you do not make these visits in the expectation that these behaviors will pass, that the objectionable differences that divide this relationship will be overcome by your patient endurance or that Uncle Halvor's anger and racism will diminish as the months go by. There's no reason to think that they will, and, as I said, it would be unjust to proceed with this hope, with a false image of Uncle Halvor and a mistaken account of what can be expected from him. If you are truly tolerant, you will not make your endurance a creature of that hope. You will not make your tolerance of his racism and your pa-

tient endurance of his anger dependent upon the hopeful expectation that his behaviors will change, that the need for virtue's act will pass.

But the tolerant who have been healed and elevated by grace not only offer just and patient endurance in circumstances that typically confound the rest of us, but they also proceed with a certain discontent for the conditions that require their virtue, a certain yearning for those conditions to pass, and a certain hope and expectation that they will. The world as we find it is not as it should be, or so they assume. The disorder that afflicts our souls and the differences and divisions that threaten our social relationships are neither natural nor necessary, or so they confess. By grace, they believe that we were made to be redeemed from this disorder, freed from the violent effects of these divisions, and gathered up into a different kind of life. So they yearn for this redemption and long for the overcoming of those conditions that require their virtue's response and that make it intelligible. In the meantime, they can't restrain their discontent with the world that remains and with the virtues that emerge from its disorder, tolerance among others. They doubt that these virtues can bring happiness in full measure, and the suffering that accompanies sin's endurance only confirms their doubt.

Like Augustine's just judge who reflects on the ignorance that clouds his best efforts, laments the unintended harm that he does, and prays that he might be delivered from the necessities that require his virtue, so too the tolerant who have been healed and elevated by grace lament the disagreements and differences they endure. They yearn for deliverance from them.[16] They long for a time when their virtue will be irrelevant even as they concede its value and importance for life in the *saeculum*. With Augustine they confess that "we are in the midst of evils, and we must endure them with patience until we come to those good things where everything will bestow ineffable delight upon us, and where there will no longer be anything which we must endure."[17]

In this respect, the yearning and discontent of the tolerant who have been healed and elevated by grace have a strange and unsettling resemblance to the passions and judgments that accompany the tragic collapse of tolerance infected with sin. Looking back on that collapse from the vantage point of a cool hour, those who proceed with acquired tolerance alone will admit that these judgments and passions stand without warrant. They know that their discontent with tolerance, their yearning for a life and world that did not demand its labors, and their hope for the overcoming of all disagreement and division in fact represent a failure of their virtue. They know that this failure amounts to little more than resentment for our world and con-

[16] Augustine, *de Civ. Dei*, 19.5.
[17] Augustine, *de Civ. Dei*, 19.4.

tempt for our humanity. By contrast, the yearning and discontent that animates a tolerance that has been healed and elevated by grace follows its success, not its failure. Looking back from the vantage point of the eschatological horizon, those who exhibit this tolerance will recognize that these judgments and passions emerge from their hope for redemption and from the faint foretaste provided by their recreated loves. They know that this foretaste, hope, and love come as gifts of God's grace and that without these gifts their discontent and yearning amount to little more than resentment for the world as we find it. They know that this resentment would be evidence of virtue's semblance, not its perfection. Such is the wisdom of acquired virtue that grace has healed and elevated.

Incompatible with the virtue that fallen humanity can acquire on its own, the yearning and discontent of the tolerant who have been graciously healed and elevated bears witness to a perfection they have received from another. That it might be difficult to distinguish the resentment and yearning of acquired tolerance that has collapsed into a semblance from the passions and judgments of that same virtue now transformed by grace is, as I said, odd and disorienting, but then, so it is with siblings. They are often hard to tell apart, even when divided by differences as stark as virtue and vice. ■