

THOMAS AQUINAS' REJECTION OF THE *FIDES CHRISTI*

His Theological Reasons and Consequent Dogmatic and Liturgical Difficulties

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Abstract

In this article, I explore how Aquinas persuasively claimed that Christ did not have faith because he had beatific knowledge of God in his human mind due to the beatific vision and infused knowledge of God that he enjoyed while on earth. Aquinas' view dominated the theological circles for centuries, but not anymore. However, the opinions of several dogmatic scholars and recent Christological ecclesiastical documents of the Church that treat Christ's consciousness and knowledge do not endorse Aquinas' claim that Christ had beatific knowledge of God because of the theological difficulties inherent in it. In line with this thinking, I argue that, for dogmatic and liturgical reasons, it is more feasible to uphold the view that, just like believers, Christ had faith.

Introduction

In traditional Christian theological thinking, remarks Gerald O'Collins, the existence and nature of faith exercised by Jesus was hardly debated, for it was taken for granted that Jesus' divine identity and his human knowledge of God ruled out the necessity of faith.¹ In the Western dogmatic tradition, Thomas Aquinas represents the strongest rejection of that idea. While Aquinas was not the only theologian in the Middle Ages to do so,² he is important for his cogent and theological arguments against attributing faith to Christ. Aquinas' denial, it can be said, became the norm for all subsequent rejections to ascribing faith to Christ almost up to the middle of the twentieth century.³ According to Aquinas, during Christ's life on earth, he possessed immediate knowledge of God by virtue of the perpetual beatific vision that he enjoyed. Christ, therefore, lived by divine sight, not by faith.⁴ For Aquinas "[f]aith is the

¹ See Gerald O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: University Press, 2013), 262–63.

² For theologians who held the same view, see *ibid.*, 266n15.

³ Liam G. Walsh says that "[since Aquinas it] has never been seriously suggested in the Christian tradition that Christ lived by faith." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 49, ed. and trans. Liam G. Walsh (London: Blackfrairs, 1974), 15nb.

⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, vol. 4, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Maryland: Westminster,

substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not.”⁵ Scripturally put, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11: 1; Rom 8: 24–25).⁶ That is, the theological virtues of faith and hope are about objective realities not yet seen or known.

However, since the late nineteenth century, several New Testament scholars began to research whether Paul’s use of the genitive noun *Christou* in the phrase *pistis Christou* (“faith of Christ”)⁷ is an objective genitive (our faith “in Christ”) or a subjective genitive (the faith or faithfulness “of Christ”).⁸ A growing number of these scholars accept the latter view, which might also be called a possessive genitive (“Christ’s faith or faithfulness”). More importantly, some sources - the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), two Decrees of the Holy Office,⁹

1920), 3a. 7. 3–4; 9. 2, 10–12 (Henceforth cited as *ST*). While rejecting the notion that Christ perpetually possessed the beatific vision as espoused by Aquinas, R. Michael Allen claims that Christ did experience beholding the divine essence at various points in his human life (for example, at his baptism and during his transfiguration). Allen likens these experiences of Christ to what Moses experienced on Mount Sinai. Allen asserts that this experience of Christ, however, requires the necessary importance of progression, maintaining the room for a dynamic faith in Christ’s earthly life through trial and temptation. See R. Michael Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 4. In addition, not all theologians who deny faith to Christ are necessarily influenced by Aquinas. For example, Jean Galot, like Aquinas, denies that Christ had faith. But unlike Aquinas, Galot also denies that Christ enjoyed the beatific vision during his earthly life. Arguing for some special aspects of Jesus’ consciousness that made him aware of his divine identity, Galot affirms that there was no need for Jesus to believe *that* or *in* something. Rather, Galot claims that Jesus had some other knowledge which was neither from his experience nor from the normal exercise of his intellect but from a higher source. Galot thus contends that Jesus possessed “certain pieces of infused information,” but not infused knowledge itself. These pieces of infused information included Jesus’ awareness that he was divine. Hence, although Jesus experienced the trials of faith, since he was the Son of God and possessed the consciousness proper to this sonship, Galot finds it impossible to attribute faith to Jesus in the strict sense of the word. See Jean Galot, *Who is Christ?* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981), 354–56, 360, 362, 380, 382. O’Collins describes what Galot speaks of “to believe that” as “confession” of believing that God the Father exists or believing what God the Father has revealed (Rom 10: 8–10). He also relates what Galot speaks of “to believe in” to believing in God the Father or “self-commitment” or “obedience” to God the Father (Rom 1: 5; 16: 26). See O’Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 264–66. Reformed theologians also deny faith to Christ but for different theological reasons than those of Aquinas because they did not want to undermine the basic Reformation emphasis on faith. For them, faith is an appropriate action for the believers but not for Christ himself, and because of their dislike of the principle of *imitatio Christi*. See Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 25.

⁵ *ST* 2a. 2ae. 4. 1.

⁶ Also see *ST* 3a. 7. 3.

⁷ The phrase is found in Romans 3: 22, 26; Galatians 2: 16a, 16b, 20, 3: 22; Ephesians 2: 12; Philippians 3: 9. The context of these passages is about how God’s righteousness has been revealed or how God brings people into a right relationship with God.

⁸ For the essential and critical points of this debate in its chronological order and across the spectrum of Christian traditions, see Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 8–25.

⁹ The first Decree (1907) deals with Christological errors of the modernists and the latter (1918) with the knowledge of

three Christological documents by the International Theological Commission,¹⁰ and several recent Catholic theologians¹¹ - do not endorse Aquinas' claim that Christ had no faith. Nor do they accept the idea that Christ had comprehensive human knowledge by virtue of the beatific vision and infused knowledge. All this suggests that many scholars believe Christ is truly human, as defined by the Council of Chalcedon.¹² In short, like other humans, Christ had faith.

It is not my intention here to present the content and nature of Christ's faith, which in and of itself is a thesis that merits to be treated at a considerable length and, hence, is beyond the scope of this article.¹³ Rather, I argue that Aquinas' rejection of Christ's faith causes a number of theological difficulties. To this end, I will start with what sort of Christology Aquinas followed and which he further developed epistemically in his writings. I will then examine the Christology of Aquinas to show how cogently and theologically he denied human faith to Christ. Finally, I will point out some important doctrinal and liturgical problems inherent in Aquinas' thesis which, in fact, show the need to uphold the idea that Christ had and relied on faith.

1. Christology Prior to Aquinas

The early Fathers of the Church gradually came to the consensus that Christ had human knowledge. For Athanasius and Basil the Great, identification of Jesus with the Son of God

the soul of Christ. For the specific articles in these two Decrees that do not uphold the rejection of Christ's subjective faith, see Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum derebus fidei et morum*, 43rd ed., ed. Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012) # 3434 and # 3645-47.

¹⁰ "Select Questions of Christology" (1979); "Theology, Christology, and Anthropology" (1981); and "The Consciousness of Christ Concerning Himself and His Mission" (1985) in Michael Sharkey, ed., *International Theological Commission, Texts and Documents 1969-1985* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 185-205, 197-223, 305-16.

¹¹ See D. L. Stubbs, "The Shape of Soteriology and the *Pistis Christou* Debate," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61 (2008): 137-57; O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 262-80; Gerald O'Collins and Daniel Kendall, "The Faith of Jesus," *Theological Studies* 53 (1992): 403-21; James P. Mackey, *Jesus the Man and the Myth* (London: SCM Press, 1979); H. Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978), 79-145; K. Rahner and W. Thüsig, *A New Christology*, trans. D. Smith and V. Green (London: Burns & Oates, 1980), 143-54; H. U. von Balthasar, "Fides Christi," in *Spousa Verbi* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961), 45-79; Gerhard Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, trans. R. G. Smith (London: Collins, 1966); Gerhard Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 44-57.

¹² See Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum derebus fidei et morum*, # 301.

¹³ The content of Christ's faith can be gleaned especially from the words and actions of Jesus contained in the Synoptic Gospels. However, this thesis is dogmatically approached by recent theologians. For example, O'Collins claims that the existence and nature of faith exercised by the earthly Jesus must be explored from his "believing that" (*fides quae*) and "believing in" (*fides qua*). In these terms, the quintessence of Christ's faith might be said to be his total and self-commitment (obedience) to his and our heavenly Father whom he called "Abba." See O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 262-80.

meant that he possessed omniscience. During the early patristic period, a distinction between “mediate and immediate”¹⁴ knowledge, resulting from the union of the divine and human natures of Jesus, was made.¹⁵ For Basil, immediate knowledge entailed communication of omniscience to Jesus due to his divinity. This meant that the degree of Jesus’ knowledge was determined by the divinity of Christ.¹⁶ As a result, Basil felt that it was futile to speak of Jesus as having human knowledge precisely because he knew all things immediately due to his divinity. Those who argued for an immediate knowledge in Christ also denied the existence of two wills.¹⁷

Later Fathers of the Church distinguished between divine and human knowledge in Christ, to the extent of expressing a mediate relationship between his divinity and human knowledge.¹⁸ Mediated knowledge in the union of divine and human natures gave certain grace to the humanity of Christ, whereby his humanity acquired perfection.¹⁹ Gregory the Great characterized this as Christ having fullness of knowledge in his humanity but not from his humanity as such.²⁰ This mediated relationship became the norm for the later patristic era, leading to the claim that Christ possessed the beatific vision and, therefore, omniscience, during his life on earth.²¹ This is the Christological reflection that Aquinas followed. However, he developed these ideas epistemically to argue that because Christ enjoyed the beatific vision, he had no need of faith.

2. Aquinas’ Theological Reasons for Denying that Christ had Faith

Aquinas affirmed that Christ enjoyed the beatific vision, hence, he lived by divine sight, not by faith. “[T]he object of faith is a Divine thing not seen. Now the habit of virtue, as every other habit, takes its species from the object. Hence, if we deny that the Divine thing was not seen, we exclude the very essence of faith. Now from the first moment of His conception Christ saw God’s Essence fully... Hence there could be not faith in Him.”²² Aquinas also

¹⁴ Allen’s terms. See Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 38.

¹⁵ See Raymond Moloney, “Approaches to Christ’s Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” in Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, eds., *Studies in Patristic Christology* (Portland, Ore: Four Courts, 1998), 42–5.

¹⁶ See Moloney, “Approaches to Christ’s Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” 45.

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, 63.

¹⁸ See Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 39.

¹⁹ See Moloney, “Approaches to Christ’s Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” 56–60; Lionel Wickham, “The Ignorance of Christ: A Problem for the Ancient Theology,” in Lionel R. Wickham and Caroline P. Bammel, eds., *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1993), 213–26.

²⁰ See Moloney, “Approaches to Christ’s Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” 61; Wickham, “The Ignorance of Christ: A Problem for the Ancient Theology,” 225.

²¹ See Moloney, “Approaches to Christ’s Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” 50, 60–1.

²² *ST* 3a. 7. 3, reply. O’Collins remarks that this assertion of Aquinas needs to be complemented by his *De veritate*, 29. 4 ad. 15. Furthermore, he notes that Aquinas’ treatment of the issue of Jesus’ knowledge and faith seems more flexible

believed that Christ's human knowledge included ordinary experimental knowledge, while embracing special infused knowledge.²³

2.1. The Beatific Vision

In his study of Aquinas' thoughts, R. Michael Allen suggests that Aquinas' account of the beatific vision must be seen within a particular context - historical, doctrinal, and pastoral.²⁴

First, Aquinas' historical intellectual context uses Aristotelian thought to discuss grace and nature, which until then was carried out solely by faith and reason. For Aquinas, the beatific vision provided an eschatological limit for the discussion because the beatific vision is the ultimate state of grace, which is no longer called *grace* but *glory*.

Second, Aquinas' account of the beatific vision was set within a dogmatic system of various doctrines interpenetrating each other (the Trinity, Christology, atonement, anthropology, and eschatology). The nature of Christ's life discussed primarily as a particular understanding of the divine essence by the God-man allowed Christ to be a human *par excellence*. In this way, Christ partook in an eschatological experience, namely, the grasping of the divine essence by a human. Needless to say, such Christological and eschatological issues necessarily raise anthropological questions regarding the relationship between creature and Creator as well as the relationship between soul, mind, and body.

Third, Aquinas' account of the beatific vision fits well with a particular pastoral concern, the pursuit of happiness. His account of the beatific vision operates within categories of vision, knowledge, and participation, thus maintaining the patristic emphasis on human participation and the need for knowledge of God. Aquinas' goal in this context was to encourage ultimate happiness by seeking the greatest good, God.

Aquinas' belief in man's ability to enjoy a beatific vision of God rests largely on the "*We shall see Him just as He is* (1 John iii. 2)."²⁵ Then we shall see God's distinctive way of being (simple, perfect, good, infinite, immutable, eternal, and united).²⁶ Thus, Aquinas' discussion of how we can know God leads to actual sight of God's essence.²⁷ In short, the beatific vision becomes the culmination of human knowledge of God.

For Aquinas, the beatific vision finds its meaning from two considerations. First, because God is "His own existence,"²⁸ he becomes knowable, just as a thing that becomes present to another is knowable.²⁹ Second, it is possible to know God from humanity's side, provided that

and existential than that of most scholastics. See O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 266n15; A. Dulles, "Jesus and Faith," in D. Kendall and S. T. Davis, eds., *The Convergence of Theology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001), 275-78.

²³ ST 3a. 10-12.

²⁴ See Allen, *The Christ's Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 41-3.

²⁵ ST 1a. 12. 1. Italics original. Also see ST 1a. 12. 2.

²⁶ See ST 1a. 3-11.

²⁷ See ST 1a. 1-11.

²⁸ ST 1a. 12. 1, reply.

²⁹ See *ibid.*

the source of this knowledge characterizes happiness and fulfillment.³⁰ True happiness occurs when one's mind reaches the zenith of its intellectual pursuit of understanding.³¹ This intellectual height entails knowledge of the source of one's being because intellectual understanding of causality (particularly final causality) lies at the heart of the development of the human mind.³² Based on these arguments, Aquinas finds the beatific vision to be a most logical doctrine.

Aquinas is, nonetheless, aware of the problem that his doctrine of beatific vision poses for knowledge or vision of the transcendent and infinite nature of the divine essence by finite human beings.³³ "But what is supremely knowable in itself, may not be knowable to a particular intellect, on account of the excess of the intelligible object about the intellect; as, for example, the sun, which is supremely visible, cannot be seen by the bat by reason of its excess of light."³⁴ Aquinas tackles this problem theologically and philosophically arising from finitude. Theologically, he says that the eschatological purpose of creation as attested in Scripture requires the beatific vision. "[I]f we suppose that the created intellect could never see God, it would either never attain to beatitude, or its beatitude would consist in something else beside God; which is opposed to faith."³⁵ Aquinas argues, further, that "there resides in every man a natural desire to know the cause of any effect which he sees; and thence arises wonder in men. But if the intellect of the rational creature could not reach so far as to the first cause of things, the natural desire would remain void."³⁶ Arguing from observation about human nature, Aquinas says that intellectual pursuits arise from questions of causality, while intellectual efforts culminate in an understanding of causes from top to bottom. As a result, the intellect by nature tends to pursue knowledge of final cause. In this way, Aquinas argues for the possibility of beatific vision by noting its fittingness with philosophical anthropology and Christian eschatology.

Aquinas, however, restricts the beatific vision in three ways: the particular manner in which it takes place; the occasion for its occurrence; and the degree to which it sees the essence of God.

a. The Limited the Manner in Which the Beatific Vision Occurs

Aquinas distinguishes the unmediated beatific vision from other human ways of knowing God that come by way of a finite "created likeness."³⁷ He claims that the way we see God is analogous to normal human sight.³⁸ "Therefore it must be said that to see the essence of God

³⁰ See *ibid.*

³¹ See *ST* 1a2ae. 3. 4.

³² See *ST* 1a2ae. 2. 8; 3. 8.

³³ See *ST* 1a. 3–11.

³⁴ *ST* 1a. 12. 1, reply.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ See *ST* 1a. 12. 2.

³⁸ Aquinas later expands his idea about the distinction between knowing by "created likeness" and by the "essence of

there is required some similitude in the visual faculty, namely, the light of glory strengthening the intellect to see God, which is spoken of in the Psalm (xxxv. 10). *In thy light we shall see light.*³⁹ Without rejecting the transcendence of God and the epistemological limitations resulting from God's immensity, Aquinas redefines human sight analogously, arguing that the beatific vision is a "likeness" of the ordinary power of sight.

Following the discussion of analogous sight with a redefinition of the faculty by which this sight comes, Aquinas asserts that corporeal eyes can only see corporeal things.⁴⁰ However, the beatific vision is, by definition, spiritual and non-corporeal. Therefore, the faculty by which one experiences the beatific vision is not the bodily eye but the mind (*solo intellectu*), for corporeal faculties can only attain corporeal results.⁴¹ Aquinas limits the occurrence of the beatific vision to life in the flesh (not by means of the flesh) and after the resurrection of the body.⁴² Scriptural support that he gives for the "mind's eye" can be found in Ephesians 1: 17, which states, "the eyes of your [mind] may be enlightened [by God]."⁴³ Aquinas thus limits the vision of God's essence to the mind's eye.

b. The Fitting Circumstance in which the Beatific Vision Occurs

Aquinas claims that because a human's "own natural power" cannot bring about the beatific vision,⁴⁴ the seer must "be separated from this mortal life"⁴⁵ either in actual death and resurrection or in removal from bodily constraints, such as ecstasy prior to death.⁴⁶ Aquinas thus relates beatific vision to the work of grace, not nature (*per gratium, et non per naturam*).⁴⁷

God itself." Cf. *ST* 1a. 12. 9. The knowledge of God granted to us in the Incarnation is of the first type; the Son of God truly reveals the Father by assuming a human nature (Jn 1: 18).

³⁹ *ST* 1a. 12. 2, reply. Italics original.

⁴⁰ See *ST* 1a. 12. 3, reply.

⁴¹ See *ibid.*

⁴² This is how Aquinas understands Job's words, "*In my flesh I shall see God my Saviour*" (Job 19: 26; 42: 5). See *ST* 1a. 12. 3, ad. 1.

⁴³ *ST* 1a. 12. 3, ad. 1. Aquinas also denies the role of the imagination as the faculty operating in the beatific vision because "the imagination receives some form representing God according to some mode of similitude; as in divine Scripture divine things are metaphorically described by means of sensible things." *ST* 1a. 12. 3, ad. 3.

⁴⁴ *ST* 1a. 12. 4, reply.

⁴⁵ *ST* 1a. 12. 11, reply.

⁴⁶ See *ST* 2a2ae. 180. 5, reply. Most will only see God's essence after being recreated anew with bodies that will not trouble their sight. "As God works miracles in corporeal things, so also He does supernatural wonders above the common order, raising the minds of some living in the flesh beyond the use of sense, even up to the vision of His own essence." *ST* 1a. 12. 11, ad. 2. Aquinas notes three degrees of such divine elevation: imaginatively comparing, acutely contemplating God from effects, and contemplating the "divine truth in its essence" as done by Moses and Paul. See *ST* 2a2ae. 175. 3, ad. 1. Aside from this ecstatic intervention whereby the body limits sight, humans cannot perceive the divine essence prior to their resurrection.

⁴⁷ See *ST* 1a. 12. 4.

However, he notes that grace cannot overcome nature,⁴⁸ for a “thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower” and, therefore, the limitations of the knower restrict the extent of its knowledge, that is, the way something is known depends on the way it exists.⁴⁹ God is infinite and simple, whose existence is what he is; humans are finite and complex and are of a nature that cannot exist except as instantiated in individual matter - all bodies are of this kind.⁵⁰ Aquinas applies a sharp limitation to this distinction when he states, “the mode anything’s being exceeds the mode of the knower, it must result that the knowledge of that object is above the nature of the knower.”⁵¹ Aquinas notes that “the created intellect cannot see the essence of God unless God by His grace unites Himself to the created intellect, as an object made intelligible to it.”⁵²

Aquinas then distinguishes between corporeal eyesight and the created mind. “The sense of sight, as being altogether material, cannot be raised up to immateriality.”⁵³ The ocular faculty entails no principle of abstraction by which it can “know abstractly what it knows concretely.”⁵⁴ In other words, ocular sight cannot transcend what is material. The created mind, on the other hand, “is able to consider abstractedly what it knows concretely. Now, although it knows things which have a form residing in matter, still it resolves the composite into both of these elements; and it considers the form separately by itself.”⁵⁵ Aquinas thus characterizes the grasp of truths by way of form embedded in matter.⁵⁶ The mind may then abstract from matter to consider forms. “Since therefore the created intellect is naturally capable of apprehending the concrete form, and the concrete being abstractedly, by way of a kind of resolution of parts; it can by grace be raised up to know separate subsisting substance, and separate subsisting existence.”⁵⁷ By using the words “separate subsisting substance and separate subsisting existence,” Aquinas is referring to the essence of God. Aquinas thus emphasizes the priority of grace in perfecting nature, without supplanting creation and without neglecting the need for divine gifting.⁵⁸ Aquinas then clarifies this grace as “some supernatural disposition [which] should be added to the intellect in order that it may be raised up to such a great and sublime height,”⁵⁹ with what

⁴⁸ See *ST 2a2ae. 175. 5, ad. 2.*

⁴⁹ See *ST 1a. 12. 4, reply.*

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ST 1a. 12. 4, ad. 3.*

⁵⁶ Allen, *The Faith of Christ: A Dogmatic Account*, 48.

⁵⁷ *ST 1a. 12. 4, ad. 3.*

⁵⁸ “It belongs to the mode and worth of a man to be uplifted to the divine because man was created in the image of God. But as the divine goodness infinitely surpasses human capacities, man needs to be supernaturally helped to attain this good - and this takes place in any bestowal of grace. That a mind should be so uplifted by God is not against nature but about the capacities of nature.” *ST 2a2ae. 175. 1, ad. 2.*

⁵⁹ *ST 1a. 12. 5, reply.*

he refers to as “created light,” which he specifies it as a means “by which [God] is seen.”⁶⁰

c. The Degree of Seeing the Essence of God

In three ways, Aquinas restricts the doctrine of the beatific vision due to the limits of what it can grasp.

First, there is variegation of the beatific vision from person to person in its depth and clarity. “Of those who see the essence of God, one sees Him more perfectly than another... [because] one intellect will have a greater power or faculty to see God than another.”⁶¹ Aquinas considers the beatific vision to be the *principium* (the pathway and the end) of eternal life, hence the centrality of the beatific vision to his eschatology. His emphasis on the variability of the beatific vision, therefore, is due to the differences among humans, rather than “as if one had a more perfect similitude of God than another...”⁶² The differences among glorified humans relate to varying degrees of charity, “because where there is the greater charity, there is the more desire; and desire in a certain degree makes the one desiring apt and prepared to receive the object desired. Hence he who possesses the more charity, will see God the more perfectly, and will be the more beatified.”⁶³ In this way, Aquinas has carefully noted the way in which the “mode of knowing” the essence of God varies among glorified humans, without predicating error of any of the less perfect viewers of God’s essence.⁶⁴

Second, there is a qualitative limitation.⁶⁵ No created mind can enjoy comprehensive knowledge of the divine.⁶⁶ Something can be comprehended “strictly and properly” by being contained and, in “a broader sense,” by grasping onto something.⁶⁷ God may be grasped but never contained (Song of Songs 3: 4). Human vision of God cannot attain “that perfect mode of the knowledge of the divine intellect whereof it is intrinsically incapable” insofar as “the created light of glory received into any created intellect cannot be infinite...”⁶⁸ This limitation applies to the way in which God, not merely some portion of God, is known.

Third, the created mind does not see everything in what God does or can do.⁶⁹ “For it is manifest that things are seen in God as they are in Him.”⁷⁰ All created things reside in God as effects, and knowledge of effects is limited by the comprehension of the cause (God). Humans,

⁶⁰ *ST* 1a. 12. 5, ad. 2.

⁶¹ *ST* 1a. 12. 6, reply. For Aquinas, egalitarian views of the beatific vision relate to the equity of eternal life generally. “If therefore all saw the essence of God equally, all would be equal in eternal life.” *ST* 1a. 12. 6, reply.

⁶² *ST* 1a. 12. 6, reply; *ST* 1a. 12. 6, ad. 3.

⁶³ *ST* 1a. 12. 6, reply.

⁶⁴ See *ST* 1a. 12. 6, ad. 2.

⁶⁵ “[H]e who sees God’s essence, sees in Him that He exists infinitely, and is infinitely knowable; nevertheless, this infinite mode does not extend to enable the knower to know infinitely...” *ST* 1a. 12.7, ad. 3.

⁶⁶ See *ST* 1a. 12. 7, reply.

⁶⁷ *ST* 1a. 12. 7, ad. 1.

⁶⁸ *ST* 1a. 12. 7, reply.

⁶⁹ See *ST* 1a. 12. 8, reply.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

not knowing God comprehensively, cannot know all creaturely effects. “[T]he more perfectly a cause is seen, the more of its effects can be seen in it” depending on the variegated nature of the beatific vision.⁷¹ The depth of one’s understanding of God’s essence directly relates to the extent of one’s knowledge of created effects.

To sum up what has been said so far, by limiting the beatific vision to resurrected life, Aquinas accentuates the eschatological character of this epistemic category.⁷² A human cannot see the essence of God in mortal life unless that person’s soul is released either in ecstasy or in death and resurrection. Most will only see God’s essence after being recreated anew with bodies that will not trouble their sight of God. However, some minds may be raised up by God to see him in this life.⁷³ For example, Paul’s enrapture to the “third heaven” can be read as a form of beatific ecstasy. Aquinas defines this knowledge as “one by the Spirit of God is uplifted to a supernatural level, with abstraction from the senses.”⁷⁴ Such abstraction is momentary in serving the mind of the human from any sensory or created intellection.⁷⁵ The soul is not separated from the body, but the body is rendered entirely passive.⁷⁶ The experience is distinct. Paul, for example, remembered the experience of God but could not express his knowledge in words.⁷⁷ Aside from this ecstatic intervention whereby the body’s physical sight is limited, humans cannot perceive the divine essence prior to resurrection.

2.2. Infused Knowledge

Christ’s human knowledge received certain graces because of its union with his divine nature. For Aquinas, Christ’s relationship with God was mediated by this union, yet his human nature must be considered as distinct from his divine nature.⁷⁸ Put differently, Aquinas allows for dogmatic emphasis on Christ’s humanity which is not separate but distinct from his divinity.⁷⁹ In two ways Aquinas attributed the mediation of omniscience to the human nature of Christ. One is that Christ was maximally graced with infused knowledge. The other is that Christ perpetually possessed the beatific vision.

Together with the knowledge of beatific vision, Aquinas asserted that Christ’s human knowledge included experiential knowledge, while embracing a specially infused knowledge.⁸⁰ According to Aquinas, experiential knowledge entails sensory acquisition of knowledge. Now, while infused and beatific knowledge may interfere with progressive growth in experiential

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² See *ST* 1a. 12. 11; 2a2ae. 180. 5.

⁷³ See *ST* 1a. 12. 11, ad. 2.

⁷⁴ *ST* 2a2ae. 175. 1, reply.

⁷⁵ *ST* 2a2ae. 175. 3, ad. 3; 2a2ae. 175. 5, reply.

⁷⁶ *ST* 2a2ae. 175. 5, reply.

⁷⁷ *ST* 2a2ae. 175. 4.

⁷⁸ See Moloney, “Approaches to Christ’s Knowledge in the Patristic Era,” 63nn67–68.

⁷⁹ See, Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 38.

⁸⁰ *ST* 3a. 10–12.

knowledge, experiential knowledge does not interfere with the exercise of faith.⁸¹ Every human learns by way of sensory experience and is only hindered from the exercise of faith if the experientially acquired knowledge is identical to the content of faith. Lack of immediate possession of full experiential knowledge does not inhibit someone from exercising faith. As a result, it is futile to discuss the role of experiential knowledge in the life of Christ so as to deny his faith.

Infused knowledge results from God's gracious act of granting understanding in a manner different from that of progression of sensory experience. By dividing the mind's operation into active and passive principles, Aquinas distinguished between two manners of natural knowledge.

The mind learns actively by way of experientially acquiring knowledge from particular sensory perception. In this case, the active exercise of the mind is limited by the bodily, created, and sinfully soiled actions of the individual. Progress, therefore, in this experiential knowledge comes slowly and fragmentally.

On the other hand, the mind learns passively by infusion or endowment which supplants the standard gradual attempts to actualize the potencies of the mind. Passive knowledge is very important insofar as it makes up the difference. In Aquinas' words, "... the passive intellect of man is in potentiality to all intelligible things; and it is reduced to act by intelligible species, which are its complete forms...."⁸² God provides the "intelligible species" which complement the passive potency of the mind's grasp of reality in its particularities. According to Aquinas, this divine gift has been given to the angels and befits Christ as well.⁸³

2.3. Christ's Perpetual Possession of the Beatific Vision

Aquinas believed that Christ enjoyed perpetual possession of the beatific vision throughout his earthly life, beginning from his very conception.⁸⁴ He first stated that Christ possessed the beatific vision.⁸⁵ But each of the three objections that Aquinas raised to this thesis⁸⁶ amounted to one primary objection that Christ being God, had no need to participate in the Triune God's life by means of the beatific vision. In this sense, it is fitting that Aquinas addressed the beatific vision prior to infused knowledge, for Christ's enjoyment of the beatific vision seemed the most crucial for Aquinas. Only after demonstrating the most exalted human knowledge, the beatific, did Aquinas suggest that Christ also enjoyed other means of human knowledge.⁸⁷

According to Aquinas, Christ's having beatific vision was necessary due to his causative

⁸¹ See *ST* 3a. 9. 4, ad. 2-3.

⁸² *ST* 3a. 9. 3, reply.

⁸³ See *ST* 1a. 58. 6.

⁸⁴ See *ST* 3a. 9. 2.

⁸⁵ See *ST* 3a. 9. 2.

⁸⁶ First, because Christ is substantially God, he need not participate in God beatifically. Second, because Christ enjoys beatitude by hypostatic union with God, he need not have enjoyed this by means of (created) knowledge. Third, because Christ has superior knowledge, he would not need supernatural knowledge. See *ST* 3a. 9. 2, ad. 1-3.

⁸⁷ See *ST* 3a. 9. 3-4.

function toward the redeemed saints.⁸⁸ This follows from the principle, “What is in potentiality is reduced to act by what is in act; for that whereby things are heated must itself be hot.”⁸⁹ By citing Hebrews 2: 10, Aquinas demonstrated that humanity’s perfection comes to pass by means of the elevation of humanity through and because of Christ. Christ’s humanity, therefore, must be perfect if it is to activate the participation of other humans, since the “cause ought always to be more efficacious than the effect.”⁹⁰ Having defined the supernatural perfection, beatitude, as the intellectual vision of the divine essence, the beatific vision must be possessed by Christ and extended to other humans.⁹¹

Christ’s actual vision of the divine essence does not follow that known by other humans because Christ is a unique human. With regard to this, Aquinas speaks of three pertinent qualities held by Christ: full beatific knowledge, clear knowledge, and the perpetuity of this vision during his earthly life.

First, Christ knew all things (all actual particulars in the world) in his knowledge of the divine essence, contrary to the typically limited nature of beatific knowledge previously described in *ST* 1a. 12. 8.⁹² This knowledge extends from universal causality to personal intuition and thoughts, all of which Christ must have known in order to function as Lord and Judge of all because “the soul of Christ knows infinite things in the Word, for it knows... all that is in the power of the creature.”⁹³ Christ’s knowledge must therefore extend to all things due to his ontological lordship over all and his coming judgment of all persons. So, “Christ knows all things in the Word... in any way whatsoever is, will be, or was done, said, or thought, by whomsoever and at any time.”⁹⁴ However, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only” (Mt 24: 36) contradicts such a claim of omniscience in the Incarnate Son of God. Aquinas settles the matter of this seeming ignorance of Christ regarding eschatology by rendering the term “know” to “make known” publicly the days and times of coming events which Christ did not do.⁹⁵ Christ knew all things insofar as they all relate to him as sustaining Lord and coming Judge.

Second, Christ possessed greater clarity of the beatific vision⁹⁶ than other humans.⁹⁷ Hence, “there cannot be a greater grace than the grace of Christ with respect to the union with the Word.”⁹⁸ Though all the blessed see the divine essence by means of their participation in the Word, the depth of this vision varies as does the intensity of the fellowship between the seer

⁸⁸ See *ST* 3a. 9. 2, reply.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ On the place of the beatific vision within supernatural perfection, see *ST* 1a2ae. 3. 4.

⁹² See *ST* 3a. 10. 2.

⁹³ *ST* 3a. 10. 3, reply.

⁹⁴ *ST* 3a. 10. 2, reply.

⁹⁵ *ST* 3a. 10. 2, ad. 1.

⁹⁶ See *ST* 3a. 10. 4.

⁹⁷ See *ST* 3a. 10. 2, ad. 3.

⁹⁸ *ST* 3a. 10. 4, ad. 3.

and the Word.⁹⁹ Because of Jesus' hypostatic union with the Word, his vision through the Word entails an unparalleled richness in comparison to the fellowship with the Word by others. Aquinas articulates this qualitative superiority in terms of metaphysical nearness and moral habitude, namely, Christ is superior to other humans as the Word of God because of his virtuous perfection. "[I]n this way, the soul of Christ, which is filled with a more abundant light, knows the Divine Essence more perfectly than to the other blessed, although all see the Divine Essence in itself."¹⁰⁰

Third, Christ possessed the beatific vision from his conception.¹⁰¹ The guiding principle here is of Christological dignity, namely, Christ did not receive any grace which did not immediately result in activity.¹⁰² Given that Christ would not leave any grace as it was, any grace equivalent to or beyond that of the blessed seers would, therefore, lead to activity of such equivalence or superiority.¹⁰³ Aquinas finds such superior grace gifted on Christ in John 3: 34. Therefore, Christ must be blessed beyond the most magnanimous grace of the blessed seers and this limitless grace must be actualized immediately.

By affirming Augustine's maxim "*Whatsoever comprehends itself is finite to itself*"¹⁰⁴ and, therefore, by noting the futility of seeking to comprehend what is infinite,¹⁰⁵ Aquinas claims that Christ's knowledge of the divine essence nowise comprehends God.¹⁰⁶ The ontological claim that Aquinas makes of Augustine's other claim - that the Word of God did not cease to govern the universe in taking human nature into the Son of God's own person¹⁰⁷ - entails an epistemic corollary that the same way "the soul of Christ sees the whole Essence of God, yet does not comprehend It."¹⁰⁸ The gracing of the Son of God's human nature entails perfection of its finite form. Hence, Jesus did not humanly comprehend the divine essence.

Christ was both a sojourner and a beholder.¹⁰⁹ The oddity of being both is that the sojourner travels, while the blessed have already arrived.¹¹⁰ To avoid the incoherency that results from applying both these predicates to one and the same person,¹¹¹ Aquinas considered Christ a beholder in his soul, that is, he saw God perfectly in his soul and thereby enjoyed beatitude.¹¹² Yet, Christ did not enjoy complete beatitude insofar as "His soul was passible, and His body

⁹⁹ See *ST* 3a. 10. 4, reply.

¹⁰⁰ *ST* 3a. 10. 4, ad. 1.

¹⁰¹ See *ST* 3a. 34. 4.

¹⁰² See *ST* 3a. 34. 3, reply.

¹⁰³ See *ST* 3a. 34. 4, reply.

¹⁰⁴ *ST* 3a. 10. 1, reply. Italics original.

¹⁰⁵ See *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ See *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ See *ST* 3a. 10. 1, ad. 1.

¹⁰⁸ *ST* 3a. 10. 1, ad. 2.

¹⁰⁹ See *ST* 3a. 15. 10.

¹¹⁰ See *ST* 3a. 15. 10, ad. 1.

¹¹¹ See *ibid.*

¹¹² See *ST* 3a. 15. 10, reply.

both passible and mortal....”¹¹³ This means that certain aspects of Christ’s person were not yet glorified, though he enjoyed the vision of God which represented the perfection of soul and mind, even from his conception. Aquinas here privileged Christ’s intellect as the main opening to beatitude. The perfection of the mental soul leads to real beatitude, even if it occurs in one liable to frailty, suffering and death. “Beatitude principally and properly belongs to the soul with regard to the mind, yet secondarily and, so to say, instrumentally, bodily goods are required for beatitude....”¹¹⁴ Allen characterizes this in the most fitting way saying, “Christ’s body was wayfaring, whereas Christ’s mental soul was a beholder”¹¹⁵ This summarizes Aquinas’ account of Christ’s possession of the beatific vision which he perpetually enjoyed because of the immeasured grace bestowed on him by the Father.¹¹⁶ Aquinas thus upheld Christ’s possession of omniscience even while incarnate.

3. Theological Difficulties

There are some notable theological difficulties with Aquinas’ thesis that Christ had no faith because his human knowledge embraced the beatific vision and infused knowledge. I categorize these problems as dogmatic and liturgical.¹¹⁷

3.1. Dogmatic Problem

The Chalcedonian Creed defines Christ as “truly man composed of rational soul and body.”¹¹⁸ It also teaches that “the character proper to each of the two natures [human and divine] was preserved as they came together in one Person and one hypostasis.”¹¹⁹ So, if Christ in his human mind perpetually knew God immediately and beatifically, the dogmatic belief of Christ’s true human nature is at stake because such beatific knowledge makes him superhuman.

As a result, the authenticity of Christ’s corporeal suffering on the cross becomes suspect.¹²⁰ Christ’s real bodily suffering becomes like a “show” on his part. Any genuine suffering by

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ See *ST* 3a. 15. 10, ad. 2.

¹¹⁵ Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 54.

¹¹⁶ Allen notes that this vision is mitigated only in theory by certain aspects of embodiment which Aquinas does not theoretically account for in his broader theology. See Allen, *The Christ’s Faith: A Dogmatic Account*, 54.

¹¹⁷ O’Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 266–74; O’Collins and Kendall, “The Faith of Jesus,” 407–23.

¹¹⁸ Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, # 301.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., # 302.

¹²⁰ For the problem of Jesus suffering on the cross while simultaneously enjoying the beatific vision, see Ludwig Ott, *Fundamental of Catholic Dogma: A One-Volume Encyclopedia of the Doctrines of the Catholic Church, showing their Sources in Scripture and Tradition and their Definitions by Popes and Councils*, ed. James Canon Bastible and trans. Patrick Lynch (Charlotte, North Carolina: Tan Books, 1974), 164.

Christ who throughout his life on earth remained obedient and loyal to his Father despite trials and temptations (Mk 1: 12–13; Lk 22: 28; Heb 2: 18; 4: 15) becomes questionable.¹²¹ The free operation of Christ's human will becomes doubtful because Aquinas claims that such beatific knowledge included a comprehensive knowledge of all creatures and all they do, whether in the past, present, or future. This sort of knowledge is irreconcilable with the genuine status of Christ's human knowledge, for human knowledge grows and develops through experience but always remains limited, belonging as it does to the nature of humans (Mk 5: 30–32; 13: 32).¹²² Exercise of freedom in this life requires limited knowledge and some uncertainties about the future.

The ontological fact of the hypostatic union does not necessarily imply something special about Christ's degree of human knowledge, let alone something unique like the beatific vision. In Christ, being, consciousness, and knowledge are intimately linked. From its very beginning, Christ's human nature had the unique, ontological status of being hypostatically united to the Word of God. Yet, the Council of Chalcedon insisted that Christ's human nature preserved the character proper to it. This should make one cautious about attributing special properties (that is, extraordinary knowledge of the beatific vision enjoyed by the saints in heaven after they have completed their earthly pilgrimage) to Christ's human mind while on earth.

The 1918 Decree of the Holy Office responded to the question of "the soul of Christ" enjoying the beatific vision perpetually as follows: "It is not certain that there was in the soul of Christ, while he was living among men, the knowledge possessed by the blessed or those who have the beatific vision."¹²³ This suggests that the earthly Christ had the same kind of knowledge which the blessed have in heaven, which casts doubt on his authentic humanity, as declared by the Council of Chalcedon. In its three Christological documents of 1979, 1981, and 1985 that deal with Christ's human consciousness and knowledge, the International Theological Commission never asserted that the earthly Christ ever possessed an immediate, beatific vision of God. Nor was there in them any mention of infused knowledge. Christ's human mind and knowledge were maintained and not made superhuman through the hypostatic union. So, the comprehensive knowledge, which Aquinas believes belongs to the beatific vision would lift Christ's knowledge beyond the normal limits of human knowledge. This casts serious doubts on the genuineness of his humanity.

While recognizing in Christ an immediate, primordial awareness of his divine identity and unique relationship to the God whom he called "Abba," what was implied for the human knowledge of the eternal Word in taking a human nature as the second principle activity must be insisted and upheld. Inasmuch as and as long as the Logos acted through a human nature in his earthly life, the Logos acted through a nature limited in knowledge. If not, the genuine status of that human nature would be suspect, and Christ would not have been "truly" human as precisely defined by the Council of Chalcedon. Otherwise, the salvific acts of Christ would become meaningless because he saved us in and through his human nature.

¹²¹ See O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, 266–67.

¹²² See *ibid.*, 267; Raymond Brown, *Jesus: God and Man* (NY: Macmillan, 1967).

¹²³ Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, # 3645.

3.2. Liturgical Problem

In their writings, theologians who engage themselves with the phrase “the faith of Christ” assert either the need of appropriating this faith or participating in it. Morna D. Hooker understands this phrase “the faith of Christ,” “as a concentric expression, which begins, always, from the faith of Christ himself, but which includes, necessarily, the answering faith of believers, who claim that faith as their own”¹²⁴ Harold W. Attridge, speaking of Hebrews 12: 2, feels that what is perfected in sharing in Christ’s faith is that faith itself.¹²⁵ Not only is Christ the perfect and adequate model of what life under the New Covenant involves, but the faith which Christ inaugurates is “the fidelity and trust that he himself exhibited in a fully adequate way and that his followers are called upon to share.”¹²⁶ Joachim Gnllka notes that Jesus’ statement to the father of the epileptic boy “All things are possible to him who believes” (Mk 9: 23) was an invitation to share in his faith.¹²⁷ O’Collins and Kendall also refer to several scriptural texts that show Jesus speaking about faith as an insider (Mk 9: 19; Mt 6: 30; 7: 7–12; 8: 26; 14: 31; 17: 20; Lk 11: 9–13; 12: 28). Thus, Jesus’ faith in God showed itself through the life of prayer that he assiduously practiced (Mk 1: 35; 6: 46; 14: 12–26; 32–42; Mt 11: 25; Lk 3: 21). Thus, Jesus can be seen as one who knew personally what the life of faith is like. Furthermore, he now wants to share his faith with others (2 Cor 4: 13).¹²⁸

A. T. Hanson suggests that Paul’s statement, “since we have the same spirit of faith as he had” (2 Cor 4: 13), shows that we share in Christ’s own spirit of faith.¹²⁹ For his part, Edward J. Kilmartin claims that the faith of Christ oriented to the Father is, by nature, personal, unique, and individual. This is a faith that reflects Christ’s intimate relationship with the Father, whom he called “Abba.” This faith of Christ himself belongs to the mystery of God in Christ, for it is the embodiment of the covenant of humanity with the Father.¹³⁰ Hence, no one can directly participate in the faith of Christ for it is, by definition, incomunicable due to its unique nature. At the same time, Kilmartin suggests that believers can participate “in the Spirit of the faith of Christ.”¹³¹

The Holy Spirit, given to the disciples as the Spirit of Christ’s faith, is the mediation through which believers participate in the covenant.¹³² This Spirit gives to the disciples the ability to participation by faith in the New Covenant reenacted in the liturgical celebration.¹³³ At the same

¹²⁴ Morna D. Hooker, “Pistis Christou,” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 341.

¹²⁵ See Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 356.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ O’Collins and Kendall, “The Faith of Jesus,” 416–17.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 417.

¹²⁹ A. T. Hanson, *Studies in Paul’s Technique and Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 17–8, 213. Also see A. T. Hanson, *The Pioneer Ministry* (London: SCM, 1961), 76–8.

¹³⁰ See Edward J. Kilmartin, “The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology: Towards the Third Millennium,” *Theological Studies* 55 (1994): 454.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 457.

¹³² Edward J. Kilmartin, “Sacraments as Liturgy of the Church,” *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 542.

¹³³ Edward J. Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 358.

time, the Spirit, the content of Christ's faith, gives believers a share of both Christ's experience of being uniquely loved by the Father and his sacrificial attitudes of response to the Father's love.¹³⁴ "In this way, the Spirit brings human persons into the covenantal relationship of divine self-communication and human self-offering established in Jesus' own life of faith and sealed with his death on the cross. In the Spirit of Christ's faith, the disciples are able to love the Father as Christ loves the Father, that is, by loving their neighbors in total self-offering because of their overwhelming experience of being loved by the Father."¹³⁵

The faith of Christ thus provides an important theological element in understanding what the Second Vatican Council taught about active liturgical participation. It is for this reason that the sacraments are called "The Sacraments of the New Covenant"¹³⁶ or "Sacraments of faith" because they not only presuppose faith in Christ, they also "nourish, strengthen, and express" the faith of believers in the faith of Christ.¹³⁷

The notion of Christ's sonship is crucial for understanding what his faith or faithfulness means. In essence, it refers to Christ's filial obedience to God the Father's will for him, particularly in offering his life on the cross. That is, Christ's faith in or faithfulness to God the Father was embodied in his self-giving love for all human beings. Christ's faith or faithfulness, first and foremost, points to his relationship as Son to God the Father who acts through him to bring about salvation.

The New Covenant between God and the world is a covenant of divine self-communication, embodied in the hypostatic union of humanity and divinity in Christ. Christ himself is the substantial covenant between God and humanity. The embodiment of the covenant - both the divine offer and the human response in Christ - was completed in time and space. This covenant is renewed whenever the Eucharist is celebrated. Believers can enter this covenant by sharing in Christ's covenant faith.¹³⁸ If Christ had no faith, liturgical participation of the kind described above would become impossible.

Conclusion

In and through the hypostatic union, Christ maintained his human mind and knowledge. However, Aquinas' claim that Christ's comprehensive grasp of all things belongs to the beatific vision would lift his knowledge beyond the normal limits of human knowledge as to cast

¹³⁴ See *Ibid.*, 357–58.

¹³⁵ Jerome M. Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ: The Holy Spirit and Liturgical Memory in the Thought of Edward. J. Kilmartin* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 135.

¹³⁶ Ott, *Fundamental of Catholic Dogma: A One-Volume Encyclopedia of the Doctrines of the Catholic Church, showing their Sources in Scripture and Tradition and their Definitions by Popes and Councils*, 326.

¹³⁷ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2014), # 59.

¹³⁸ See Hall, *We Have the Mind of Christ: The Holy Spirit and Liturgical Memory in the Thought of Edward. J. Kilmartin*, 134.

serious doubts on the genuineness of his humanity, and, as a result, be a rejection of his faith. As was argued in this article, there is no clear obligation to reendorse Aquinas' view that during his earthly existence Christ enjoyed the beatific vision. Nor was it necessary that his unique personal dignity as the Son of God and his mission to redeem the world to require such extraordinary knowledge.