

- (2) He briefly discusses the role and use of principles in moral reasoning and discernment (284–85). I wonder whether his approach would allow us to rethink their role in moral discernment, maybe with even greater attention to the common good.
- (3) T. ends with a discussion of the ecclesial and social dimensions of moral life. In both cases, an expanded attention to varied contexts, approaches, and authors around the world could confirm the complexity of the hermeneutical task and emphasize the relational dimension of the moral agent.
- (4) Finally, T. refers to highly debated ethical issues—e.g., euthanasia (86), racism (274), and abortion (369)—to exemplify his hermeneutical approach. Expanding on these references would greatly enrich the current theological discourse on these issues.

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CHRIST AND SPIRITUALITY IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. By Jean-Pierre Torrell. Translated from the French by Bernhard Blankenhorn. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2011. Pp. xxiii + 265. \$24.95.

Torrell is well known internationally for his writings on Thomas Aquinas. He joins past and present historical research with the theological insights of scholars ranging from Jean-Hervé Nicolas to Otto Pesch. This collection gathers essays from 1991 to 2004: one essay has been published in the United States but in French, while two have been published in a previous collection.

Around 15 years ago, T. drew together his research and reflection into a two-volume work that he referred to as an “initiation”—readers, however, might find it magisterial. Volume 1 was entitled *Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*; and volume 2, *Spiritual Master*. T. began the latter by noting that one would not immediately think of Aquinas as a spiritual director. Aware that medieval theologians do not expound distinct areas like spirituality first articulated in the years around the Council of Trent, T. wants to show that Aquinas can contribute to the topics of spirituality prominent from the 17th to the 20th centuries, and also that this medieval theology can be viewed today as a spirituality linking God and believers. T. is not writing about devotional attitudes or methods of prayer but about a presentation of Christian life whose sources are the Bible, liturgy, past theologians, and human wisdom. Aquinas’s theology of Christian life is realistic and creation affirming; it shows no fear or servitude; it is full of joy, focused on freedom and not on sin. This spirituality is in source and ground the missions of Word and Spirit in the lives of men and women.

A helpful “review” of this book is T.’s own preface where he gives the context, purpose, and basic insights of each essay. To turn to the nine essays, the first, second, and last are about Aquinas as a person. In what way is he a mystic, a holy person, a master of spirituality? There follow essays on Christian love as friendship with God, on prayer as the expression of the desire of the Christian, and on Aquinas’s interpretation of the biblical phrase of being conformed to Christ. There are then three essays on Christ: the role of Christ in Aquinas’s view of the spiritual life, the priesthood of Christ, and Christ as preacher. In some ways the book is about a single theme, spirituality, since Christ is present there as pedagogue and exemplar for the spirituality of Christians in various ministries and not as the subject of medieval Christology, a topic of other books by T.

The essays on spirituality, friendship, prayer, and mutual likeness are related to one another. The Holy Spirit is in us and we are in God. Prayer as desire and orientation is born by love in the mode of friendship; prayer is not a list of requests but a way of friends being with God. Revelation is God’s conversation with us.

The section on conformity elucidates Aquinas’s view of the economy of salvation personalized. Conformity to God and Jesus (related to covenant) means not imitative actions or obedience to Gospel stories but the depth of the life of the person. Conformity comes first from being the image of God in freedom and intellect, and then love brings further conformity, love (much more than being occasionally charitable) as an underlying orientation of the Christian. Conformity and friendship flow from the activity of the Trinity, for grace conforms the human being to God by the divine Persons being present in the human person. This happens not through a passing influence to do good or be moral, but by a lasting mission of Word and Spirit, a new way of being present in the gift of what we call “grace” or “charity.” Jesus enters as an example of living according to an orientation of love but also as the singular human being where incarnation brings mission and presence in a special way flowing out to the entire human race.

Access to Aquinas’s spirituality comes also through his pastoral theology: two essays give the university teacher’s look at the priest and the preacher. He was a keen judge of the effect of emotions and of the importance of good judgment. He is indignant at the injustices perpetrated on the poor by cheating shopkeepers or by unjust taxation. The ordinariness in his pastoral spirituality flows from Scripture, and he gently leads his hearers away from the miraculous and the theatrical.

T.’s studies here give not spirituality as words and images, methods and practices, but as a theology of the Trinity vitalizing the human person. Each is distinct and yet intimately cohesive, active yet grounded in a shared life.