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## *THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE* (EPH 1:5): THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THOMAS AQUINAS' SOTERIOLOGY

A reflection on human salvation, considering the long debates on this theme in the past and their repercussions, seems to be difficult and might be compared to entering dangerous territory. Our modern world, as Alasdair MacIntyre observes, resembles the situation after the explosion of an atomic bomb, the result of which is the fission of particles which earlier constituted an intuitive unity (*vide* “the fragmentation of ethical standards”). They cease to appeal through their coherence and cannot be put together like pieces of a puzzle. It is necessary to unite them again and create a coherent vision similar to the one presented by Thomas Aquinas. Remi Brague referring to this situation during Symposium Thomisticum in Paris in 2016 postulated the need to return to Thomas and the Middle Ages as a synthesis, but what is required is Aquinas *Aquinans*, *non Aquinatum*. It is not a simple concordism, but the art of creating the *ordo*. Not surprisingly, this is what Pope Francis postulates and it is similar to what Thomas suggested himself when writing his *Summa Theologiae* for beginners. Even the introduction, which criticizes “excessive overloading with useless questions [in theological books] ... [which] are not presented in a systematic way ... and frequent return to the same theme resulting in boredom of mind and confusion...”<sup>1</sup>) testifies to the *ordo* and *ordinatur* being more than a linguistic habit. This is the focus on fundamental concepts which help Christians understand their salvation and how to live it now. The essence of Aquinas' recipe is associated with the project of the *Summa*. However, in modern theology, and in soteriology in particular, there exists a specific patchwork; like the particles of MacIntyre's theory there are numerous terms which create arbitrary configurations of models, frequently deprived of coherence.

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<sup>1</sup> ST, Prol.

Therefore, one of the most fundamental challenges seems to be the restoration of the proper understanding of the relationship between salvation and time, especially the present (*status praesenti vitae*, as Aquinas would say), in relation to eternity, which Max Seckler describes as the “meantime.” Reflecting ironically on post-conciliar eschatology, which appears to be “anemic,”<sup>2</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar observes that “Catholic eschatology is temporarily closed down due to its reconstruction” as it must understand once again the meaning of the present. In the context of previous debates on the understanding of *meritum* in theology, there exists a strange paralysis of perceiving the relationship between time (“here” and “now”) and eternity (“then.”). Translated into the language of soteriological discourse, the question is whether we have already been saved and only have to wait until the end or whether “everything” will happen “later” and we are waiting now unable to dream of what is going to happen and what kind of reward we will receive for a “race” (where both “race” and “reward” are something radically different). St. Thomas seems to offer a different logic which is characteristically rendered by his term *inchoatio* (more meaningful than *initium*), namely the beginning, in which the whole is included (although virtually), and which should be led till the end, applying effort without losing the support of grace in this moral *agere*.

It appears impossible to practice Thomism differently than in a broad unity with all the treatises. The architecture of the “Summae” shows clearly that Thomas’ idea is a creative inclusion of tradition into his synthesis. Nevertheless, in certain historical circumstances, the division between Christology and soteriology has been created. However, this occurred after Thomas in the antipodes of his Christological thought which, similarly to the whole of Eastern theology, has recently revealed many “Greek” features of Thomas’ theology<sup>3</sup> and which does not separate Christ as the person from His work. This ‘isolationist tendency’ seems to be introduced by F. Melancton, which in its extreme form later led to the separation of “objective’ redemption from “subjective” reception of grace. That is why Weinandy warns us that “Aquinas’s Christology must never be seen in isolation from his soteriology. The reason why the Incarnation is fitting is that through it humankind’s salvation is assured. Aquinas repeatedly emphasized in his *Summa contra Gentiles* that the goal of the Incarnation and the redemptive acts of Jesus is our obtaining the beatific vision.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>J. HENTSCHEL, “Thomas Aquinas, 2 Corinthians 5 and the Christian Hope for Life after Death,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1 (2014): 63–80.

<sup>3</sup>D. GARLAND, “St. Thomas, Doctor graecus?: A Rapprochement Between Irenaeus and Aquinas on Salvation,” *Heythrop Journal* (2013), 10.1111/heyj.12047.

<sup>4</sup>Th. WEINANDY, “The Marvel of Incarnation,” in *Aquinas on Doctrine: a Critical Introduction*, ed. Th. Weinandy, D. Keating and J. Yocum (London-New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 85.

The *promotio in bono*, mentioned as the first argument *ex convenientia* for the Incarnation, only supports this logic.

In this article, I will try to place Aquinas' soteriology in relation to his interpretation of three Biblical texts: first his exposition of Ps 21 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?," which opens such an understanding of salvation that is expressed in the participation in the Passion of Christ and His merits (*merita Christi*) and the interpretation of the Letter to the Ephesians and the Letter to the Galatians. According to Thomas' method, they should not be interpreted in isolation as ghettoization of the texts is a very common temptation and that is why the analysis will be performed relying on Aquinas' systematic works, which offer a better understanding of Biblical texts. It is not possible to understand the *Summa* without this context, because it was not born in isolation, but its task is to order the scattered interpretation of Scripture and to solve exegetic dilemmas. Thomas clearly implies this form of reading (numerous hermeneutic procedures testify to it<sup>5</sup>) as he frequently returns to this type of interpretation.

Thus the three texts will be interpreted by relying on Thomistic soteriology; for Thomas, the act of salvation signifies the inclusion in Christ as through Him man can experience true freedom, which is expressed in a new *conversatio* between God and man. The term *conversatio* is something more than a talk, it is a mutual presence, lifestyle, solidarity and sharing. Thomas devotes the whole article in *Tertia Pars* to the *conversatio* of Jesus (q. 40), which becomes an example of human moral action. However, this is a secondary element of the logic of soteriological discourse, in which *gratia capitis* is given to the other members.<sup>6</sup>

The aim of this article is to show the participatory nature of soteriology of Thomas. First, I intend to indicate (1) the central role of the Passion of Christ in Aquinas' theory of salvation, from which our salvation begins. It will be an opportunity to draw attention to the significance of the term *inchoatio*. Next, (2) the distinction between the *pignus* and *arra* will be analyzed together with its consequences in Christian life understood as belonging to the "members of God's household" and "fellow citizens with saints." In the final part of the article the understanding of faith as the "beginning of eternal life" according to Aquinas will be presented.

<sup>5</sup> On the Biblical hermeneutics of Aquinas see P. ROSZAK, J. VIJGEN. *Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas. Hermeneutical Tools, Theological Questions and New Perspectives* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> *In II Thes.*, cap. I, lect. 2: "...vel glorificari in sanctis eius, qui sunt membra sua, in quibus habitat, et in quibus glorificatur, quando sua gloria, scilicet capitis, derivatur usque ad sua membra". Unless otherwise noted, all citations from the commentaries of Aquinas to *Corpus Paulinum* are taken from the translations of The Aquinas Institute, WY.

I. WHEN DOES OUR SALVATION BEGIN?  
THE PASSION OF CHRIST AND HIS MERITS

Recently, Mark Jordan in his book *Teaching Bodies* suggests reading the *Summa Theologica* “from the end” starting from the question of the sacraments and Christology, thus beginning with the conviction that man is a sacramental being and requires a “bodily” means of communication. To explain the meaning of the moral effort of Christians, Jordan introduces the term “belatedness.”<sup>7</sup> Speaking of “belatedness” or “belated” he has in mind the anteriority of Revelation as we are always “after it” (also in theology), whereas anticipation directs us ‘towards God.’ Thus “prefiguration” makes sense if we know *figuration*, whereas the *consummatio* throws light on *inchoatio*. In the case of human salvation, the situation is unique: now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see truly in glory. But what is the significance of time until *consummatio*?

It is worth beginning the analysis by understanding the central role of the Passion of Christ thanks to which *sacramenta Passionis Christi* are accomplished as they are the application of the fruit of the Passion to our Christian life.

*1.1 The locus of our Salvation: the Passion of Christ and its fruits*

In *Super Psalmos* Thomas indicates five psalms which predict the Passion of Jesus, namely 21, 34, 54, 68 and 58. However, Psalm 21 is the first and the longest of all.

And this on account of the five wounds of Christ: or because of the five outpourings of his blood. And there is one manner of proceeding in all of these, because they begin in lamentation, and end in the salvation of the people, since from the passion was accomplished the salvation of all men.<sup>8</sup>

What does the commentary reveal on the salvation of men through the Passion of Christ?

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<sup>7</sup>M. JORDAN, *Teaching Bodies. Moral Formation in the Summa of Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).

<sup>8</sup>*In Ps.*, 21, n. 1: “Sciendum est autem quod quinque Psalmi agunt de passione Christi prolix: quorum iste Psalmus primus est. Alii enim brevius tangunt passionem Christi. Secundus est, judica Domine nocentes me, Ps. 34. Tertius est, ibi, exaudi Deus orationem meam, et ne despexeris deprecationem meam. Quartus, Ps. 68: salvum me fac Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquae. Quintus, Ps. 108: Deus laudem meam ne tacueris. Et hoc propter quinque plagas Christi: vel propter quinque effusiones sanguinis. Et unus est modus procedendi in omnibus, quia incipiunt a gemitu, et terminantur in salutem populorum: quia ex passione facta est salus omnibus hominibus.” [emphasis added]

On the one hand, Thomas explains the fruitfulness of “outpouring” which is seen in Ps 21 “like water I am poured out” (*sicut aqua effusus sum*). This comparison with water is to illustrate the wish of the oppressors who wanted to wipe out the memory of Christ and his work. If you pour oil into a vessel, some part of it stays there; if you pour wine, the smell remains but the liquid disappears. Water, however, also has a “cleansing” function. In the same way as the Passion of Christ cleanses us of our sins, water “irrigates and leads to the production of fruit” (*rigat et facit fructificare*); the Passion of Christ *fructificat vitae aeternae*. In this context, it is worth looking at Thomas’ distinction of the “two-fold salvation” referring to the motif of the right and left hand:

duplex est salus Dei. Una scilicet sinistra, qua salvat in temporalibus, bona temporalia largiendo: Ps. 48: *homines et jumenta salvabis Domine*. Alia est salus dexterarum, quae est aeternorum, qua salvat justos, dona tribuendo: Sap. 10: *reddidit Deus mercedem laborum sanctorum suorum*.<sup>9</sup>

However, Thomas does not finish his explanation: he observes that what is hard must melt under the influence of heat and lose its “hardness” so that it can be shaped and this is accomplished through love. The Passion of Christ through the abundance and heat of love melts evil so that fruit-bearing could be effective.

From the perspective of *Super Psalmos* the salvation of man is linked with the idea of Christ’s merits, which are communicated to man through the sacraments, included in the Mystical Body of Christ, thanks to which it is possible to fulfill “the law and the temple.”<sup>10</sup> The merits of Christ, as Aquinas explains in *Tertia Pars* (qq. 48–49) encompass the pardoning of sins, justification and glorification (*glorificatio*), which were served by Christ as the Head for all the members of His Body: *passio Christi efficienter causat salutem humanam*.

The key term to understand the causality of the Passion is Christ’s grace which opens the participation in the merits of His Passion for the faithful. This is an indication of what the members of the mystical Body of Christ participate in. As Thomas himself admits, the Passion of Christ is a “common cause” of salvation and the sacraments are instrumental, particular causes through which these merits are administered to the faithful (therefore sacraments are the highest form of moral life on earth which succumbs in the face of *visio beatifica*). If the aim of a moral life is attaining eternal life (which is one of the conditions of a happy

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<sup>9</sup> *In Ps.*, 19, n. 5. See also parallel distinction between *salus universalis* and *salus particularis* in *In Ioan.*, cap. VII, lect. 1. All Latin citations from Aquinas’ works are taken from the *Corpus Thomisticum* ed. Enrique Alarcón.

<sup>10</sup> M. LEVERING, *Christ’s Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

life), then the proportional possibility of approaching this aim is possible thanks to the Passion of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, Thomas notices the predictions of Christ's death in the Old Testament prefigurations, particularly in the events of the life of King David or the persecuted in the Old Testament. Thomas' perspective focuses on God's glory and the recognition of His coming close to man: the initiative of endowment comes from God who, in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, gives the "proof" of His love.<sup>12</sup> This is how terms applied by Thomas such as the *argumentum* or *manifestum* of divine love which saves man should be interpreted. Christ gives Himself into the hands of man,<sup>13</sup> it is his voluntary decision and through it his sacrifice unifies people with God. Such is the meaning of sacrifice: it unites those who offer it and does not consist in the physical annihilation of food alone. In light of this, commenting on the Letter to the Galatians St. Thomas can call the Cross not only the fulfillment of the Law but above all "the art of good life" (*ars bene vivendi*),<sup>14</sup> as it is the sign of friendship and love which determine good life. The point is to lead a life which is profoundly "Eucharistic" based on the thanksgiving for love expressed by Christ on the Cross that unites people thanks to the "holy exchange" (*admirabile commercium*), on which the classical concept of friendship is founded with the *communicatio* being its essential component.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion, St. Thomas views salvation from the perspective of participation as the grace itself is participation in the divine nature.<sup>16</sup> Salvation being the result of the Passion of Christ is already the share of the baptized. The statement of Psalm 4:7: *signatum est super nos lumen [...] tui*, reveals the meanders of Aquinas' exegesis and transmits the logic that something has already started.<sup>17</sup> It is interesting that Thomas, in explaining this verse of the psalm, also refers to the "seal" from Song 8:6 (*pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum*), which apart

<sup>11</sup>T. HARMON, "The Sacramental Consummation of the Moral Life According to St. Thomas Aquinas," *New Blackfriars* 91 (2009): 476.

<sup>12</sup>This endowment is a frequent motif in Aquinas' Commentary on the *Corpus Paulinum* where he pays a particular attention to the various benefits promised to the faithful, whether fulfilled or imparted, whether *in specialis* or *in generali*, etc.

<sup>13</sup>*In Ps.*, 3, n.3; *In Ps.*, 50, n.5.

<sup>14</sup>*In Gal.*, cap. VI, lect. 4: "Nam in cruce est perfectio totius legis, et tota ars bene vivendi".

<sup>15</sup>P. ROSZAK, "O kulturze przyjaźni z perspektywy Tomasza z Akwinu i M. Ricciego," in *O przyjaźni. II Dysputy Nawarryjskie*, ed. P. ROSZAK, P. ORŁOWSKI, (Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Toruń 2015), 55–72.

<sup>16</sup>M. EITENMILLER, "Grace as Participation according to Thomas Aquinas," *New Blackfriars* (2016), DOI:10.1111/nbfr.12154.

<sup>17</sup>P. ROSZAK, *The Place and Function of Biblical Citation in Thomas Aquinas' Exegesis*, in *Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas. Hermeneutical Tools, Theological Questions and New Perspectives*, ed. P. ROSZAK, J. VIJGEN, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 115–139.

from *Super Psalmos* appears four times in his works, but always in the Christological context.<sup>18</sup> It is the invisible seal of baptism which cannot be rubbed away but should influence our everyday life and awaken the cooled-down love. As a consequence, salvation is a continuous reception of Christ's form which is distorted by sin.

### 1.2. *Inchoatio* — something more than the “beginning”

In classical publications on the understanding of history by Aquinas, written by Max Seckler or Jean-Pierre Torrell OP amongst others, attention is drawn to the “ontological inclusion” underpinning Thomas' reflection. It concerns a specific perception of time which somehow anticipates where the past and present tenses are included and treated as completed or “perfected.”<sup>19</sup> The famous expression *fides implicite* (implicit faith) proves this manner of thinking and Thomas applies it to characters from the Old Testament who had implicit faith in Christ (*fides Mediatoris*)<sup>20</sup>. That is why Thomas can say that circumcision was in some way an expression of faith in Christ.<sup>21</sup> This logic is supported by the term *inchoatio*, which should be translated as something more than the “beginning” as it implies some “granting” or “imparting,” which connotes “complement” by definition. It is rightly associated with the term *anticipatio*, which expresses an imperfect form of participation “here and now” and will be completed in a perfect way later. It is not surprising that Thomas speaks of *inchoatio seu participatio*.<sup>22</sup> It signifies that something has already started, it is an ongoing process, and the emphasis is not on the unspecified preparations which may not result in anything. Therefore, in the Commentary on Psalm 4, Thomas states that “for holy persons all such blessings are here and obtained from the Lord God, and will be blessings perfected within heaven.”<sup>23</sup> It is linked with the state of grace as *participatio*, which

<sup>18</sup> *In Io.*, cap. III, lect.6; *In Gal.*, cap. III, lect. 1; *In Is.*, cap. 57; *In II Cor.*, cap. I, lect. 5.

<sup>19</sup> That is why, “disruptions” in perceiving time should not be surprising; past perfect (not to mention the present tense) becomes future. In the context of the High Priestly Prayer of Christ from Jn 17:4 where before His Passion, Jesus said that he “had finished” the work of the Father, Thomas emphasizes this grammatical nuance which explains the category of *inchoatum*. See *In Ioan.*, cap. XVII, lect. 1: “Utitur praeterito pro futuro, scilicet clarificavi idest, clarificabo; et consummavi, idest consummabo: et hoc, quia iam inchoatum erat, et iterum quia imminebat hora passionis, quando hoc opus consummatum est.”

<sup>20</sup> See T.J. WHITE, *The Incarnate Lord. A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington: CUA Press, 2015), 395–405.

<sup>21</sup> *S. Th.*, III, q. 70, a. 2c.

<sup>22</sup> *S. Th.*, I–II, q. 66, a. 5, ad 2.

<sup>23</sup> *In Ps.* 4, n. 7: “Quarto ex quiete a labore conquirendi; unde dicit, *et requiescam*. Et hoc potest esse etiam hic in praesenti vita secundum inchoationem; quia sancti omnia ista habent hic aequaliter in Deo; sed haec omnia perfecte erunt in patria”.

is between destiny and the state of glory and Thomas describes it as the *inchoatio gloriae*. What is happening now in terms of salvation is a pursuit of perfection, the revealing of what is hidden.<sup>24</sup> is thus in the dialectics of fulfillment, initiated like a chain reaction, but might be interrupted by sin.<sup>25</sup>

The logic of *inchoatio*, which is subordinated to the *consummatio* and makes sense in relation to this completion being its function, is a frequent feature of Aquinas' Biblical commentaries. *Inchoatio* is synonymous with a hopeful completion of the process, the beginning of everything here on earth, the happiness of the blessed starts here, observes Thomas interpreting Ps 32 and in the future it will be *perficiendam*.<sup>26</sup> Paying attention to the logic of the discourse, Thomas compares *inchoatio* to *consummatio*, as imperfect to perfect,<sup>27</sup> and not as the beginning (in which there is nothing) to the end. It is the process of leading to completion, the shaping of the desire during the prayer, which is *interpret desiderii* and accomplishes the good, which surpasses the possibilities of waiting by the created nature.<sup>28</sup> The passage from Aquinas' commentary on the Gospel of John based on the question of whether saints can ask for something in the glory (Jn 16) demonstrates how the reflection on the beginning which can be viewed in the perspective of the end shaped Thomas' thinking:

The time of glory can be considered in two ways: the time of the beginning of glory, and the time of its full completion. The time of the beginning of glory lasts until the day of judgment: for the saints receive glory in their soul, but something still remains to be received, that is, the glory of the body for each one, and the completion of the number of the elect. ... The time of fully complete glory is after the day of judgment...<sup>29</sup>

To illustrate his thought process, Thomas applies the metaphor of the flower and its fruit, to which he refers in his commentary to the Galatians *in flore est quaedam inchoatio fructus* and this "here" *inchoatio beatitudinis* is included in virtuous acts, which becomes complete when knowing and love are perfected (*perficientur* — again it is an indication of the process of perfection which is characteristic of the way from *inchoatio* to *consummatio*).<sup>30</sup> This is similar to the

<sup>24</sup> *In Ps.* 30, n. 16. *Inchoatio*

<sup>25</sup> *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 3. It is worth stressing that for St. Thomas although the inclination towards good is not a perfect virtue, it is, nevertheless, the *inchoatio* of virtue.

<sup>26</sup> *In Ps.* 32, n. 11.

<sup>27</sup> *In Matt.*, cap. XIX, lect. 1: "Quidam igitur habent vitam inchoatam et imperfectam, ut iusti in hoc mundo; illi vero perfectam, qui iam sunt in vita aeterna".

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *In Ioan.*, cap. IV, lect. 2: "for grace is not given to anyone without their asking and desiring it. ... In fact, desire is so important that even the Son himself is told to ask: 'Ask me, and I will give to you' (Ps 2:8)."

<sup>29</sup> *In Ioan.*, cap. XVI, lect. 6.

<sup>30</sup> *In Gal.*, cap. V, lect. 6.



anticipation of the divine filiation; reading the Letter to the Romans, Thomas analyses why St. Paul writes that he waits for it if we have already received it through the Holy Spirit that justified a certain beginning (*inchoata est huiusmodi*, as Thomas observes). What Paul expects is the *completio*,<sup>31</sup> which starts here: *haec gloria, quae in futuro in nobis complebitur, interim nunc in nobis inchoatur per spem*,<sup>32</sup> as “for in hope we were saved” (Rom 8:24). It is inscribed in the conviction that eternity is not the state of above-grace because it is grace that constitutes a “new creation” as *esse gratiae* which outlines the new framework of existence. Grace signifies a new birth into “the inheritance that is imperishable” (1 P 1:3).

Thus we come across one of the essential questions concerning Thomas' soteriology, namely why salvation has not happened at the beginning of the times or at the end times but in the “fullness of time.” If Christ's event is definite, why is there a delay when it comes to the *consummatio*? Aquinas provides two arguments: *propagatio Evangelii* and the growth of the Church.<sup>33</sup> In fact, what is important is that Christ is to be the *principium*, the source of perfection of all. On the one hand, the sense of time towards the *consummatio mundi* is associated not so much with an objective proclamation of news about Christ but the effect of preaching.<sup>34</sup> This *cum pleno effectu* indicates its existence in each generation, both in a chronological and ethnological sense. The completion of it is the second reason indicated by Thomas and emphasized by Max Seckler, namely the existence of creatures endowed with reason, which refers to Thomas' understanding of history as a process of positive duplication. It is part of Thomas' teaching on “the end of the world” viewed from the perspective of the completion of the number of the chosen ones and realization of divine plan in history.<sup>35</sup> M. Seckler stresses that salvation for Thomas is not understood as an “escape from history” (even if following his metaphor it refers to the eternal granaries in which the harvest of history is gathered<sup>36</sup> and history should be perceived as something temporary) but the redemption of history itself. The point is to refer everything to Christ who is the first example and the source. This is the dynamics of moving from what is hidden to the aim which is fully revealed.

<sup>31</sup> *In Rom.*, cap. VIII, lect. 5.

<sup>32</sup> *In Rom.*, cap. V, lect. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *S. Th.*, III, q. 1, a. 6.

<sup>34</sup> *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 106, a. 4, ad 4.

<sup>35</sup> M. SECKLER, *Zbawienie w historii. Teologia historii w nauce św. Tomasza z Akwinu* (Fundacja Dominikańskie Studium Filozofii i Teologii: Kraków, 2015), 361.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* See also M. Przanowski, „Zbawienie według św. Tomasza z Akwinu,” *Bobolanum* 3 (2014): 5–21.

In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, St. Thomas already wrote that the state of grace is *inchoatio gloriae*,<sup>37</sup> applying a suggestive comparison between the heat and fire as the disposition in its perfect state somehow “touches” or “reaches” what it is disposed to *per quamdam inchoationem*. He referred to the relation between a contemplative and active life being against their division:

sicut patet de calore et forma ignis; quia quando calor completus est in termino alterationis, forma ignis inducitur, et calor simul cum forma ignis manet; dum vero erat alteratio, non erat forma ignis, nisi secundum quamdam inchoationem.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. A DEPOSIT (PLEDGE) OR AN EARNEST: *pignus* OR *arra*

Let us move on to the second source on which our analysis is based, namely the commentary on the Letters of St. Paul, especially the expression *pignus haereditatis* from the Letter to the Ephesians (1:14) “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession of [God], unto the praise of his glory” (*qui est pignus haereditatis nostrae in redemptionem acquisitionis in laudem gloriae ipsius.*) However, I shall begin with the *haereditatis* instead of the *pignus*.

The idea of “inheritance,”<sup>39</sup> which has been lost by man through sin and restored by Christ, evokes the *firma possessio* present in *Super Psalmos*.<sup>40</sup> This inheritance is not “earned” but “given.” The ontology of donation is visible in Aquinas’ works and constitutes the basic grammar of his theological discourse. Given by the Father, this inheritance is the good we do not claim and cannot be bought but is received by us. In *Iob* 27, Aquinas says that the creation of the world means that we receive “part of the inheritance” (*pars haereditatis*), namely worldly and spiritual goods.<sup>41</sup> It does not concern the purely material account as for Thomas “inheritance” signifies, above all, entering family relations, belonging to a family and at the same time the theme of adopted sonship.

<sup>37</sup> *In Ps.* 30, n. 16.

<sup>38</sup> *In III Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 3c.

<sup>39</sup> *In Ps.* 15, n. 5.

<sup>40</sup> *In Iob*, cap. 31.

<sup>41</sup> *In Iob*, cap. 27: “Est autem considerandum quod cum Deus sit creator omnium et gubernator, omnes ab eo suscipiunt aliquid quasi hereditatem suam a patre: mali autem homines quasi suam partem et suam hereditatem a Deo accipiunt bona temporalia huius mundi, unde ex eorum persona dicitur *haec est pars nostra et haec est sors*, e contrario autem boni percipiunt quasi suam partem et hereditatem spiritualia bona...”.

### 2.1. *Pignus as the guarantee of possessio*

In his commentary on Ephesians, reflecting on the role of the Holy Spirit and our justification St. Thomas observes that St. Paul provides three expressions to describe the Holy Spirit: it is the sign, the spirit of promise and “the earnest of our inheritance” (*pignus haereditatis nostrae*). In his exegetic practice Aquinas frequently analyses different variants of the text, introducing them through the *alia littera* formula and this time deriving inspiration from a *Gloss* he considers two variants which are synonymous but carry different content. The term *pignus* has legal connotations and indicates the certainty of the promise of inheritance, the sense of security of the one who borrows and will not be disappointed as the contract will be fulfilled until the end, which in our language is close to the idea of “deposit.” Fr. Przanowski OP indicates this in his paper concerning the antiphon *O Sacrum Convivium* analyzing both terms in the Eucharistic context.<sup>42</sup>

Thus *pignus* understood in this way differs from the object in place of which it is given (*pignus est aliud a re pro qua datur*).<sup>43</sup> However, for Thomas, the term *arra* seems to be more accurate to describe the situation of a just man who has already experienced salvation. This term indicates some kind of pledge which is not returned since it is a partial payment of the price itself, which is not to be withdrawn but completed (*non est auferendum, sed complendum*). That is why this experience of love communicated through the Holy Spirit, love-*caritas*, which signifies some form of *unio*, is a deposit referring to a “certain individual and imperfect participation” in the divine *caritas* and *dilectio* (love), which will be brought to perfection (*perficienda*) and not replaced with something radically different. Thomas, who rarely rejects the views of other authors but always distinguishes possible interpretations, observes that *pignus* might be used as a proper term as long as it refers to something that will not last on account of their imperfection such as faith or hope. “Hence, the Spirit is called an earnest (*arra*) in reference to what will remain, and a pledge (*pignus*) with respect to what will be done away with.”<sup>44</sup>

However, it is necessary to be careful and avoid “part-whole” way of thinking in this context: God gives Himself fully although our capabilities are imperfect and we are unable to receive the whole gift, to use Thomas’ metaphor about the eagle’s eyes that would grasp it better than our eyes.<sup>45</sup> Eternal life, namely our

<sup>42</sup> See M. Przanowski, “Eucharystia — ‘zadatek przyszłej chwały’ (*pignus futurae gloriae*),” in *A świątyni w nim nie dojrzałem... Liturgia i eschatologia*, ed. K. Porosło, (Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów, Tyniec 2012), 83–91.

<sup>43</sup> *In Eph.*, cap. I, lect. 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *In Eph.*, cap. V, lect. 3: “For example, if the light of the sun were as small as a point, the

inheritance, is based on enjoying the presence of God which depends on the quality of knowing. It is unclear, *aenigmat* now, whereas in heaven, it will be perfected although not such as God's; we shall know God *totum* but not *totaliter*. It means that the process of salvation of man is, above all, a progress in knowing and not something radically different. From a soteriological perspective, moral life will be an opening of man to a more profound *fruitio Dei*.<sup>46</sup>

It is not such that the inheritance — the presence of the Holy Spirit — is something new which appears suddenly. Thomas says that “at all times there have been some persons belonging to the New Testament.”<sup>47</sup> The work of the Holy Spirit is inscribed, as M. Levering observes,<sup>48</sup> in the beginning of the Kingdom of God, which is initiated in us through grace and the new dwelling of God in us and directs us towards eschatological fullness. In his Commentary on the Sentences, when discussing temporary origin of the Holy Spirit, Thomas pays attention to this aspect of the gift of the Holy Spirit which is not only a new relation between the creation and the Creator, but His ownership.<sup>49</sup>

Once again referring to a *pignus*, Thomas emphasizes “the sealing” (“configuration to likeness” as he explains in the *Summa contra Gentiles*) of the Holy Spirit in us which indicates a particular “direction” of man as “we are ordered (*ordinamur*) to the heavenly inheritance, and this is perfect beatitude.”<sup>50</sup> But again, it does not mean a distant promise that we will receive something one day, but potentiality which is realized through moral life influenced by grace.

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human eye could perceive the whole of it, although not fully, whereas the eagle's eye would grasp it totally.”

<sup>46</sup>Ibid: “Haereditas nostra consistit in fruitione Dei, nunc autem Deus aliter se fruitur, et nos eo; quia Deus seipso perfecte fruitur, quia seipsum perfecte cognoscit et totaliter diligit quantum cognoscibilis et diligibilis est. Non autem sic nos, quia licet ipsum perfecte cognoscamus in patria, et per consequens diligamus, quia qui aliquid simplex attingit, ipsum totum cognoscit, etsi non totaliter, sicut lux solis si esset punctalis, humanus oculus ipsam totam apprehenderet, non totaliter, oculus vero aquilae ipsam totaliter comprehenderet.”

<sup>47</sup>*S. Th.*, I–II, q. 106, a. 4, ad 2.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. M. LEVERING, *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 239. He observes that the Church is not so much identical to the Kingdom of God as she inaugurates it (41).

<sup>49</sup>*In I Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 2. “Ad secundum dicendum, quod in processione Spiritus, secundum quod hic loquimur, prout scilicet claudit in se dationem Spiritus sancti, non sufficit quod sit nova relatio, qualiscumque est, creaturae ad Deum: sed oportet quod referatur in ipsum sicut ad habitum: quia quod datur alicui habetur aliquo modo ab illo. Persona autem divina non potest haberi a nobis nisi vel ad fructum perfectum, et sic habetur per donum gloriae; aut secundum fructum imperfectum, et sic habetur per donum gratiae gratum facientis; vel potius sicut id per quod fruibili jungimur, in quantum ipsae personae divinae quadam sui sigillatione in animabus nostris relinquunt quaedam dona quibus formaliter fruimur, scilicet amore et sapientia; propter quod Spiritus sanctus dicitur esse pignus haereditatis nostrae.”

<sup>50</sup>*ScG* IV, cap. 21 n. 6.

On the basis of the dispute with Joachim of Fiore and his “seventh age,” Thomas demonstrates that the time of the New Law in which Christ’s grace is identified with the work of the Holy Spirit in us is *aequalis gloriae in virtute*, is “equal” to glory virtually.<sup>51</sup> This is how Thomas describes it in the *Summa Theologiae* in the context of his reflections on “merit”:

The grace of the Holy Ghost which we have at present, although unequal to glory in act, is equal to it virtually as the seed of a tree, wherein the whole tree is virtually. So likewise by grace of the Holy Ghost dwells in man; and He is a sufficient cause of life everlasting; hence, 2 Cor. 1:22, He is called the “pledge” of our inheritance.<sup>52</sup>

For Thomas, the logic of “earnest” is also linked with the nature of desiring spiritual things. As temporal things to some extent produce a desire for more when possessed:

...while a spiritual thing when possessed takes away the thirst for other things, and causes us to thirst for it. ... a spiritual thing in not known unless it is possessed ... So, when it is not possessed, it does not produce a desire; but once it is possessed and known, then it brings pleasure and produces desire, but not to possess something else. Yet, because it is imperfectly known on account of the deficiency of the one receiving it, it produces a desire in us to possess it perfectly.<sup>53</sup>

## 2.2. *What does the consummation consist of?*

S. Th. Pinckaers observes that the structure of the *Summa Theologica* itself seems to indicate that the moral life of Christians is directed towards the Christological-ecclesial-sacramental *consummatio*, namely its realization/completion or fulfillment. The term *consummatio* carries a reference to “being complete,” or perfected and constitutes a mode of Aquinas’ thought as it allows us to view the whole theology as a coherent project, in which particular events (also those originating from the Revelation) make sense in the context of the workings of the Logos. In *After writing C. Pickstock* remarks that medieval nominalism accentuating the primacy of being over existence and maintaining that the will does not have a direction (Thomas believed that the will shapes

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<sup>51</sup>O.H. PESCH, “Behold I am doing a new thing? History of Salvation and Historic Moments of Transition in Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther,” *Science et Esprit* 1 (2000): 130.

<sup>52</sup>*S. Th.*, I–II, q. 114, a. 3, ad 3. The quotations of the *Summa Theologiae* in English are taken from the translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger, 1948).

<sup>53</sup>*In Ioan.*, cap. IV, lect. 2.

nature and nature shapes the will), namely that it is deprived of teleology originating from nature, imposes somehow its will closing soteriological experience in temporality, in some form of quasi-eschatology.<sup>54</sup> There is no “completion” there, but a number of willings after which something radically new is accomplished. In the nominalist approach there is no *consummatio* or it stops half-way as the difference between nature and grace is unbridgeable. However, the quest for the *consummatio* constitutes the framework of Aquinas’ soteriology, which does not view the relation between nature and grace as a difference of degree or the logic of departure. For Thomas, grace is the *habitus*, which is intrinsically linked to nature.

The meaning of *consummatio* in soteriological reflection of Aquinas derives from the importance of the “purpose” of human act and from the theology of God’s image which delineates the direction of his reflection. Despite sin, this image remains stable and salvation is the development of its powers.<sup>55</sup> The realization or completion is expressed by Thomas in his Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians:

In this sense he affirms: I say that he has vivified us in hope, namely through Christ or in grace *that he might show in the ages to come*, that is, that he might bring to perfection in the next life, *the abundant riches of his grace*. Such an abundant grace with which, even in this world. He forgives many sins and confers the greatest of gifts, will superabound even more in the next life, since there it will be enjoyed unfailingly. *I have come that they might have a life*, namely, of grace, in this world, *and have it more abundantly* in the fatherland of glory (John 10:10).<sup>56</sup>

In this context it is worth returning to the non-accidental Biblical image of a garden cultivated by man, which renders the idea of spreading the divine work of creation to the whole universe in cooperation with man. By fulfilling this task, man prepares the earth for the definite eschatological presence of God expressed in the image of “the new heaven and the new earth” where God is all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). The seeing of God fulfills human longing but does not imply the devaluing of the present world. It is important to redeem in history and not

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<sup>54</sup>C. Pickstock interprets in a symbolical way the attitude of Socrates who “leaves the city,” seeing in it the disruption of closure in immanence. The author observes the same movement in Christian liturgy, especially in the Roman rite, which he discusses in detail in *After Writing*.

<sup>55</sup>I.A. MORALES, “Aquinas’s Christology of the Imago and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture,” *Nova et Vetera*. English Edition, 1 (2017): 161–184.

<sup>56</sup>*In Eph.*, cap. II, lect. 2: “Dicit ergo secundum hunc sensum: dico quod vivificavit nos in spe, scilicet per Christum, vel in gratia, *ut ostenderet in saeculis supervenientibus*, id est in alia vita completeret, *abundantes divitias gratiae suae*, id est abundantem gratiam, quam etiam in hoc mundo dum multa dimittit peccata et maxima dona concedit, dicit: quae quidem superabundat in vita alia, quia ibi indeficienter habetur.”

redeem from history, as Max Seckler puts it, as the importance of temporal life is seen very clearly. The memory of earthly events burdened with evil will be referred to the glory of God whose mercy is eternal. The understanding of worldly history and fulfillment of the deepest human longings will be the foundation of "the new heaven and the new earth," based on seeing God in the form of liturgical fulfillment in the hymn of glory and seeing God in everything.<sup>57</sup> This liturgical *consummatio* is essential for Christian hope and does not signify any "decreation,"<sup>58</sup> to use a term which appears frequently in some theological publications.

The logic of "earnest" is also rendered in Thomas' commentary on John 5:25 ("the hour is coming, and now is,") which reminds us that spiritual resurrection is happening *now* through faith and constitutes a part of the process of "completion" understood as the re-forming and is directed at changing our lowly body to be like His glorious body (Phil 3:21). Resurrection is thus a transformation and glorification of our "lowly" body. However, one more important dimension discussed by Thomas is hidden behind it, namely the social context which expresses the joy of resurrection associated with the completion of the number of saints in heaven.<sup>59</sup> Thus man is perfected in his individual nature but also in his relations. Undoubtedly, the anticipatory character of liturgy which prepares for the joy of eternal life is significant, whereas the notion of "perichoresis" is inscribed in the reflection of the "earnest."

Commenting on a well-known passage about "the pains of childbirth" from Rom 8 which refers to the logic of *consummatio* as a complete birth without stopping in the transitional form, Thomas understands the meaning of this in anticipation of the "completion," namely the adoption to sonship: "this adoption has begun by the Holy Spirit justifying the soul,"<sup>60</sup> so it is not something that will begin one day. This imparting of glory in the form of an earnest is associated with a certain "postponing" of its ultimate form but it exists *now* in justified people: "it is partially formed now with grace, but it is still, as it were, without form and awaits final form which comes through glory."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>I.A. MORALES, "With My Body I Thee worship': New Creation, Beatific Vision, and the Liturgical Consummation of All Things," *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (2016): 337–356.

<sup>58</sup>P. GRIFFITHS, *Decreation. The Last Things of All Creatures*, (Baylor TX: University Press, 2014).

<sup>59</sup>ST Suppl., q. 88, a. 1, ad 2. Cf. also *In Hebr.*, cap. XI, lect. 8, "the joy of man grows if he rejoices with others."

<sup>60</sup>*In Rom.*, cap. VIII, lect. 5.

<sup>61</sup>*In Rom.*, cap. VIII, lect. 4.

### 2.3. *Fellow citizens with saints and members of his household: unfinished participation*

The status of after Jesus' Passion signifies the initiated participation which awaits its completion together with the *consummatio* of the time. It is translated into the awareness of our belonging not only to the earthly existence but also to the ultimate realization of the Kingdom of God through the *inchoatio* of glory. From a soteriological perspective, two expressions are important, namely the people redeemed by Christ as the "citizens with God's people" and "members of his household" (Eph 2:19), which Thomas analyses in detail in his commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians.

Thomas' soteriology constantly refers to a "relational" quality and the categories of community. The salvation which is happening now, that we have already received and are trying to complete in our life is likened to Christ's Passion and communicating its effect sacramentally,<sup>62</sup> builds our identity expressed through our membership of the *ordo* of the saved in heaven ("God's people") and to God Himself to whom creation returns.

When commenting on these two expressions (*cives sanctorum* and *domestici Dei*), St. Thomas describes new mankind in two ways: as redeemed by Jesus and gathered in His Church constituting the family of God with the right to inheritance (Eph 1:8) and as a city. Both terms do not refer so much to spatial categories (the concept of citizenship seems to exceed it) but they acquire internal and external relations. This duplication of the description opens up a vision of the Church in which two relations are present: she is the city when it comes to the mutual (horizontal) relations of the faithful, the public acts, which, for Thomas, are the virtues of faith, hope and love (relational, participatory virtues). However, the notion of a "household" carries a reference to the superior, namely *ad rectorem*.<sup>63</sup>

The awareness of this belonging bears moral consequences: acting worthy of the heavenly vocation<sup>64</sup> serves as the main argument for justifying the existence of the infused moral virtues "whereby men behave well in respect of their being 'fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.'"<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *S. Th.*, III, q. 49, a. 3, ad 2: "in order to secure the effect of Christ's Passion, we must be likened unto Him."

<sup>63</sup> *In Eph.*, cap. II, lect. 6.: "A city possesses a political community, whereas a household has a domestic one, these differ in two respects. For those who belong to the domestic community share with one another private activities; but those belonging to the civil community have in common with one another public activities."

<sup>64</sup> *In Eph.*, cap. IV, lect. 1.

<sup>65</sup> *S. Th.*, I-II, q. 63, a. 4c: "Et per hunc etiam modum differunt specie virtutes morales infusae, per quas homines bene se habent in ordine ad hoc quod sint *cives sanctorum et domestici Dei*."



Developing the motif of virtues in *De virtutibus* Thomas refers again to Eph 2:19 emphasizing that

...a man's good insofar as he is a citizen is that he be ordered in all things according to the city, which is why the Philosopher says in *Politics* 3 that the virtue of man as a good man is not the same as the virtue of man as good citizen. But man is not only a citizen of the earthly city, but is also a participant in the heavenly city of Jerusalem whose ruler is the Lord and whose citizens are the angels and all the saints, whether they reign in glory and are at rest in the heaven or are still pilgrims on earth, according to what the Apostle says Ephesians 2:19, "You are citizens with the saints and members of God's household. A man's nature does not suffice for him to be a participant of this city; he must be elevated by the grace of God."<sup>66</sup>

Thomas sees the earthly city, the good of which is partaken by each citizen who possesses the requisite virtues allowing him to take part in it. Thus, participation in heavenly happiness is based on enjoying the presence of God which makes man "somehow" *cives et socius illius beatae societatis*. Infused virtues facilitate the common good of this community which is the divine good bringing happiness to man.<sup>67</sup> Participation in the city of God opens up important soteriological inspirations. This belonging to the Mystical Body of Christ, i.e. the Church, rests on the foundation which "grows out of earth upward towards heaven," whereas in case of the spiritual structure the situation is reversed:

The foundation of a spiritual edifice contrasts with that of a material building. For a material building rests on a foundation in the earth, and the more important the foundation is, the deeper must it be. A spiritual structure, on the other hand, has its foundation in heaven; as a result, the more principal the foundation, the higher it necessarily is. Thus we could imagine a city, as it were, coming down itself appearing to come downward towards us below, according to what is written: *I John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God* (Rev 21:2).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 9c: "Bonum autem hominis in quantum est civis, est ut ordinetur secundum civitatem quantum ad omnes: et propter hoc Philosophus dicit, III Politic., quod non est eadem virtus hominis in quantum est bonus et hominis in quantum est bonus civis. Homo autem non solum est civis terrenae civitatis, sed est particeps civitatis caelestis Ierusalem, cuius rector est Dominus, et cives angeli et Sancti omnes, sive regnent in gloria et quiescant in patria, sive adhuc peregrinentur in terris, secundum illud Apostoli, Ephes. II, 19: *estis cives Sanctorum, et domestici Dei*, etc. Ad hoc autem quod homo huius civitatis sit particeps, non sufficit sua natura, sed ad hoc elevatur per gratiam Dei."

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> *In Eph.*, cap. II, lect. 6.

The traces of Thomas' soteriology lead to a conviction which is crucial for experiencing faith, namely that it is not only the participation in the life of God but also in His nature making man *consors divinae naturae*. It is not dwelling in the city of God as He "may dwell in [our] hearts through faith; ...being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph 3:17).

### 3. FAITH AS THE BEGINNING OF ETERNAL LIFE

In this perspective it is not surprising that faith is described as the "beginning" of eternal life, namely the one which does not come "later." Faith (*habitus mentis*) opens access to the experience of eternity (as though *habitus* is drawing from the source).<sup>69</sup> It results from the fact that eternal life which "begins through faith and accomplishes its fullness in the future life"<sup>70</sup> is based on knowing God (cf. John 17:3). As Benedict XVI observes in *Spe salvi*, the dialogue during the celebration of baptism expresses it perfectly when the question is directed to parents: "What do you ask of God's church for your child?' The answer is "faith." In his works, Thomas frequently refers to a perception of faith as the beginning, especially explaining Hbr 11:1. He notices that faith is "the foundation of the whole building" (*fidem quae est fundamentum totius spiritualis aedificii*).

Understanding the "earnest" as *inchoatio* in his commentary on Ps 2 Thomas uses a metaphor which serves as an image of the present time. Man is like a vessel in the hands of a potter. When the potter's vessel is new, it is shattered easily on account of a defective form, and is restored to a good one. Thomas refers to this situation in the context of Psalm 2. The Jews had been converted as they believed in One God, and thus did not have to be broken into pieces (*confringendi*): they simply needed a certain correction which included the Trinitarian mystery. The entire life of man is based on acquiring a proper form which is preserved when it is placed in the oven, namely when it comes through the experience of death so that what has happened in the present should be shared in eternity.

<sup>69</sup> *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 4, a. 1, co; *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 2; *In Hebr.*, cap. XI, lect. 1 (where Thomas reflects on two lectures of the text, faith and *argumentum* or *convictum*).

<sup>70</sup> *In Symbolum Apostolorum*, prol.: "...per fidem inchoatur in nobis vita aeterna: nam vita aeterna nihil aliud est quam cognoscere Deum: unde dicit Dominus, Ioan. XVII, 3: *haec est vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te solum verum Deum*. Haec autem cognitio Dei incipit hic per fidem, sed perficitur in vita futura, in qua cognoscemus eum sicuti est: et ideo dicitur Hebr. XI, 1: *fides est substantia sperandarum rerum*." Cf. J. SALIJ, "Wiara jako początek życia wiecznego," *Teologia i Człowiek* 3 (2013): 67-75.

## CONCLUSIONS

The reflection on Thomas' soteriology from the perspective of an *earnest* allows us to understand key terms such as *satisfactio* which, as Stump remarks,<sup>71</sup> does not mean settling accounts but attuning a depraved will to *conformitas*. It is not about settling debts but restoring harmony. Disputes over legal language, especially in the context of the dialogue with Lutheranism, have been a significant contribution and revealed essential questions of Thomas' proposal. The sacrifice of Christ inaugurates God's glory on earth, the satisfaction/atonement of Christ allows the communication of divine goodness and is not a vindictive justice.

In the contemporary cosmivision, as it is emphasized by Mariano Artigas in *Mind of Universe*, the information and self-organization of matter play a fundamental role: some pieces of information are programmed earlier (such as DNA which determines behavior in different situations), but the rest is developed through a large number of possible types of behavior depending on circumstances. As with every analogy, this one is not entirely relevant, but we might say that a similar situation can be applied to salvation and its pledge which we experience in our life on earth. This is the image of God, the present likeness of the Creator, which through moral life is preserved like brushstrokes of impressionist paintings:<sup>72</sup> unclear lines mingle with each other and a clear vision is formed throughout our whole life.

Perhaps Nietzsche was right when he said that he would believe in salvation if Christians looked a little more like people who have been saved. We do not know if we have been half or three quarters saved but "the good work initiated in us" will be completed by God in cooperation with human freedom.<sup>73</sup>

Transl. Anna Olkiewicz-Mantilla

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<sup>71</sup>E. STUMP, *Atonement according do Aquinas*, in *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*, ed. T. MORIS, (Notre Dame 1988), 67–71.

<sup>72</sup>This image used by Thomas is drawn from the Gloss cf. *In Rom.*, cap. VIII, lect. IV (nr 659): "...as we say, the matter awaits a form or the colours await the completion."

<sup>73</sup>This article uses information gathered through the grant "Identity and Tradition. The Patristic Sources of Thomas Aquinas' Thought" (2017–2020) funded from the resources of National Science Center (NCN) in Poland, allotted following the decision no. DEC-2016/23/B/HS1/02679

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*THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE* (EPH 1:5):  
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OF THOMAS AQUINAS' SOTERIOLOGY

S U M M A R Y

From the perspective of Aquinas' Biblical commentaries, the article develops the reflection on *pignus / arra haereditatis* (Eph 1:5) seeing these essential elements of Thomas' reflection on salvation in the terminological question of which one is better: *pignus* or *arra*, namely the pledge or the earnest/deposit. Thomas develops soteriology, which indicates that human salvation starts “now” and not “later,” through the participation in the Passion of Christ and in His merits. Analyzing Aquinas' commentary on Ps 21, on the Letter to the Ephesians and on the Letter to the Galatians together with the themes of Christ's obedience and its soteriological significance as well as His wish of voluntary death for us, the article shows the Biblical roots of Thomas' soteriology. The author devotes particular attention to the analysis of the logic of *inchoatio* and *consummatio* in Thomas' soteriological grammar and his understanding of faith as the beginning of eternal life and the ensuing consequences.

KEYWORDS: salvation, history, participation, grace, Biblical Thomism, God's image

SŁOWA KLUCZE: zbawienie, historia, uczestnictwo, łaska, tomizm biblijny, obraz Boży