

## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ON JESUS, ST III Q 16-26

### CHRISTOLOGY

#### The Sanctification of the Virgin (Q 27)

- Sanctification in the womb
  - She should have been sanctified from the womb because she is the greatest follower of Christ
  - Since others (John the Baptist and Jeremiah) were sanctified in the womb, so much more so should she have been
- Sanctification with animation
  - One who is not rational cannot be sanctified
  - Sanctification regards the soul that then is communicated to the body
  - Mary incurred the stain of original sin and was then cleansed from it, like all other humans
- The inclination to sin was cleansed from Mary
  - Since the inclination to sin was not in Mary, nor was any disorder
  - The integration of integral nature must be said to be granted to Mary only after the conception of Christ; before that the inclination was kept under the control of grace
- She was preserved from all actual sin
- She was made full of grace due to her sanctification in the womb
- Jeremiah and John the Baptist were also sanctified in the womb, but no others
  - Mary's sanctification was continual, unlike Jeremiah and John the Baptist

#### The Virginity of the Mother of God (Q 28)

- Mary was a virgin
  - It affirms the dignity of the Father
  - It affirms the integrity of the Word in acting completely on the flesh
  - It affirms her sinlessness
  - It affirms its purpose, that all be born again of the Spirit
- She is a virgin in her birth (“a virgin will conceive and bear”)
  - Her body was not corrupted by her Son
  - Incarnation is to take away corruption, not cause it
  - Christ should not lessen the honor due his mother
  - It was a miraculous event
- She remained a virgin
  - This affirms Christ's perfection as only-begotten
  - The shrine of the Holy Spirit should not be defiled by intercourse
  - If not, it would suggest that Mary was ungrateful and wanted more sons
  - If not, it would suggest presumption in Joseph that he demanded intercourse
- Mary took a conditional vow of virginity that became absolute before the Annunciation

#### The Espousals of the Mother of God (Q 29)

- It was fitting that Mary be espoused
  - For Christ
    - So that he would not be taken to be illegitimate

- That his genealogy could be traced through the male line, as was the custom
- For the safety of the child
- So that he would be cared for by Joseph
- For Mary
  - So that she would be exempt from the punishment of the law
  - So that she would be safeguarded from ill fame
  - So that Joseph would take care of her
- For us
  - So that Joseph be a witness of Mary's virginity
  - So that the truth of Mary's words be strengthened
  - To not give justification to weak virgins
  - So that the Church be typified
  - So that both virginity and marriage are honored
  - So that belief would have greater merit
- Mary and Joseph had a true marriage because it was perfect in form (the inseparable union of souls in a bond of mutual affection) and perfect in the upbringing of children (Jesus)

### **The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin (Q 30)**

- It was necessary to announce the Annunciation to the Virgin
  - In order to maintain a becoming order
  - So that she might be a more certain witness
  - So that she might assent to the action, giving her gift of obedience to God
  - To show "a certain spiritual wedlock between the Son of God and human nature"
- The angel's announcement is fitting
  - This maintains the divine order
  - It restores the first sin by countering the example of the serpent
  - The angel parallels Mary's virginal state
- The bodily vision was fitting
  - Because of the content: incarnation
  - Because of the dignity of Mary
  - It was in accord with the certainty of the event
- The order was fitting
  - To draw attention to the momentous occasion
  - It provided instruction
  - It provided the occasion for consent

### **The Conception of the Savior's Body (Q 31)**

- Christ's flesh is derived from Adam
  - This is so that it could be cleansed
- He is born of the seed of David and Abraham
  - Because it was foretold
  - Because he is king, prophet and priest
  - To show that he came to the elect as well as those under the law
  - (Mary and Joseph were both of the house of David)
- The genealogy is suitable

- There are various theories on how to reconcile the discrepancies
- The most likely resolution is due to the inclusion of step-parents and the skipping of unfavorable generations
- It is fitting that he took his body from a woman
  - It ennobles both sexes
  - True incarnation is evident
  - It completes the variety of generation
- The flesh of Christ was from the same matter as all people (pure blood)
  - The active principle was divine
- Mary did not pass on a part of her body to Christ
  - Christ was therefore not tangibly in Adam (by signate matter)
  - Christ was in Adam by active principle, preparing humanity for the incarnation, not by a passive-material principle
  - Others were in Adam by seminal virtue
- Christ is related to Adam through the medium of Mary
  - Insofar as the body of Mary was in the patriarchs, it was subjected to sin
  - The entire flesh of the patriarchs was subjected to sin; there was no pure source of Christ found in bodies before him
- Christ did not pay tithes in Abraham because he did not need to be healed

### **The Active Principle of Conception (Q 32)**

- The accomplishment of the conception was due to the Spirit
  - It was the work of the Trinity, but not properly of the Father or the Son
  - This is fitting because divinization is the work of the Spirit
- He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
  - The Holy Spirit effects his bodily sanctification and his consubstantiality
- Fatherhood refers to his person and to his divine generation
  - Christ is not the Son of the Holy Spirit in his humanity
  - He is not called Son of God in respect to his humanity but his person
  - The Spirit brings forth sons in imperfect likeness
- Mary did not actively cooperate in the conception
  - The female is the passive agent in human conception and on the side of nature, the conception was natural

### **The Mode and Order of Christ's Conception (Q 33)**

- His body was completely formed at conception
  - The preparation and development took time
  - It was an ensouled body with then developed
- Animation happened at conception
  - Others require development before animation
- The flesh was assumed as it was created
- The conception is supernatural and miraculous as regards the active power

### **The Perfection of the Child Conceived (Q 34)**

- The human soul of Christ is sanctified from the moment of conception

- Sanctification is not necessarily from sin
- As perfect, he had free will at conception
  - Free will is perfection in act
- His movement of free will is toward God; this is perfectly meritorious from conception
- Christ received the knowledge of the beatific vision far more than any other, and this from the moment of his conception

### Christ's Nativity (Q 35)

- It is proper for Christ to be born because nativity regards the person, with the nature as its terminus
- Nature is the terminus of nativity, thus two births occur
- Since the human nature of Christ is from Mary and since she bore him, she is truly his mother
  - It is a natural maternity from her side
- There is one filiation in Christ in regard to his person, but two in regard to his Father and Mary
  - There are two acts of filiation, but one subject
  - The relationship to his mother is like the relation of God to creatures, which means that it is not a real relation but a relation of reason; it resides in his mother
- His mother did not suffer
  - Christ came from the closed womb of his mother; therefore, there was not the pain of opening it—there was no corruption—there was joy (Is 35:1-2)
  - The pains of childbirth result from the mingling of the sexes
  - The no pain is due because the conception was without sin
- His birth in Bethlehem shows his connection to David
  - This is because of David's birth
  - It is also fitting because Bethlehem means "house of bread"
  - It is also fitting because it was not the home of his parents, thus he was without a home
- The time of Christ's birth is fitting because he chose it
  - The submission to the Romans shows the freedom he brings
  - It was a unique time of peace that also showed his meaning
  - The time of year is also a sign of his being the light of the world
  - Birth in winter shows his sharing in our suffering

### The Manifestation of the Newly Born Christ (Q 36)

- Christ's birth should not have been known to all
  - It would have taken away people's willingness to crucify him
  - It would have lessened the merit of faith
  - It would have made people doubt his human nature
  - *The last is the key to interpreting the first two*
- It should have been known to some