

VATICAN II AND THE CHURCH'S  
"OPENNESS TO THE WORLD":  
CASTING A WIDER NET  
THROUGH THE STILL  
NARROW GATE

• Margaret H. McCarthy •

"Having received the revelation of the Mystery for which the world was made, but does not yet possess, the Church bears a responsibility for the world."

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*Introduction*

It is well known that the relation between the Church and the world was at the heart of the Second Vatican Council's concerns, and that the renewal of that relation would come in terms of the Church's "openness to the world." Such "openness" often, and rightly, entailed the assessment of certain specific problems which the Church faced *ad extra*, so to speak, in its encounter with modernity, especially where modern science, technology, and the modern state were concerned.<sup>1</sup> There was, however, a more basic question about this Church-world relation, also prompted by new problems *ad extra*, which required the Church to think anew about

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<sup>1</sup>*Gaudium et spes* [GS], 54.

the relation *tout court*. We refer, of course, to the phenomenon of modern atheism which in large part drove the final “schema” of what then Fr. Ratzinger called “one of the most important pronouncements of Vatican II,”<sup>2</sup> *Gaudium et spes*.<sup>3</sup> That phenomenon, as authors of the final draft would note, had a decidedly humanistic character to it and thus offered a fruitful “point of contact,” however much this point of contact was its most virulent point (reasons for which many, understandably, wanted to offer a simple condemnation).<sup>4</sup> It would be on account of the very nature of this atheism, and its central concern about “alienation,”<sup>5</sup> that the question about the Church’s “openness” to the world would be met in the most radical way. More than showing that there was no conflict—that the Church was not “closed” to the world—the council would have to confirm, in a way unintended by the fathers of modern atheism, that the question of the non-existence or existence of God was the question of the non-existence or existence of man, and of his world.

We are well aware of how the council fathers took up this challenge *christologically*, in that famous text which followed immediately upon the discussion of the Church’s strongest critics: “only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light.”<sup>6</sup> It was this solution to which Ratzinger would refer when he wrote in his commentary of the Pastoral Constitution:

In answer to the denial of God for the sake of man, the Church professes its faith in the God who became man. To alleged self-projection of man, which is said to create God, it opposes the

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<sup>2</sup>Joseph Ratzinger, “The Dignity of the Human Person,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5, trans. W. J. O’Hara (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1969), 145.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Moeller wrote: “As regards atheism, it was considered that the schema as a whole would itself constitute an answer” (“History of the Constitution,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5, trans. W. J. O’Hara [Freiburg: Herder, 1969], 62).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Ratzinger, “The Dignity of the Human Person,” 146.

<sup>5</sup>Henri de Lubac masterfully set forth this *humanist* atheism in his book *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995).

<sup>6</sup>GS, 22.

God who empties himself of what belongs to him in order to lead man to what is most his own.<sup>7</sup>

In this text, which the future Polish pope would identify as the “key point in the council’s thought,”<sup>8</sup> we are arguably at the heart of the Church’s desire of “openness to the world.” Any “razing of bastions,” through a broadening of horizons (at all levels, whether intra-ecclesial, ecumenical, inter-religious, or simply worldly)—through *aggiornamento*—would be no less fixed on that specifically Christian element, its “narrow gate,” so to speak: *extra ecclesia nulla salus!*<sup>9</sup> It alone, paradoxically, was both worthy and capable of being translated believably to the world, for every time and every place. The “opening” would require then a deepening of what was most peculiar to the Church, a “discernment of what is Christian” (as Guardini put it).

Here one might ask just how open that peculiarity of Christianity—that thing which “leads man to what is most his own,”—can be. If it were merely a “crowning conclusion,” so to speak—to use the expression Ratzinger employs disparagingly in his commentary of the text<sup>10</sup> and other, more recent commentators,

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<sup>7</sup>Ratzinger, “The Dignity of the Human Person,” 146.

<sup>8</sup>Karol Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 75.

<sup>9</sup>This formula, found in *Lumen gentium* [LG], 14, is, of course, an extension of the doctrine of the *unicity* of Jesus Christ (LG, 8) and of the paschal mystery (GS, 22). This has been reiterated emphatically more recently in *Dominus Iesus*, 13–15.

<sup>10</sup>Ratzinger, “The Dignity of the Human Person,” 119. Ratzinger’s critique of article 12 (on “man as the image of God”) is biting: “[t]he text was blamed for only apparently choosing a theological starting-point in the idea of man as the image of God, whereas in reality it still had a theistically-colored and to a large extent non-historical view” (120). “It was implicit in the logic of the starting-point, once this was chosen, that its authors wanted to introduce Christology at the end and were not ready to admit it here, even though it forces itself on the attention here as an indispensable component of a Christian anthropology. Consequently the perspective remained exclusively that of the theology of creation, but one which is not even adequate to the wealth of a Christian theology of creation, for this is only intelligible in eschatology; the Alpha is only truly to be understood in the light of the Omega. At bottom, the very verses of Ps. 8:5–7 quotes in the text should have prompted a widening of the perspective. These Old Testament statements about man were interpreted messianically within the Old Testament and then Christologically within the New Testament, so that the link between Adam and Christ, anthropology and Christology, presented itself here as quite

insistently<sup>11</sup>—how can it meet the very objection placed before it, that Christianity is a “flight from the world,” or a “doctrine of escape,” and, therefore, ultimately incapable of embracing human worldly existence? It would be difficult here to ignore the book that de Lubac, one of the key drafters of the section in question, wrote, leading up to the council. His *Catholicism* was precisely an attempt to answer this very objection.<sup>12</sup> In it, and at the core of his response, de Lubac set forth the distinctively historical character of Christianity whereby, in the culminating Event of the Incarnation (prepared for by the events in the history of Judaism) one could say that something truly new had been wrought in the world by God’s action in it—by his penetration of humanity in Jesus Christ—such that the course of history and the subject of it, the world and the humanity in it, could be said to have a new “ontological density.”<sup>13</sup>

But, again, what is the relation between this humanity-embracing novelty-in-time of the Christian event and everything that came before it (not to mention everything contemporaneous

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inescapable” (121). Likewise, and concerning the same text, Ratzinger wrote in 1966: “One can easily get the impression that the authors themselves saw the Christological and centrally Christian statements as only acceptable on faith, that they considered this world of faith a kind of second world alongside the first and immediate world of ordinary daily life” (*Theological Highlights of Vatican II* [New York: Paulist Press, 2009], 222).

<sup>11</sup>Cf. G. Mansini, “The Abiding Significance of de Lubac’s Surnaturel,” *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 593–619; R. Cessario, “Cardinal Cajetan and his Critics,” *Nova et Vetera* 3 (2005): 109–18; L. Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2010), 443–44; T. J. White, “The ‘Pure Nature’ of Christology: Human Nature and *Gaudium et Spes* 22,” *Nova et Vetera* (2010): 283–322.

<sup>12</sup>Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, trans. L. C. Sheppard (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1950).

<sup>13</sup>*Catholicism*, 70. De Lubac sets the Christian valorization of the historical in direct contrast to the “eternal return” of ancient mysticism in which “the unfolding of time is a development without substance, in which nothing changes because everything changes” (*Catholicism*, 69). Meditating on the novelty of Jesus Christ as “concrete historical norm,” Balthasar would present a masterful discussion of the new “ontological density” of history in *A Theology of History* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963). On this point see also J. Ratzinger’s commentary on *Dei Verbum*: “Revelation Itself,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), 172–73.

with it or after it which happens also to be in ignorance of it)? That is, just how open can the narrow gate of a particular moment in time be? It was precisely here that we see just what is so novel about the Christian novelty: Jesus is not only the only mediator but also the universal one, just as, by extension, his Church outside of which *nulla salus* is also "the universal sacrament of salvation."<sup>14</sup> De Lubac in his *Catholicism*, reminds us of the scandal of the Christian novelty of time to the pagans, in their objection: "If Christ is the only Savior, as his faithful people claim, why did he come so recently, leaving up till then so many men to be lost?"<sup>15</sup> To that objection, which we moderns know through Lessing,<sup>16</sup> de Lubac responds with Irenaeus who borrowed from his anti-Gnostic arsenal to argue that, though Christianity was new, it came "in the fulfillment of time," after a long *preparatio*,<sup>17</sup> and was not, therefore, a sudden improvisation, or a "strange star," so to speak.<sup>18</sup> The "Image that was shown" late in time, was the one "after whose image man was created," he had said famously.<sup>19</sup> Maximus, among others, would say the same thing, that what came "at the end of the ages" was the fulfillment of the plan of the Creator "before all ages."<sup>20</sup> It was this unity with the

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<sup>14</sup>LG, 48. See also the more recent *Dominus Iesus* on this point (13–15).

<sup>15</sup>de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 126.

<sup>16</sup>See X. Tilliette's discussion of Lessing's embarrassment over Christianity's historical events and witnesses to them ("Contingent historical truths can never be the proof of rational necessary truths," and Kierkegaard's rebuttal, in "Témoignage et vérité. Valeur et limites d'une philosophie du témoignage," in *Le Témoignage*, ed. E. Castelli (Paris: Aubier, 1972), 92–96.

<sup>17</sup>de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 127.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>19</sup>*Adversus haereses* V, 16, 2: "In times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not actually shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created."

<sup>20</sup>"He who, by the sheer inclination of his will, established the beginning of all creation, seen and unseen, before all the ages and before that beginning of created beings, had an ineffably good plan for those creatures. The plan was for him to mingle, without change on his part, with human nature by true hypostatic union, to unite human nature to himself while remaining immutable, so that he might become a man as he alone knew how, and so that he might deify humanity in union with himself" (*Ad Thalassium*, 22, in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. P. Blowers and R. Wilken [Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003], 115).

beginning, through the “pre-existence” of Jesus Christ,<sup>21</sup> that would show the universal relevance of what came “at the end,” just as the Old Testament allowed one to see that the God and Savior of Jacob—the God of the late-in-coming Covenant—was the God and Savior of everyone.<sup>22</sup> It was for this that the world (and the humanity in it) came to be in the first place.<sup>23</sup> Returning then to the objection, the response is full-blown. The salvific reach of that unique and singular humanity-embracing historical event is universal because it is the reason for everything (everything that had hitherto been taken for granted, but which now no longer could be so). Those who came before were already implicated by the “one who comes after.” This very response can be detected in many of the texts of the Vatican II,<sup>24</sup> not to mention in the very announcement of the council by John XXIII. It is not only that the Church, being the “*lumen gentium*,” has a universal mission,<sup>25</sup> but that it has this by

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<sup>21</sup>The “pre-existence” of Jesus Christ, indicated chiefly in the hymns of Colossians and Philippians and in the formula of faith of 1 Cor 8:6 (“through whom are all things and through whom we exist”) is not, as many have shown, merely a statement about the co-eternality of Christ with God (the vertical “*prae*”) but, also, as Balthasar says, the statement that Jesus, in his consciousness about his mission “knows that his human existence is identical with the actual implementation of God’s eternal plan for the world.” “He is directly conscious of having been always ‘with’ God when, together with the Logos, God drew up the world plan, that is, to bring together all things in the incarnate Word” (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, trans. G. Harrison [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992], 256). On this point, cf. also “Theology, Christology, Anthropology,” in *International Theological Commission—Texts and Documents 1969–1985* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 216–19.

<sup>22</sup>On this point, cf. G. Colombo, “La Création,” in *Bilan de la Théologie du XXe Siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: Casterman, 1970), 268–89, and L. Scheffczyk, *Creation and Providence* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 21–37.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. de Lubac, “Predestination of the Church,” in *Catholicism*, 126–43.

<sup>24</sup>“Christ is the light of humanity; and it is, accordingly, the heart-felt desire of this sacred Council, being gathered together in the Holy Spirit, that by proclaiming his Gospel to every creature (cf. Mk 16:15), it may bring to all men that light of Christ which shines out visibly from the Church” (*LG*, 1). “Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be ‘the universal sacrament of salvation,’ the Church in obedience to the command of her founder (Mt 16:15) and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men” (*Ad gentes divinitus*, 1).

<sup>25</sup>“The Church’s anxiety to promote and defend truth springs from her

virtue of the fact that the content of that mission is linked to the very beginning, to the "plan," and therefore to "the whole of man's history," as its "center" and "purpose."<sup>26</sup> Christ is the truth of the mystery of man, "the image of the invisible God," "the first-born of every creature"<sup>27</sup> and the content, by way of prophecy, of his "likeness to God."<sup>28</sup> In this distinctive way the council, involved the deepest openness to man, without for this ceding to any anthropocentrism, as Paul VI said. On the contrary.<sup>29</sup> Ratzinger,

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conviction that without the assistance of the whole of revealed doctrine man is quite incapable of attaining to that complete and steadfast unanimity which is associated with genuine peace and eternal salvation. For such is God's plan. He 'wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Unhappily, however, the entire Christian family has not as yet fully and perfectly attained to this visible unity in the truth. But the Catholic Church considers it her duty to work actively for the fulfillment of that great mystery of unity for which Christ prayed so earnestly to His heavenly Father on the eve of His great sacrifice. The knowledge that she is so intimately associated with that prayer is for her an occasion of ineffable peace and joy. And why should she not rejoice sincerely when she sees Christ's prayer extending its salvific and ever increasing efficacy even over those who are not of her fold?" ("Address at the Opening of Vatican Council II," 11 October 1962).

<sup>26</sup> "Missionary activity is nothing else, and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany and realization in the world and in history; that by which God, through mission, clearly brings to its conclusion the history of salvation" (*Ad gentes divinitus*, 9). "The Church . . . believes that the key, the center and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master. She also maintains that beneath all that changes there is much that is unchanging, much that has its ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever (Heb 13:8). And that is why the Council, relying on the inspiration of Christ, the image of the invisible God, and firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15), proposes to speak to all men in order to unfold the mystery that is man" (GS, 10).

<sup>27</sup> GS, 10. Charles Moeller, commenting on the recourse to these christological texts, notes how they reveal "the profoundly biblical and Christological perspective which characterizes the first part and the first two chapters of the second part of *Gaudium et Spes*" ("Preface and Introductory Statement," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5, trans. W. J. O'Hara [Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1969], 113–14).

<sup>28</sup> Moeller suggests this as a "deepening" of the lines of thought in the council document, in "Renouveau de la Doctrine de L'Homme," in *La theologie du renouveau*, ed. L. K. Shook (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1968), 244.

<sup>29</sup> Pope Paul VI, "Address During the Last General Meeting of the Second Vatican Council," 7 December 1965.

too, in his commentary on that famous text of *Gaudium et spes*, will say

[F]or the first time in an official document of the magisterium, a new type of completely Christocentric theology appears. On the basis of Christ this dares to present theology as anthropology and only becomes radically theological by including man in discourse about God by way of Christ, thus manifesting the deepest unity of theology.<sup>30</sup>

We are brought, then, to the heart of the Church's "openness to the world" in its growing awareness of her universality.<sup>31</sup> But with this we are also brought before the *vexata quaestio* of predestination and the restriction for which the Augustinian doctrine was so well known, a restriction which played no small part in the very "bastion-like" ecclesiology the council was razing. Balthasar had made this connection not long before the council in *Razing the Bastions*:

In the middle ages, and still in the Baroque period, the attitude [of possessor] was the essential one; the latter [that of giver] followed as a possible derivative at best. Things could not be otherwise as long as the Augustinian view of predestination—two classes of men from the very outset, one chosen and the other rejected—was seriously taken as basic. One cannot say that the medieval Christian felt himself, fundamentally, and in his very identity as a Christian, responsible for the non-Christian.<sup>32</sup>

A "razing of the bastions," would entail, then, revisiting the terms of limited election, to the point of discovering in it the

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<sup>30</sup>Ratzinger, "The Dignity of the Human Person," 159.

<sup>31</sup>This "growing awareness" of the Church's universality is the theme of H. U. von Balthasar's *Razing the Bastions* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), written before the council (in 1952). While not denying that the universal horizon of the Church "can be demonstrably traced to the earliest Christian sources," Balthasar writes: "[In the middle ages] the Church had a very summary relationship to the non-Christian world—pagans, Jews, heretics, schismatics—even as late as the period of the missionary mendicant orders. At the level of consciousness humanity possessed at that period, an awareness of ultimate solidarity and fellowship in destiny could not yet exist, and one cannot presuppose such an awareness without anachronism" (31).

<sup>32</sup>Balthasar, *Razing the Bastions*, 58–59.



responsibility of the elect toward the non-elect.<sup>33</sup> But more significantly (and perhaps surprisingly), such a revisiting would re-discover in the Pauline doctrine the very basis upon which to establish a distinct Christian openness of the most radical kind. In the debate over whether or not one should apply a "hermeneutic of continuity or discontinuity" to the council, then, the doctrine of predestination, as tied to the question of the scope and nature of Christian openness, would provide a case in point of what Benedict XVI recently called "innovation in continuity" where the Church "in its apparent discontinuity . . . has actually preserved and deepened her inmost nature and true identity."<sup>34</sup> We will look then at the revisiting of the doctrine of predestination. We will note first the parameters of the doctrine as we know it and then the reception of it by the faithful and the teaching Magisterium. Finally, we will consider the challenges that a re-thinking of the doctrine in "universalist" terms faces.

*Predestination as we know it*

Briefly put, predestination as we know it is chiefly the answer to the problem of the salvation of the individual sinner. More precisely, it is the answer to why some, with the help of efficacious grace, merit salvation through faith and final perseverance while others do not, and why the God who distributes this grace is not unjust or "required" to distribute it more broadly.<sup>35</sup> In looking at this answer, we note briefly its key features. In the first instance we draw attention to a point which is generally taken for granted but which is central to the critique underlying the renewal of the doctrine. We note the context assumed by those who began to take

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<sup>33</sup>The re-thinking of "election" as a *mission* stands at the heart of Ratzinger's "true universalism" (cf. *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988], 75–84. Cf. also Balthasar, *Razing the Bastions*, 59. Cf. n. 95 below.

<sup>34</sup>Benedict XVI, "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia Offering Them His Christmas Greetings," 22 December 2005.

<sup>35</sup>The history of the doctrine has been amply documented. For a good synthesis, cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, "Prédestination," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 12 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1935), 2832–3022.

up the question of predestination more thematically.<sup>36</sup> It is the sinner who is the object of the divine act of predestination.<sup>37</sup> But more precisely, it is the sinner who, by virtue of his perseverance to the end, has attained, or will attain glory. This post-lapsarian context, together with the apparent state of affairs, in which not all are or will be in glory,<sup>38</sup> gives the doctrine its second and most vexing feature: only *some* sinners are predestined. It would be this limitation—of only some—within that prior limitation—of only *sinners*—that would make central to all debates concerning the predestination of sinners (and the grace offered to them) one dominant question: “On what basis is one predestined and not the other?” Augustine’s answer

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<sup>36</sup>Before St. Augustine, predestination was not directly at issue. It was the Latin Fathers of the Church, most notably, St. Augustine, who took up the problem. The Greek Fathers looked at the question more from the point of view of the *ordo executionis* (considering the *effect* from the point of view of the *means*), where glory or damnation were taken simply as rewards for the cooperation or not of freedom with the divine initiative of grace. Their concern was to argue for the reality of freedom (against fatalism) thanks precisely to the divine initiative of grace. In this context, the actual “outcome” depended upon the interplay between the divine initiative and the human will, the latter either cooperating with the divine initiative or resisting it. (For a good discussion of predestination in the Greek Fathers, cf. H. D. Simonin, “Prédestination d’après les pères grecs,” in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* [Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1935]: 2815–2832, and M. J. Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will* [Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1964], 73–79.) It was the Latin Fathers who, in the context of the question about the gratuitousness of grace, started looking at this interplay from the point of view of the *ordo intentionis*, where the means (grace) are considered from the point of view of the end (glory). God first (in the logical order) wills glory, and only then the means to attain it. The question then becomes on what basis does he will glory for some and not others? For a discussion of this Latin turn, cf. V. Boublík, *La predestinazione: S. Paolo e S. Agostino* (Rome: Lateran University Press, 1961), 88–89. Cf. also G. Colombo, “La Grazia,” s.v. “Cattolicesimo,” in *Enciclopedia delle Religioni I* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1970), 1625.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. O. Rottmanner’s highly controversial article (appearing originally in 1892) which made much of the infralapsarian nature of Augustine’s doctrine (“L’Augustinisme,” *Mélanges de Sciences religieuses* 6 [1949]: 853–78). On this point, cf. also M. Jacquin, “La predestination d’après Saint Augustin,” *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 2 (1931): 859.

<sup>38</sup>Concerning Augustine’s certainty on this point, A. Trapè pointed to the three facts supporting it: that not all men had faith, that not all babies were baptized, and finally, that Sacred Scripture referred to “two hosts” at the final judgment (“A proposito di predestinazione: S. Agostino ed i suoi critici moderni,” *Divinitas* 7 [1963]: 268).

to this question would bring forward the third feature of that doctrine signaled by its very prefix—"pre"—the feature for which he as *doctor Gratiae* is most known: its gratuitousness.

When Simplicianus of Milan had asked the new Bishop of Hippo to clarify the ultimate reason for the distinct destinies of Jacob and Esau as described in Romans 9, Augustine offered a judgment which would become his definitive view,<sup>39</sup> overruling his formerly held proto-Pelagian view which located the distinction in God's foreknowledge.<sup>40</sup> The distinction, he said in his reply, was made prior to any consideration of future merit as is suggested by the twins themselves who, being *in utero*, had not only not done anything of merit, but had not done anything at all. Insisting on the priority of election over merit, Augustine would secure the utter gratuity of grace for which he would fight ardently against Pelagius and his disciples.<sup>41</sup> The gratuitousness of grace was of course already affirmed in the fact of being pulled out of the *massa damnatis*, since such a rescue could in no way be considered owed to the sinner in it.<sup>42</sup> But it was solidified by the fact that those who were pulled out of the *massa* were pulled out prior to any foreknowledge of their merit, an act of faith, that is, whether uninitiated by grace (as the semi-Pelagians held)<sup>43</sup> or initiated by it. Salvation was of course a crowning of merit (in the *ordo executionis*), but the very capacity to merit (beginning with the act of faith) was itself the fruit of God's gifts,<sup>44</sup> so that, as Augustine said, "when God crowns our merits, he does nothing other than to crown his own gifts."<sup>45</sup> "What have you

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<sup>39</sup>*De dono perseverantiae*, 20, 53.

<sup>40</sup>*De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, 1, 2, 306.

<sup>41</sup>On the link between Augustine's theology of predestination and his theology of grace, cf. J. Chéné, *La théologie de St. Augustin: grâce et prédestination* (Lyon: Éditions Xavier Mappus, 1961), 87; Garrigou-Lagrange, "La Prédestination," 2833; M. Jacquin, "La prédestination d'après Saint Augustin," 859; Colombo, "La Grazia," 1628.

<sup>42</sup>*De natura et gratia*, 5.

<sup>43</sup>At the end of his life, Augustine rejected the semi-Pelagian view that grace was not needed at the beginning, for the *initium fidei*, in his *De praedestinatione sanctorum*.

<sup>44</sup>*De dono perseverantiae*, 21, 54.

<sup>45</sup>*Epistola*, 194, 5, 19.

that you did not receive?” Augustine asked frequently, invoking the words of St. Paul (1 Cor 4:7).

The gratuitous priority of predestination meant, moreover, that the predestined were those who persevered to the end by virtue of a unique grace that carried them to that end infallibly, or “*certissime*,” as he says in his definition.<sup>46</sup> They were not, that is, simply those who persevered and who, being “foreknown,” were predestined, but rather those, who, being predestined, persevered.<sup>47</sup> There was no other way, in Augustine’s view, to respect the principle of gratuitousness than to explain perseverance in this way.<sup>48</sup> And given the apparent limited outcome, an alternative was born: either God grants the grace of perseverance to all, and all are saved (“most certainly”), or all are not saved (as it seems), because all were not given the grace to persevere, and this because all were not predestined.<sup>49</sup> The principle of gratuitousness required, it seemed,

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<sup>46</sup>The predestined are: “*certissime liberantur quicumque liberantur*” (*De dono perseverantiae*, 14, 35). The guarantee of this is that they are offered a grace which acts “*indeclinabiliter et insuperabiliter*” (*De correptione et gratia*, 12, 38).

<sup>47</sup>In the course of his dispute with the monks of North Africa, Augustine forged a distinction between the grace given to Adam before sin and that given to the predestined after sin where the difference is found at the level of efficacy. The *adiutorium sine qua non*, given to Adam prior to original sin, could be refused, whereas the *adiutorium quo*, given to the “second Adam,” had a greater efficacy, since it gave the act of the will itself (*De correptione et gratia*, 11, 31). It was unfrustrable (*De correptione et gratia*, 14.45). For a discussion of the distinction, cf. Ch. Boyer, *Essais sur la doctrine de St. Augustin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1932), 221–28.

<sup>48</sup>Farrelly explains the logic of relation between the infallible efficacy of grace and its gratuitousness: “if the grace that as a matter of fact does elicit the good response of the will were not infallibly efficacious in first act, there would not be a greater benefit or love given to the one who uses the grace well than to the one who falls into sin. So, too, of two men in the same temptation, one of whom overcomes and the other fails, the one would not be loved more by God and would be the cause of his own better state than the other” (*Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 103).

<sup>49</sup>Colombo notes the novelty of this alternative in the history of theology (“La Grazia,” 1625). Moreover, he points out the irony of the “anthropocentric” point of departure in the doctrine of a limited predestination. “[I]nstead of starting from the divine plan revealed in the Bible so as to understand the history of man, theological reflection started with the history of man and tried to infer from it the plan of God. This distorted procedure began, at least in its emerging line, with Pelagius. He in fact indicated in human behavior, foreseen by God, the determining criterion of divine predestination. As such the idea that the divine is

that predestination be limited and that the criterion for that limit be found in no other place than in God himself, in his "unsearchable judgments" and "inscrutable ways" which St. Paul had invoked at the end of his discussion of "Jacob and Esau" (Rom 11:33).<sup>50</sup> This is why not all are (or will be) in glory *de facto*. And this is why Augustine, who did not yet have recourse to the Damascene's distinction between the "antecedent" and "consequent" wills, would interpret the "*omnes*" of the text "God wants all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4) in every way other than the normal literal sense.<sup>51</sup>

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deducible from the history of man is introduced. Then Augustine pushed ahead much further along this line. Starting from the history of man, and not being able to draw from it that all men are saved (in particular because history presents the case of babies who die without baptism and adults who do not come to faith) he infers that the plan of God which refers to the salvation of men, does not extend to all, but is limited only to some" ("La Grazia," 1627; 1630, my translation).

<sup>50</sup>*De dono perseverantiae*, 8, 18.

<sup>51</sup>As Rottmanner has demonstrated, during the course of the Pelagian controversy Augustine began to take the "*omnes*" in this text in every way other than its literal meaning. "*Omnes*" could refer to *many* men, to men from *every race*, to the *predestined*, or it could be taken to mean that God wants men to desire the salvation of all men ("L'Augustinism," 45–46). Ultimately, all men are not saved not because "all men do not want it," but because God does not want it. "*Cum tam multi salvi non fiant, non quia ipsi, sed quia Deus non vult*," said Augustine (*Epistola*, 217, 19). On this point, John Rist speaks of Augustine's "unwillingness to take scriptural texts about the desire for universal salvation seriously" ("Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," *Journal of Theological Studies* 20, no. 2 [1969]: 440). In defense of the Bishop of Hippo, Augustinians will point to some sort of implicit use of the distinction St. John Damascene had made between the "antecedent" (conditional) will and the "consequent" (absolute) will (e.g., Trapé, "A proposito di predestinazione," 266–67). According to that distinction God, prior to his foreknowledge of original sin, wants the salvation of all, and after that same foreknowledge (which "conditions" the former will) he wants to order evil to a greater good for those who freely cooperate with the divine initiative or to exact justice on those who refuse it. (For a historical discussion of this distinction, cf. Antoniotti, "La volontà antecedente et conséquente selon Saint Jean Damascène et Saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 65 [1965]: 52–77.) Insofar as this distinction can be applied to Augustine retroactively, there would be a significant difference in the use of the distinction, since Augustine's "consequent will" (predestination) was *infallibly efficacious*. Later, Thomas would resort to the distinction, but there, unlike the Damascene, the limited scope of the "consequent will," which considers the conditions by which a man concretely realizes eternal glory, namely merit, is established *ante praevisa merita* and is assured by virtue of *infallible* means (*ST I*, 23, 3, ad 3). (On this difference with the Damascene, cf. L.

Given the parameters of the doctrine, it was natural that objections be raised concerning divine justice, as well as human freedom. Augustine answered the first objection by pointing to the gratuity of salvation as such with respect to the chastisement merited by the sinner such that even if no one were predestined, God would not be unjust.<sup>52</sup> Indeed it would be precisely his justice served to the un-predestined that would show, by way of “contrast,” the gratuitousness of the mercy shown to the predestined.<sup>53</sup> As for the latter objection, Augustine, as we know, did not think that his doctrine of grace curtailed freedom at all. This was his claim in *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, where, responding to the objections of certain monks that his teaching did so, he replied that grace was the very perfection of it.<sup>54</sup> This can be understood from within Augustine’s general doctrine on freedom where freedom was of its nature in a relation to the good which preceded it (the good not being a mere choice among indifferent choices);<sup>55</sup> but, now, by taking sin into account, grace can be seen as that which liberates a freedom which, prior to grace, is only a freedom to choose sin. It can be seen as that which

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M. Antoniotti, “La volonté divine antécédente et conséquente,” 64). Thomas, thus, could say: “God loves all men and all creatures, inasmuch as he wishes them all some good; but He does not wish every good to them all. So far, therefore, as he does not wish for some this particular good, namely, eternal life, He is said to hate or reprobate them” (*ST I*, 23, ad 1). He could also say: “Our Lord did not pray for all those who crucified Him, as neither did He for all those who would believe in Him; but for those only who were predestined to obtain eternal life through Him” (*ST III*, 21, a. 4, ad 2).

<sup>52</sup>*De correptione et gratia*, 10, 28; *De natura et gratia*, 5.

<sup>53</sup>*De civitate Dei*, 11, 18; 12, 12 (“*Si omnes remaneret in poenis justae damnationis, in nullo appareret misericors gratia redimentis; rursum si omnes a tenebris transferrentur in lucem, in nullo appareret severitas ultionis*”). On this question, see the debate between V. Boublík and A. Sage on the question of how much the sinners abandoned as a consequence of sin (Boublík and Sage) fulfill the reason for the permission of sin itself (Boublík). Boublík, *La predestinazione*, 119–20; Sage, “La prédestination chez Saint Augustin d’après une thèse récente,” *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 10 (1960): 34–35; V. Boublík, “La predestinazione in S. Agostino: una risposta al P. Sage,” *Divinitas* 5 (1961): 153–57.

<sup>54</sup>*De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 8, 17.

<sup>55</sup>For an excellent discussion of the Augustinian understanding of the will’s prior ordering to the good as the condition of its liberty (not its limitation), cf. D. C. Schindler, “Freedom Beyond Our Choosing: Augustine on the Will and Its Objects,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 29, no. 4 (2002): 618–53.

gives freedom its true *libertas*<sup>56</sup>—and which, moreover, grants a greater liberty,<sup>57</sup> on account of its greater efficacy<sup>58</sup> to the point that those in heaven who are unable to sin, can be said to be the most free.<sup>59</sup> None of this, moreover, meant that the adherence to the good was brought about in spite of the human will. On the contrary, it worked through the human will, giving the will an interior *delectatio* for the good, so that the will itself (though not on its own) would will the good.<sup>60</sup> Thus it was not a range of choice which granted freedom, being effectively able to assent to or refuse grace, so much as the capacity (our capacity) to adhere to the good, which distinguished Augustine's notion of freedom. That said, the old question still remained (and remains) whether the infallibly efficacious character of grace can give the element of consent, in the historical state—prior to its definitive state—its full value.<sup>61</sup> We might also ask if it does not compromise the very character of grace itself whose very generosity implies a risk taken, with the freedom it addresses.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>For a discussion of the liberating idea of Augustinian freedom, cf. Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," 423–27.

<sup>57</sup>*De correptione et gratia*, 12, 35.

<sup>58</sup>See n. 47 above.

<sup>59</sup>*De correptione et gratia*, 11, 32.

<sup>60</sup>On the non-compelling or non-constraining (and therefore, non-Jansenist) nature of Augustine's "infallible" grace, see Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," 429–35, as well as E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (New York, 1967), 155.

<sup>61</sup>We note here the insistence in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the possibility of choosing between good and evil, "as long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God" (1732). On this point, we follow the suggestion of D. C. Schindler that the element of consent (and therefore also the possibility of defection) is demanded by the nature of the good itself ("Freedom Beyond Our Choosing," 637–42).

<sup>62</sup>Commenting on the risk associated with the gift of creation whereby the Creator gives to the creature its own immediate inner ground of integrity, Kenneth Schmitz writes: "[God] . . . freely determines to create a creature of a certain sort with integrity and freely determines to respect that integrity. In creating creatures who have freedom, he even determines to respect the capacity to flaw the original gift. The German word, *Opfer*, catches both meanings, for the creator's love is both an offering and, potentially, a victim" (*The Gift: Creation* [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982], 96–97).

The question about freedom, as well as the limitation of predestination for no other reason than the “inscrutable ways of God,” are the perennial irritants to the *sensus fidelium* of the “traditional doctrine of predestination, (irritants even to Augustine himself, who had cautioned against preaching some of its “harsher elements”).<sup>63</sup> They are what drove the famous post-Reformation debate over the sufficient and efficacious *auxilii Dei* offered to a freedom so that it might persevere and finally receive its “crown.”

That debate was sparked by the Jesuit Luis de Molina who, in the wake of certain teachings of some of the Protestant reformers, tried to defend the truth about human freedom by offering a “middle way” with a “middle knowledge” by which God could foresee merits in a world not yet willed. With his *scientia media*<sup>64</sup> Molina established a non-arbitrary election of the predestined determined *post praevisa merita*, without for this being semi-Pelagian, technically speaking; for, he argued, the choice of the actual order (among the infinite number of possible orders) would be chosen *ad libitum*, and thus respect the principle of gratuitousness. Molina’s “middle way” was accompanied then by the doctrine of a simultaneous—that is, non-antecedent—and indifferent “divine concurrence” with the human will, which, would overcome the problem of infallibility when referring to supernatural acts.<sup>65</sup> To this theory,

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<sup>63</sup>*De dono perseverantiae*, 22, 58–61. Boublík, one of the more severe critics of the *Doctor Gratiae*, sees Augustine’s own reticence to refer publicly to the formulas which expressed his solution most clearly as the first red flag, signaling the lack of correspondence between the doctrine and the *sensus fidelium* (*La predestinazione*, 129).

<sup>64</sup>Molina’s “middle knowledge” stood between divine “natural and necessary knowledge,” where God knows the nature of things prior to any decree of the will, and “free contingent knowledge,” by which he knows that which he has willed, but could also not be, following an absolute decree. It is a divine knowledge by which he knows infallibly, *prior to an absolute decree*, what the free creature *would* determine if the world in which he is “foreseen” *were* enacted. Cf. *Concordia* q. 14, a. 13, d. 26; q. 23, a. 4 and 5, d. 1 [ed. J. Rabeneck, S. J., Matriti, Soc. Edit. “Sapientia,” 1953].

<sup>65</sup>Molina’s theory of divine simultaneous concurrence supported his idea of a free agent who could only be called free “once everything necessary for acting has been granted, [and once he] is able to act or not to act, or to do one thing in such a way that it could also do the opposite” not only *before* the free act “*in sensu diviso*” but also *in the moment of acting*, “*in sensu composito*” (*Concordia*, q. 14, a. 13, d.2, n. 3 [quoted in Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 13]). For a concise review



the Dominican Domingo Bañez responded that any distinction in the goodness of creatures could be accounted for ultimately only by recourse to the (omnipotent) will of God (via his "predetermining decrees" and "physical premotion")<sup>66</sup> and that this was the ultimate ground of any divine foreknowledge of what an individual would do (in the actual order). The distinction in men therefore could only be *ante praevisa merita*.<sup>67</sup> The fact that one necessarily persevered under the dominion of an efficacious grace, did not curtail freedom in this order, Bañez argued, since freedom did not consist in the ability to do otherwise (in fact), but in the fact that the effect is brought about through the will itself (the second cause)<sup>68</sup> as well as in the fact that, as a power, the will is indifferent and could do otherwise (*in sensu diviso*).<sup>69</sup> Finally, God was not implicated in any injustice by not

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of the Molinist argument, cf. Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 21–28.

<sup>66</sup>Garrigou-Lagrange, a twentieth-century Bañezian, listed the four characteristics of "physical promotion." In the first place, it is a "motion" which is received passively in the created operative faculty to be applied to action. Second, it is "physical," that is, not just moral which works by attraction, as does a final cause. Third, it is a "premotion," in the causal sense and not the temporal sense, which executes the divine decree. Fourth, it is predetermining inasmuch as it moves the will with an intrinsic and infallible efficacy to determine itself to a certain determined good deed rather than another one ("Prémotion physique," in *DTC*, vol. 13, 1 [Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1936]: 50–51). For a contemporary account of this "Physical promotion," cf. Thomas M. Osborne, Jr., "Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion," *Nova et Vetera* 4, no. 3 (2006): 557–605.

<sup>67</sup>For a concise description of the Bañezian doctrine see Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 5–19. The causative character of divine knowledge for Bañez found its basis in the Thomistic doctrine of *divine predilection* where, unlike for creatures, the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things and does not presuppose it (*ST*, I, 20, 3). This doctrine, in its turn, would provide the reason why the choice of the elect (to be predestined) was *ante praevisa merita*, and anchor its gratuitousness. Garrigou-Lagrange makes this point in "La Prédestination" in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 12 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1936), 3005.

<sup>68</sup>Here recourse is made to the distinction between the *necessity of consequence* (if God wills it, it will take place) and the *consequent necessity* (the kind of necessity in creatures without free will) (Cf. Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 6).

<sup>69</sup>The distinction is between a non-necessity *in sensu diviso*, where the will before it is moved to action is indifferent with respect to the object (and *therefore free*), and the inability to do otherwise *in sensu composito*, once, that is, the will has been moved to act. On this point see Farrelly's discussion of the use of this distinction in *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 14.

granting efficacious grace to all, since this is not “owed” to a naturally defectable nature,<sup>70</sup> and since everyone had “sufficient grace” (even if it sufficed only to grant the possibility—the proximate power—of positing a salutary deed, not its actuality).<sup>71</sup> Nor was he implicated directly in evil, since this was only permitted.<sup>72</sup>

Between these two positions, one was caught, in the end, between affirming a truly gratuitous predestination, one which anteceded human action at every level, but which required of this antecedence an infallible efficaciousness, and therefore a limited predestination, (the Augustinian and Bañezian/Thomist) view<sup>73</sup> and,

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<sup>70</sup>Thomists justify negative reprobation (the not-electing of some) on the grounds of the gratuitousness of the supernatural order with respect to a naturally defectable will (*ST* I, 23, 3). On this point cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, “Prédestination,” 3014.

<sup>71</sup>On this point, cf. Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 16. Pascal, in particular, took the Bañezian adjective “sufficient” to task in his Letter II: “On the Subject of Sufficient Grace,” in *Provincial Letters* (New York: J. Leavitt, 1828), 35–44.

<sup>72</sup>M. J. Nicolas admits the difficulty with the Bañezian/Thomist doctrine here where the question of divine complicity in evil is raised: “The whole problem . . . lies in this point of the relation between the divine permission and the evil initiative, the failure of the creature. I see the two ways that are open to explain this, and each of them seems impossible to follow to the end” (“Simple réflexions sur la doctrine thomiste de la grâce,” *Revue thomiste* 58 [1985]: 649, cited in Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 19). Farrelly explains these two ways: “If the ultimate priority belongs to the creature, then how does God know this evil initiative? This would make God passive before creatures. If, on the other hand, God knows our failure in his permission, there is a necessary connection between that permission and our failure. If this is so, how can God be absolved from responsibility for man’s sin?” (Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 19). Jacques Maritain described the “necessary connection” thus: “In the theory of the antecedent permissive decrees, God, under the relation of efficiency, is not the cause, not even (that which I do not concede) the indirect cause, of moral evil. But he is the one primarily responsible for its presence here on earth. It is He who has invented it in the drama or novel of which He is the author. He refuses His efficacious grace to a creature because it has already failed culpably, but this culpable failure occurred only in virtue of the permissive decree which preceded it. God manages to be nowise the cause of evil, while seeing to it that evil occurs infallibly. That antecedent permissive decrees, be they presented by the most saintly of theologians—I cannot see in them, taken in themselves, anything but an insult to the *absolute innocence of God*” (*God and the Permission of Evil* [Milwaukee: J. W. Evans, Bruce Publishing Co., 1966], 30–31).

<sup>73</sup>St. Thomas received the basic framework of the Augustinian doctrine with

on the one hand, carving out a "space for freedom" by making predestination posterior to human action and its grace "simultaneous"—not antecedent—to it (in a way that seemed suspiciously close to semi-pelagianism, even if technically distinct from it).

Apart from the *aporia* that ended the debate (in both its post-Tridentine and twentieth-century rounds),<sup>74</sup> the malaise that is felt on account of the traditional doctrine of predestination can also be perceived in the fact that most of the debate among the theological schools went (and goes) relatively un-noticed by the faithful. Whereas for Protestants, some of whom were (and are) constantly nourished (and/or tortured) by the doctrine,<sup>75</sup> the Catholic faithful were (and remain) largely unaware of it; and when they do become so aware, they associate it with Calvinism. How else can this be explained but by the fact that for the Catholic faithful there is an authority in the background which checks the popular dissemination of the doctrine held firmly by even some of the most notable theological schools and venerable Doctors?<sup>76</sup>

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little resistance, and tailored it to the parameters of Scholasticism. (He treats the question in *Super Epistolam ad Romanos*, c. 8, 6–9, 4; *Super Epistolam ad Ephesianos*, c. 1, 1; *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum [Sent.]*, I, d. 40–41; *De veritate*, 6; and the *Summa Theologiae*, I, 23. On his doctrine as a whole, cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, "La prédestination d'après les docteurs du moyen âge," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 12 [Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1935], 2940–56, as well as A. D'Alés, "Prédestination," in *Dictionnaire Apologetique de la Foi Catholique*, vol. 4 [Paris: Beauchesne, 1928], 227–30.) Though within Thomism there are disputes over the position of Bañez, his doctrine has generally remained the doctrine of Thomists, especially owing to its respect for the principle of "predilection," the principle on which Thomas based the election of some and not others (cf. Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 17).

<sup>74</sup>On 5 September 1607, Pope Paul V dissolved the *de auxiliis* Congregation which had been established to settle the contentious debate between the Jesuits and Dominicans over the question of efficacious grace, enjoining the contending Dominican and Jesuit parties to refrain from calling each other "Calvinists" or "semi-Pelagians," respectively, and leaving the final judgment to the Holy See, at some later time (DS 1997). For the twentieth-century debate, cf. note 89, below.

<sup>75</sup>See E. Oakes, "Predestination in America," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 8, no. 3 (2010): 683–702.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's discussion of the subordination of theology to the Magisterium as one of key distinctions in Christianity's inversion of the prior pagan "two-caste" system (*The Nature and Mission of Theology* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995], 61–69).

*The Magisterium*

What are the parameters of the Magisterium on the question? At the time of Augustine himself, the Council of Carthage (418) confirmed Augustine clearly in his teaching (against Pelagius) that grace was necessary for every dimension of adherence to the good profitable for eternal salvation and that this grace was not merely a matter of communicating a knowledge of God's commands, or a help to do more easily what could be done on one's own. After his death, Augustine's teaching against the "semi-Pelagians" was also confirmed in the *Indiculus* and then in the Second Council of Orange (529), both of which taught that all such acts were anticipated and caused by grace, starting with the act of faith itself.<sup>77</sup>

Notwithstanding the almost complete dependence on the thinking and formulations of the *Doctor gratiae* in these early councils and texts on the question of the necessity of grace for salvation, there is a conspicuous silence about the Augustinian doctrine of predestination itself.<sup>78</sup> There is, on the other hand, a clear teaching against predestinationism (the teaching that some are predestined to evil).<sup>79</sup> Moreover, beginning with the Council of Quiercy (849), the Church

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<sup>77</sup>DS, 129–42 (*Indiculus*); DS, 199.

<sup>78</sup>“We don't want to deprecate nor do we wish to prolong the too-profound and difficult analysis of these arguments, which those who have fought the heretics have treated diffusely, since in admitting the grace of God from whose action and benevolence we cannot subtract anything, we think all that the foresaid norms which the writings of the Apostolic See has taught us is enough: and that is, whatever is contrary to the above statements we clearly consider as not being Catholic” (DS, 249). This reticence had already been apparent in a letter from Pope Celestine to Prosper of Aquitaine, Augustine's famous disciple (cf. DS, 238).

<sup>79</sup>DS, 397 (Council of Orange). Later, too, following the controversy with Gottshalk, the Council of Quiercy (849) would confirm the prior condemnation of a “double predestination” (DS, 621). Later the Council of Valence (855) would use the language of “double predestination,” but would mean by this that “in the election of those who will be saved, the mercy of God precedes their merits; whereas, in the condemnation of those who will be damned, the demerits precede the just judgment of God” (DS, 628). When it says, “Christ did not die for the damned,” it will qualify this by adding that the damned render vain the redemptive action of Christ,” and that no one is damned without wanting it freely (DS, 625–33).

would affirm that God wanted to save all men, even if not all were saved,<sup>80</sup> a teaching that would be reiterated later in the condemnation of the Jansenist teaching that Christ died only for some (and that it was semi-Pelagian to say that he died for all),<sup>81</sup> and most recently by Benedict XVI who, wishing to correct a narrowly individualistic idea of hope, pointed to the "universal subject" of hope.<sup>82</sup>

The universality of the salvific will, then, raises the question about the possibility of resisting the grace of salvation. Here, also in response to Jansenism, the Church, rejecting a notion of grace as "the working of the omnipotent hand of God which nothing can hinder or retard,"<sup>83</sup> held that the human will could either resist or submit to grace.<sup>84</sup> Finally, The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) without defining freedom as mere choice,<sup>85</sup> teaches the possibility of choosing between good and evil, growing in perfection or sinning, "as long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God."<sup>86</sup> We should not fail to mention here the papal intervention which dissolved the *de auxiliis* Congregation—convened for the purpose of settling the contentious debate between the Jesuits and the Dominicans over efficacious grace—which enjoined each party to charity toward the other, leaving a final decision to the Holy See at some later time, a date which would not be imminent, as history would show.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>DS, 623.

<sup>81</sup>DS, 2005.

<sup>82</sup>"The real life, towards which we try to reach out again and again, is linked to a lived union with a 'people,' and for each individual it can only be attained within this 'we.' It presupposes that we escape from the prison of our 'I,' because only in the openness of this universal subject does our gaze open out to the source of joy . . . to God" (*Spe salvi*, 14).

<sup>83</sup>*Unigenitus Dei Filium*, 2410.

<sup>84</sup>*Cum occasione*, 2004.

<sup>85</sup>CCC, 1742.

<sup>86</sup>CCC, 1732 (emphasis added).

<sup>87</sup>Cf. n. 74 above.

*The reformulation of the doctrine*

It was not only the lack of magisterial corroboration that would drive the re-formulation of the doctrine. In many ways that lack had fueled the many attempts to modify a doctrine which would remain, nonetheless, well within its well-known parameters.<sup>88</sup> It was thanks initially to the biblical renewal that those parameters would begin to be opened. Such renewal would take up, among other things, the texts on which Augustine founded the more problematic elements of his doctrine.<sup>89</sup> For example Augustine's exegesis of Romans 8:28, which saw in the passage two distinct groups, those who were merely "called" and those who were called "*secundum propositum*,"<sup>90</sup> was seen to be a foreign body in the Pauline

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<sup>88</sup>In the twentieth century the old debate about predestination was revisited in both Augustinian and Thomistic camps. The Augustinian debate was focused on the problem of the universal salvific will and the permission of evil. Augustine's chief critics, on these points especially were: Rottmanner ("L'Augustinisme: étude d'histoire doctrinale") and Boublík (*La predestinazione—S. Paolo e S. Agostino*). In defense were Sage ("La prédestination chez Saint Augustin d'après une thèse récente"), Jaquin ("La prédestination d'après Saint Augustin"), and TRAP ("A proposito de predestinazione: S. Agostino ed i suoi critici moderni"). The Thomistic debate concerned especially the relation between divine and human causality and free acts (especially salutary ones) and the divine knowledge of these. Garrigou-Lagrange and A. D'Alès represent the debate between the Bañezian (Thomist) and Molinist (Jesuit) schools respectively. For Garrigou-Lagrange's position, see his "La Prédestination," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 12 (1935): 2832–3022; "Le dilemme: Dieu déterminant ou déterminé," *Revue Thomiste* 11 (1928): 193–210; "La grâce efficace: Est-elle nécessaire pour les actes salutaires faciles?" *Revue Thomiste* 8 (1925): 558–66; "Une nouvelle mise en valeur de la science moyenne," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 7 (1917): 418–42; and "Prédétermination non-nécessitante," *Revue de Philosophie* 26 (1926): 379–98. (A more recent representative of the Bañezian view is S. A. Long, "Providence, Freedom and Natural Law," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 4, no. 3 [2006], 557–606.) For D'Alès' position, see his "Prédestination," in *Dictionnaire Apologetique de la Foi Catholique* 4, 1922 col. 195–270; "Autour de Molina," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 7 (1917): 1–35; "Science divine et décrets divins," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 7 (1917): 1–35; and "Prédétermination non nécessaire," *Revue de Philosophie* 26 (1926): 399–422.

<sup>89</sup>For a general comparison of the Augustinian doctrine to that of St. Paul, cf. Boublík, *La Predestinazione*, 131–66.

<sup>90</sup>*De predestinatione sanctorum*, 32.

text.<sup>91</sup> Then too, St. Paul did not appear to guarantee the "predestined" that they would be borne infallibly to eternal glory (since the very "elect" were exhorted to be vigilant and to remain faithful<sup>92</sup>). Nor did he appear to exclude the possibility that others presently outside the circle of the elect might eventually enter that same circle. Referring back to the Old Testament idea of election, some recalled its universal horizon,<sup>93</sup> where the very particular election in history of one people over another, or of one individual over another (such as Jacob over Esau), served the greater, more universal design even as being elect provided no guarantee that one would not be "cut off," as the infamous Romans 9–11 text clearly suggested.<sup>94</sup> Finally, that universal design referred not chiefly to those individuals destined to glory, nor infallibly so, but to the conformity of men to Jesus Christ, a design which had already been partially realized in

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<sup>91</sup>Dion points out that Paul, in Romans 8, was addressing *Christians* to encourage them, such that were the linguistic subtlety an indication of two groups existing within the present gathering of Christians, as Augustine had taught, Paul would have acted against his very purpose (H. M. Dion, "La prédestination chez Saint Paul," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 53 [1965]: 36). He writes: "[C]ette exégèse augustinienne, qui pèse pourtant assez lourd sur la tradition théologique latine, est-elle unanimement rejetée des exégètes modernes de toutes confessions" (38). M.-J. Lagrange also concluded that the Augustinian distinction between the "called" and the "called according to the purpose" "n'a aucun fondement dans le texte et est contraire à tout le contexte" (*Saint Paul. Épître aux Romains* [Paris, 1931], 214).

<sup>92</sup>Dion indicates 2 Tim 2:10, which exhorts the *elect* to endure so that they might obtain salvation and eternal glory ("La prédestination chez Saint Paul," 40).

<sup>93</sup>See. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950) and G. Quell, "Election in the Old Testament," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), 145–68.

<sup>94</sup>On the exegesis of Romans 9–11, see: J. Munck, "Israel and the Gentiles in the New Testament," *Journal of Theological Studies* (1951): 3–16; J. Ratzinger, *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood* (originally published in 1960), 75–84; D. Robinson, "The Salvation of Israel in Rom. 9–11," *Reformed Theological Review* 26 (1967): 81–96; H. U. Balthasar, "The Church and Israel," in *Church and World*, trans. A. V. Littledale (New York: Herder, 1967), 166–76; W. Babcock, "Augustine and Paul: The Case of Romans 9," *Studia Patristica* 16, no. 2 (1985): 473–79; and F. Montagnini, "Elezione e libertà, grazia e predestinazione a proposito di Rom. 9: 6–29," in L. De Lorenzi (ed.), *Die Israelfrage nach Röm 9–11* (Rome: Abtei von St. Paul vor den Mauern, 1977), 57–97.

those to whom Paul was addressing and exhorting to vigilance, those who called themselves “Christians.”<sup>95</sup>

It was the christological term of predestination in particular that would break open the parameters of the doctrine, and not merely by bringing to the fore the exemplar and efficient causality that Christ exercised in the predestination of men,<sup>96</sup> but, more radically, by opening up the question about the place of Jesus Christ in the actual order. That question was alive in the revival of the old *Cur Deus Homo* debate over the “predestination of Jesus Christ”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Dion, in particular, brought out the christic term of predestination: conformity to Christ (Rom 8:29) and the “divine adoption as sons” (“La prédestination chez Saint Paul,” 27–35). On this point, see also F. Prat, *La théologie de Saint Paul*, vol. 1 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1949), 292–94, and J. Bonsirven, *La théologie du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Aubier, 1951), 270, n. 20.

<sup>96</sup>Augustine had tied the gratuitousness of the predestination of men to the exemplary gratuitousness in Jesus Christ where the assumption of human nature by the Word showed the absolute priority of grace over merit (*De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15, 30–31). And it was, of course, by virtue of the merit of Jesus Christ that the predestined were effectively liberated from sin (*De praedestinatione sanctorum* 15, 31).

<sup>97</sup>Initially, the question about the “predestination of Jesus Christ” was opened up apart from that of the predestination of men. It was a revival of the old medieval quarrel over the “motive” of the Incarnation expressed famously in its hypothetical question: *utrum si Adam non peccasset, filius Dei incarnatus fuisset*. That debate, which sought not so much to inquire into a hypothetical order, as to establish the weight of the Incarnation in the present order, sought to identify the primary motive of the Incarnation, the redemptive one, on the one hand, or the “un-conditioned,” gratuitous one—the glory of Christ—on the other. (For a concise study of the Thomist-Scotist debate, cf. G. Biffi, “Fine dell’Incarnazione e primato di Cristo,” *Scuola Cattolica* 88 [1960]: 241–60. Also cf. Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 253, n. 71; *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. E. Oakes [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992], 327). The same debate took place on biblical grounds, especially over the key text in the whole discussion: Colossians 1:15–17. In particular, the debate sought to identify who exactly the “first born of creation” was, the Word, or the Word to become incarnate, whether, the “pre-existence of Christ” concerned simply a statement about the divinity of the Person who Jesus was, or (and) the universal breadth of the Incarnate Christ on account of his being an integral part of the divine plan for the world. The key representatives of the former view were: F. Prat, *La théologie de Saint Paul*, vol. 1 & 2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1949), and A. Feuillet, *Le Christ sagesse de Dieu d’après les épîtres pauliniennes* (Paris: Gabalda et Cie, 1966); the key representatives of the latter view were: A. Durand, “Le Christ, ‘premier-né,’” *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 1 (1910): 56–66, and J. Huby, *Saint Paul: les épître de la captivité* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1947). In the renewal



but even more so in the Catholic attempts to found a Christocentrism beyond the narrow confines of that same debate.<sup>98</sup> Among the latter, there were some who would appeal quite explicitly to the category of predestination, proposing a "co-predestination" of what had been formerly held apart in separate tractates, not only in view of the aporia of the respective debates, but more significantly, in view of an attempt to regain the unity between Christ and creation. We refer to the Northern Italian theological school, the "Scuola di Venegono."<sup>99</sup> More well-known, perhaps, is Hans Urs von

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of this debate, wherever one found oneself, the attempt to unify Christ and creation was palpable. P. Galtier, holding the "Thomist" position, famously attempted to establish some kind of "primacy" before sin by resorting to Molina's *scientia media* such that it could be said that the permission of sin was preceded by the intention to send the Redeemer. (See his *Les deux Adam* [Paris: Beauchesne, 1947]; "Le vrai motif de l'Incarnation," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 43 [1911], 44–57; 104–24). But short of resorting to *scientia media*, and all of its many complications—not the least of which was divine complicity in evil—those holding the Thomist position could not say that Jesus Christ was in the ultimate analysis Adam's "contemporary," much less his *older* Brother. One of these had to declare frankly that before sin "men are strangers to Christ" (M. Corvez, "Le motif de l'Incarnation," *Revue Thomiste* 49 [1949]: 118). As for the Scotists, their primacy of Christ in all of its gratuitous and unconditioned "absoluteness," made it difficult to see the relation of Christ to other men, by way of a mediating role, especially when it came to his redemption *pro nobis*. This was the objection of I. Biffi, of the "Scuola di Venegono" (cf. n. 99, below) who argued for the idea of mediatorship in the very nature of the Incarnate Word ("Fine dell'Incarnazione e primato di Cristo," *Scuola Cattolica* 88 [1960]: 254). The same point was made also by G. Martelet ("Sur le problème du motif de l'Incarnation," in *Problèmes actuels de christologie* [Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965], 73–75). L. Serenthà summed up the difficulties of both positions with respect to the unity of Christ and creation: "The predestination of Christ, deprived of its original anthropological context, that is, no longer connected with the creative act of God, who creates man so as to communicate to him his very divine life, is seen either without a historic-salvific finality or with a finality which is simply redemptive. That is, either it does not refer to man or it refers to man only *qua* sinner" ("La predestinazione," *Dizionario teologico Interdisciplinare*, vol. 3 [Turin: Marietti, 1977], 760).

<sup>98</sup>See Balthasar's discussion of the three main proponents of Christocentrism in Catholic theology (R. Guardini, M. Schmaus, and E. Mersch) in *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 327–34.

<sup>99</sup>Cf. especially G. Biffi, "La predestinazione in Cristo," in *Alla destra del Padre* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1970), 86–108; L. Serenthà, "Predestinazione," in *Dizionario Teologico Interdisciplinare III* (Turin: Marietti, 1977), 759–73; G. Colombo, "La Grazia," s.v. "Cattolicesimo," in *Enciclopedia delle Religioni I* (Florence:

Balthasar, who also made explicit recourse to predestination to anchor his Christocentrism in which Jesus Christ was the “concrete and personal universal norm” of history,<sup>100</sup> and “particular law” on which all general laws of providence were founded.<sup>101</sup> Balthasar was, of course, indebted to Karl Barth for his universalist doctrine of predestination—what Balthasar called “the very heart-beat” of Barth’s whole theology<sup>102</sup>—as it had “confirmed an idea [that he, Balthasar] had been looking for for a long time.”<sup>103</sup> Barth’s christological rethinking of predestination from within the context of creation,<sup>104</sup> would allow Balthasar to root the universality of the mission of Jesus (whose Person had *always* been the “envoy” of the Father<sup>105</sup>) in the *de facto* (non-necessary) “archetypal predestination” of Jesus Christ as “first born among many brethren,”<sup>106</sup> though not without the “drama” which he thought was missing in Barth’s

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Vallechi, 1970), 1612–46.

<sup>100</sup>*A Theology of History* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963), 89.

<sup>101</sup>*A Theology of History*, 16. It was, as Barth suggested, the “primal election of Christ [that was] the foundation for the whole epic of divine providence, so that the doctrine of providence must be unconditionally regarded as part of the more comprehensive doctrine of election, but not the reverse” (*The Theology of Karl Barth*, 175). De Lubac, too, had argued for the originality of the Church vis-à-vis creation through the “predestination of the Church” (*Catholicism*, 126–43).

<sup>102</sup>*The Theology of Karl Barth*, 174.

<sup>103</sup>“In Retrospect,” in *The Analogy of Beauty*, ed. J. Riches (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1986), 195.

<sup>104</sup>Cf. especially his *Church Dogmatics* II, 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957).

<sup>105</sup>The identity of person and mission of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Balthasar’s Christology. See especially his *Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 149–282.

<sup>106</sup>*Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 252. Balthasar articulates the predestination of Jesus Christ at the end of his long excursus on the identity of the mission and person of Christ, under “Inclusion in Christ: Christ’s Mediatorship in Creation” (250–59). See also his *Theology of Karl Barth*, 174–188; 326–334. Moreover, he situates this predestination within his recovery of the causal relation between the Trinity and creation, between, that is, the necessary generation in God and the unnecessary and free creation of the world, referring back to Bonaventure (“*De necessitate si est productio dissimilis praeintelligitur productio similis. . . Inaequalitates oriuntur ex aequalitate*” (*Hexaem.* XI, 9), but also St. Thomas (*I Sent.*, d. 7, dub. 2; *De Potentia Dei*, 2, 6). Cf. *Theo-Drama*, vol. 5 [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998], 64.

account.<sup>107</sup> It was in the *Incarnate* Son that the world, and man in it, was conceived (the reason, therefore, why Balthasar would seek to explain the nature-grace distinction in him).<sup>108</sup>

In the face of the hypothetical question, Balthasar felt stifled, for both positions were too narrow in his estimation. Scripture, he said, presented the predestination of Jesus Christ neither as merely redemptive nor "absolute."<sup>109</sup> Rather, the predestination of Jesus Christ was both primordial—since "God chose us in him before the foundation of the world" and "destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ"—and for the world,<sup>110</sup>—since the Person of Jesus Christ had at "no 'moment' been isolated from the drama of his world mission," that of bringing others into his sonship.<sup>111</sup> Thus, for Balthasar, the archetypal predestination of Jesus Christ was utterly gratuitous not only because there was nothing that could make a claim to it (not even the creature), but also because it was the reason for the creature, the ontologically distinct creature with whom the Creator willed to take a "risk," even to the point of assuming *pro nobis* an eventual betrayal, and being thereby "conditioned" by it.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Cf. n. 130, 131, and 132, below.

<sup>108</sup>*The Theology of Karl Barth*, 343–63. Following Balthasar's christological approach to the nature-grace problem, A. Scola wrote: "[A] concept of the relationship between nature and grace emerges which overcomes any extraneousness between the two terms, without going so far as to nullify the legitimate autonomy of nature. . . . It is simply that nature is seen in Christocentric terms: not as a presupposition extrinsic to grace but as internal to it, internal but distinct. If grace, in the one real historical order, is not a *superadditum* of nature, then inevitably the latter must be thought of as a dimension, a component of that Christic whole which is grace" (*Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1991], 46). De Lubac, who had confined himself to the historical (abstract) terms of the debate over the "natural desire to see God," welcomed the christological starting point made by many of his contemporaries (cf. Henri de Lubac, *Entretien autour de Vatican II* [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985], 30, and H. U. Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991], 68).

<sup>109</sup>*Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 254–55.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, 253–56.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 254f.

<sup>112</sup>*The Theology of Karl Barth*, 177. Cf. also n. 62, above.

According to this re-thinking of predestination along christological lines, where what is at stake is the place of Christ in the actual order, predestination—it is clear—has to do with something more primordial than sin and the problem of sin (even if it *cannot be* indifferent to that which seeks to thwart its purpose). It is in the first instance caught up with the “plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.”<sup>113</sup> In one of his Wednesday Audiences, Blessed John Paul II took up predestination explicitly from within this new context.<sup>114</sup> There the late pope distanced the contentious doctrine from “erroneous or even imprecise and non-essential meanings which have entered into common use,”<sup>115</sup> but not by simply pointing to more refined attempts to explain the relation between divine and human causality (which must of course be made), but rather, more radically, by placing it in, or restoring it to, the context of creation, since, as he notes, “God . . . chose us in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:4).<sup>116</sup> He writes:

[P]redestination precedes “the foundation of the world,” namely, creation, since this is realized in the perspective of man’s predestination. By applying to the divine life the temporal analogies of human language, we can say that God “first” willed to communicate himself in his divinity to man called to be his image and likeness in the created world. “First,” he chose him, in the eternal and consubstantial Son, to participate in his sonship (through grace) and only “afterwards” (“in its turn”) he willed creation, he willed the world to which man belongs.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>Eph 3:8–9 (from *The New Oxford Bible*).

<sup>114</sup>“The Mystery of Predestination,” General Audience, 28 May 1986.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, 3

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 4. So as to show just how radical this predestination is, John Paul II adds that it qualifies the very meaning of Providence, since it enters organically “into the whole plan of Divine Providence” (4) and confers on it “a decisive soteriological and eschatological characteristic” (1). Later, John Paul II would refer to the universal dimension of predestination in *Mulieris dignitatem*: “The particular union of the ‘Theotokos’ with God—which fulfills in the most eminent manner the supernatural predestination to union with the Father which is granted to every human being (*fili in Filio*)—is a pure grace and, as such, a gift of the Spirit” (*MD*, 4); “The biblical teaching [of predestination] taken as a whole enables us to say that predestination concerns all human persons, men and women, each and every one

This new context is suggested by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as well when it traces the shape of the traditional reason for creation: the theophanous "glory of God."<sup>118</sup>

God made [destined] us "to be his sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph. 1:5–6), for "the glory of God is man fully alive" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 4, 20, 7).<sup>119</sup>

The world is created for God's glory, as the tradition says, and that glory, says the *Catechism*, paraphrasing St. Paul with St. Irenaeus, is "man fully alive" in Jesus Christ.

The significance of the "re-contextualization" of predestination should not be understated. Given a predestination that precedes the creation of the world and is no longer logically subsequent to the foreknowledge of original sin makes of predestination not principally the answer to the question about the drama of personal salvation, about why some sinners and not others are saved, but rather, the answer to the question "why the world?" It makes of it the reason for the concrete order, the shape of the "glory of God." Thus its problem shifts away from the attempt to justify God in the face of apparent defeat—real apparent persistence in evil—from showing, that is, at "what stage of gratuitously imparted blessings—being, will, reason, adherence in the good—he elects to [and is allowed to] halt in his creative activity towards the creature,"<sup>120</sup> grace and mercy "not being owed" to the sinner or to his defectable nature,<sup>121</sup> toward the

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without exception" (*MD*, 9).

<sup>118</sup>The *Catechism* clarifies that the "glory of God" is not a matter of "increasing God's glory" so much as it is to "show forth and communicate it" since "[t]he glory of God consists in the realization of this manifestation and communication of his goodness, for which the world was created" (CCC, 293–94). On this point, Schmitz speaks of the "glory of God" as "that aspect of the gift that is the very presence of the giver Himself" (*Creation: The Gift*, 22–23).

<sup>119</sup>CCC, 294.

<sup>120</sup>D. Hart, "Providence and Causality: On Divine Innocence," in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. F. Murphy and P. Ziegler (New York: T&T Clark: 2009), 42.

<sup>121</sup>Concerning the justification of God on the grounds of the creature's lack of merits or "rights," Hart says: "[A]s for the ancient argument that such actions

commitment which God makes to his creatures in the reason for their being created in the first place.

In this stepping back to “before the foundation of the world,” what was once the challenge to the universal salvific will, then becomes the very principle of it, because, being the reason for the world, it implicates all who are in it. And when the history of salvation does concern the sinner, all the narrowing of God’s salvific activity towards some and not others is in service of this universal predestination. Election itself—that very exclusive biblical preference which separated off one from the other (Abraham from everyone else; Isaac from Ishmael; Jacob from Esau)—will take its bearings from that more basic universal preference,<sup>122</sup> by serving “the others who are, at bottom, the ‘other brother,’” as Ratzinger has said.<sup>123</sup> And the mercy bestowed on them in apparent exclusivity, as “vessels of mercy” (Rom 9:32) will spill over into the “vessels of wrath” (Rom 9:22)—“made for destruction” no less—“so that [God] may have mercy upon all,” as St. Paul concluded in his discussion of the twins (Rom 11:32).<sup>124</sup> This is the content which

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constitute no injustice on God’s part, because the creature cannot *merit* grace, this should be dismissed as the fatuous *non sequitur* it has always been. The issue has never been one of merit—for, indeed, the creature ‘merits’ nothing at all, not even its existence; the issue is, rather, the moral nature of God, as revealed in his acts towards those he creates” (“Providence and Causality,” 48).

<sup>122</sup>On the biblical idea of election, cf. nn. 95–96.

<sup>123</sup>Ratzinger, *The Meaning of Brotherhood*, 80–81. More recently, as Benedict XVI, he said, on this point: “Our hope is always essentially . . . hope for others; only thus is it truly hope for me too. As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: how can I save myself? We should also ask: what can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them, too, the star of hope may rise? Then I will have done my utmost for my own personal salvation as well” (*Spe salvi*, 48).

<sup>124</sup>Looking especially at the end of the discussion of Jacob and Esau (Rom 9–11), it could not be said that justice and mercy are attached to mutually exclusive groups, nor that they stood in a kind of equilibrium. Pointing back to creation itself, Balthasar noted with Thomas the *primacy* of mercy, since “the work of divine justice always presupposes the work of mercy; and is founded thereupon” (*ST I*, 21, 4), the world being due to God’s goodness. Thus, just as God’s justice toward the world, by which he gave each created essence its “due,” followed his goodness (and mercy), as its fruit, so too, argued Balthasar, did his justice toward the sinner *follow* a more primordial mercy and act in service of it. In sum, these divine attributes were not *opposites*, and so there was no need to reserve in advance a large (or small) sector of humanity, so as to “exhibit” a (“pure”) merciless justice, since

many would rediscover in the "unsearchable ways of God" before which St. Paul would exclaim: "O *altitudo!*" The "unsearchable ways" are not the reason for the "insolvable question about efficacious and sufficient grace,"<sup>125</sup> as de Lubac said, about why one was chosen for eternal salvation and the other left to eternal perdition, but rather "the ingenuity of the universal mercy that could bring the Jews themselves back to the unity of ultimate salvation after having made use of their blindness for the conversion of the Gentiles."<sup>126</sup>

### *Objections Considered*

We must now entertain the objection that the "wide net" that has been cast over the world, on account of the universal scope of predestination, has relaxed the personal drama of salvation because it has been made ultimately inevitable—either by making passage through the "narrow gate" automatic, or by making that gate the explicit structure of the "implicit" general anthropological architecture. We refer, of course, to the problem of universalism (*apokatastasis*) and to that of "anonymous Christianity," respectively.

As for the former, the question concerns the seriousness with which human freedom is taken, in the dramatic interplay of divine

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mercy was the "primary source" of justice. Nor for that matter was this necessary *for mercy's sake*, since its gratuity was shown not in the first instance by the human subject, sinful or otherwise, to whom mercy was not "owed," but by God who committed himself to man in that primordial merciful act of creation itself. By implication, had a creature wished to "disentangle" justice from mercy, it would be his affair alone (though in doing so he would not be "clarifying" justice more by uprooting it from its very source). Cf. H. U. von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved?" With a Short Discourse on Hell*, trans. D. Kipp and L. Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 154–57. On the exegesis of Rom 11, apropos of the relation between justice and mercy, cf. Boublík, *La Predestinazione*, 64–70.

<sup>125</sup>de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 140.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid. On this point, Balthasar writes: "The parable of the two brothers, the one rejected and the other chosen, becomes transparent in its reference to the intended truth about the chosen and the rejected people. . . the chosen people is rejected because of its guilt, so that the non-people which was not chosen may be brought into election; and in its turn this non-people is chosen so that the first promise to the chosen people may reach its fullness" (*Razing the Bastions*, 59–60).

and human freedom, specifically in the admission or not of the real possibility of final damnation, on account of a definitive turning from grace, from within that dramatic space.<sup>127</sup> This problem was not easy for Barth to skirt, notwithstanding his demurrals,<sup>128</sup> given the extreme substitutionism of his doctrine where it seems that in his clever reformulation of the Calvinist *praedestinatio gemina*, Jesus Christ was not only *the* Elect and *the* Rejected Man, but also, the *only* Rejected Man.<sup>129</sup> It was the “typically Protestant” narrowness of Barth’s Christocentrism—which made of other men “mere epiphenomena” of Christ<sup>130</sup>—that made all his protestations against an *apokatastasis* “lip service,” and “mere words,” in Balthasar’s estimation.<sup>131</sup> Balthasar’s more Catholic “dramatic” Christology,

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<sup>127</sup>The condemnation concerned specifically the denial of that possibility, in its finality, being directed to those who thought that demons or the condemned could be prayed for (DS, 409), or that the cross of Christ would someday apply to them (DS, 411), or that Christ descended into hell to save them (CCC, 633). Cf. Balthasar’s discussion of the centrality of the idea of the “restoration of all things” (*apokatastasis*) especially in early Christian neo-platonic thought where the “return to the beginning” prevailed, even if, as he says, the possibility of damnation was generally held open (*Dare We Hope*, 225–35).

<sup>128</sup>*Church Dogmatics* II, 2, 417, 422, 476.

<sup>129</sup>“God, by the decree he made in the beginning of all his works and ways, has taken upon himself the rejection merited by the man isolated in relation to him; . . . on the basis of this decree of his the only truly rejected man is his own Son; . . . God’s rejection has taken its course and been fulfilled and reached its goal, with all that that involves, against this One, so that it can no longer fall on other men or be their concern” (*Church Dogmatics* II, 2, 319). As for the godless, who live under the threat of rejection they feel, Barth says: “It cannot . . . be their concern to suffer the execution of this threat, to suffer the eternal damnation which their godlessness deserves. Their desire and their undertaking are pointless in so far as their only end can be to make them rejected. And this is the very goal which the godless cannot reach, because it has already been taken away by the eternally decreed offering of the Son of God to suffer in place of the godless, and cannot any longer be their goal” (*Church Dogmatics* II, 2, 319). Similarly he writes: “With Jesus Christ the rejected can only *have been* rejected. He cannot *be* rejected any more” (*Church Dogmatics* II, 2, 453).

<sup>130</sup>*The Theology of Karl Barth*, 242–43.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, 186. Balthasar wrote: “[D]espite these demurrals, Barth’s doctrine of election does not leave much room open for possibility. There is something inevitable and necessary in his views. What is definitive in Barth’s thought is grace and blessing, and all reprobation and judgment are merely provisional” (186). Cf. also Balthasar’s *Dare We Hope*, 94.



would have him take his distance from what seemed to be a new incarnation of the old heresy.<sup>132</sup> Cardinal Ratzinger would note the distinction, when commenting on Balthasar's view:

In several places Balthasar expresses the opinion that the closed brackets of predestination, which had been firmly shut with Augustine, and by which he had set an absolute limit to the Church's capacity for carrying sinners to redemption, are today ever so gradually and slowly starting to open up again. Not of course that Balthasar, the great scholar and translator of Origen, wants to align himself with Origenism in the sense of a doctrine of inevitable universal redemption. He fully realizes the danger entailed in the sense of election, in whatever guise, and decisively rejects "a certain exhilaration at feeling part of the elect of God, which is just as extreme as was the correlative Reformed despondency resulting from an obsession with guilt." But he also teaches us even more clearly that what belongs to God we should leave to God and not fix the decision ahead of time in either direction—either toward the Origenist or the extreme Augustinian side.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>In a whole series of "dramatic spaces," beginning with the "positivity of the other" in God and then of the world (*Theo-Drama*, vol. 5, 81–85), of the drama of the Son *being sent* by the Father—and not the Barthian "subject of election" (cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II, 2, 54; II, 2, 94–116)—Balthasar distances himself from the "christological restriction" that engulfs the non-divine reality, and eliminates the space that Christ makes within himself, the "acting area for dramas of theological moment, involving other created persons" (*Theo-Drama*, vol. 3, 162). Serenthà, too distances himself the restriction, beginning with Barth's "christomonism": "[w]e do not want to diminish the importance of the Barthian christocentrism, which has influenced contemporary theology positively, be it Protestant or Catholic . . . Barth is very lucid in the polemic part of his thought: he grasps the methodological vice of the Augustinian framework, too controlled by the problem of human freedom, and of the Calvinist framework, too influenced by the prejudice over the unfathomable sovereignty of God; but, in the positive part of his thought, he ends up dissolving the reality of Christ in the gesture of God toward man: Christ is the function of God and, since man is the function of Christ, there is the risk of the dissolution of human history in the reality of God" ("Predestinazione," 770 [my translation]). Biffi coined the terms "co-predestination" and "in-predestination" to note the duality in the "predestination of Jesus Christ" as "first born among many brethren" ("La predestinazione in Cristo," 86–87).

<sup>133</sup>Joseph Ratzinger, "Christlicher Universalismus: Zum Aufsatzwerk Hans Urs v. Balthasars," *Hochland* 54 (1961): 72 (cited and translated by E. T. Oakes, "Predestination in America," 698).

In his re-thinking of predestination along universal lines, then, Balthasar, would propose a hope for the salvation of all, not a presumption. But this hope, being a real hope, meant too the rejection of that other more limited but no less certain inevitability.<sup>134</sup>

Once again, though, we are brought before the original problem of gratuity. If all are predestined from “before the foundation of the world,” and if the efficacy of grace is not restricted in advance, then would this not cast a shadow on the gratuity of salvation (which is, of course, the ultimate goal of predestination), since in the end the only difference between the one who falls into sin and the one who overcomes it (and perseveres) is due to him, in the final analysis.<sup>135</sup> This was the reason for this teaching on the unfrustrability of the grace given to the elect (who, for Augustine, were the predestined). Now it is clear from the thesis of the predestination of Jesus Christ and of men in Jesus Christ, that the “space for freedom” is not found by denying the priority of predestination, its *antecedence*, that is, *vis-à-vis* freedom, in the Molinist spirit.<sup>136</sup> On the contrary, it is established on the basis of

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<sup>134</sup>In the quarrel that followed the publication of his “Short Discourse on Hell” (published first in the Italian weekly, *Il Sabato*, and then later in *Dare We Hope*) one of his critics wrote: “such a hope does not exist, because we cannot hope in opposition to certain knowledge and the avowed will of God” (*Dare We Hope*, 18). Another wrote that it was impossible that “we can hope for something about which we *know* that it will *certainly* not come about” (*Dare We Hope*, 18). More recently, R. Hütter has made recourse, with Balthasar, to this “hope that all men be saved” (“*Desiderium Naturale Visionis Dei—Est autem duplex hominis beatitudo sive felicitas*: Some Observations about Lawrence Feingold’s and John Milbank’s Recent Interventions in the Debate over the Natural Desire to See God,” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 5, no. 1 [2007]: 130); but, given his insistence on the predestination of only some, as “illustrative” of the gratuity of grace, he can only mean by such hope that Christians exercising the second theological virtue must cast their net wide on account of their ignorance of who exactly is predestined and who is not. This is clear in his rejection of “Origenism” where, it seems, what is at stake for Hütter is not merely the problem of the inevitability that all be saved, but that all *could* be saved (“*Desiderium Naturale Visionis Dei*,” 117).

<sup>135</sup>Cf. n. 48 above. We could also mention here the Thomist principle of predilection whereby the love of God is the cause of goodness (*ST I*, 20, 3) such that, by implication, the greater goodness in the creature would signal a greater love in the form of a limited predestination *ante praevisa merita* (cf. n. 67, above).

<sup>136</sup>Molinists make election of the the limited number of the predestined follow

this priority. It is, as we have said, predestination which reveals the reason (the "glory of God") for which the world—and the created freedom in it—are created as genuinely other than God. At the same time the shape of that glory reveals an utterly un-indifferent autonomy, one that is poised to be fulfilled in sonship in the Incarnate Son.<sup>137</sup>

All indifference aside, then, the divine intention does appear to be (actually) frustrable. Sacred Scripture, precisely there where Augustine would anchor his unfrustrable predestination *ante praevisa merita*, indicates as much when St. Paul pointed to the defection of the elect ("Jacob") and the possibility of his being cut off.<sup>138</sup> The Magisterium too teaches the possibility of a choice between good and evil, growth in perfection or sin, "as long as freedom has not bound itself definitely to its ultimate good which is God."<sup>139</sup> The very logic of perseverance suggests this possibility.<sup>140</sup> But it is not on account of the indifference of the will, or a sort of libertarian autonomy<sup>141</sup>—nor indeed of a non-antecedence—that the possibility for refusal is found, but rather, on account of creation whereby, at one and the same time, the world depends radically on God in all of its "risky" ontological liberty.<sup>142</sup> And then this possibility of refusal

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the divine foreknowledge (via *scientia media*) of what those individuals would do, in an act, moreover, where God's causality could only be "simultaneously concurrent" not prior (a "pre-movement"). Cf. n. 64 and 65, above.

<sup>137</sup>Hart refers to Maximus the Confessor's doctrine that the created autonomy of rational nature found its fulfillment in surrender to the love of God ("Providence and Causality," 45).

<sup>138</sup>On the exegesis of St. Paul on this point of the "effectiveness" of election/predestination, see Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 63f., 202, 208f.

<sup>139</sup>CCC, 1732. Farrelly and Hart both explain this possibility of resistance as a condition of the non-definitive nature of the deliberative will to which the objects presented to the will do not yet appear to will "as complete fulfillments of the will's love of the good" (Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Freedom*, 195; Hart, "Providence and Causality," 47).

<sup>140</sup>Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 212f.

<sup>141</sup>The suggestion is made by those who deny the (actual) possibility of resisting efficacious grace. Cf. Steven Long, "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law," 558, 559, 562, 591, 601, 603.

<sup>142</sup>Schmitz speaks of the "risk" the Creator takes on the basis of the "gift of creation" which at one and the same time establishes a radically dependent creature

is found in the very determinate reason for creation itself: filial surrender and obedience, and the “space” provided for it—created autonomy—which space opens up even the (unequal) possibility of prodigal sonship, even a tragically definitive one.<sup>143</sup>

Still, how are we to understand the resistance or non-resistance with respect to the problem of the gratuity of grace? Beyond the necessary work of explaining the different moments in the complex interplay of grace with human freedom in a salutary action,<sup>144</sup> it suffices here to say that there is no aspect of the salvific

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(*ex nihilo*), and one with its own immediate inner ground of integrity (cf. n. 62, above). In the same vein, Hart challenges the famous and oft used axiom of Garrigou-Lagrange (“God determining or determined: there is no other alternative”) by returning to the “great ‘discovery’ of the Christian metaphysical tradition. . . the true nature of transcendence.” “When, in the fourth century, theology took its final leave of all subordinationist schemes of Trinitarian reflection, it thereby broke irrevocably with all those older metaphysical systems that had attempted to connect this world to its highest principle by populating the interval between them with various intermediate degrees of spiritual reality. In affirming that the Persons of the Trinity are coequal and of one essence, Christian thought was led also to the recognition that it is the transcendent God alone who gives being to creation; that he is able to be at once both *superior summo meo* and *interior intimo meo*; and that he is not merely the supreme being set atop the summit of beings, but is instead the one who is transcendentally present in all beings, the ever more inward act within each finite act. And it is precisely *because* God is not situated within any kind of ontic continuum with the creature that we can recognize him as the ontological cause of the creature, who freely gives being to beings. True divine transcendence, it turns out, is a transcendence of even the traditional metaphysical demarcations between the transcendent and the immanent. At the same time, the realization that the creature is not, simply by virtue of its finitude and mutability, alienated from God—at a tragic distance from God that the creature can traverse only to the degree that everything distinctively creaturely within it is negated—was also a realization of the true ontological liberty of created nature” (“Providence and Causality,” 35).

<sup>143</sup>In his recovery of the medieval causal relation between the unequal God-world distinction and the equal distinctions in God (cf. n. 106), Balthasar would ground even the “atheistic possibility” in that trinitarian “space” (*Theo-Drama*, vol. 4 [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994], 324–28; *Theo-Logic*, vol. 2 [San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2000], 317–61).

<sup>144</sup>Farrelly has put forth a reasonable solution to the *de auxiliis* whereby sufficient and efficacious grace are numerically the same, but performing different “functions,” one making the will “truly able to elicit a salutary act” (so that “God is not responsible for a failure of the will to perform the act to which he calls it”), and the other being that by which the will responds positively (not on its own

act which is not performed under the gratuitous influence of grace, not even the non-resistance to it, but that the will can nonetheless turn away to "act" on its own, sin having "its own cause."<sup>145</sup> That this tragic possibility is truly possible, does not imply that salvation (or any aspect of it) is derived from freedom.<sup>146</sup> It means simply that through freedom one can subtract himself from grace.<sup>147</sup> At the same time the "involvement" of freedom does not make the gift of grace less so since grace, of its very nature, does its work through the consent of freedom. Indeed, it is on account of the very plan for which grace is the "fullness" that the world and the freedom in it were called into being.

In the end then, if salvation is not simply "up to God," it is so not because of a compromise that must be struck in order to give freedom its "space," through indifference or non-antecedence, but because of who God is and because of what he revealed in his Son about the reasons for the foundation of the world and the freedom in it: that there be *fili in Filio* who work out their salvation with fear and trembling in that space of the "glorious liberty of the children of God."

There is then the second objection to a universal predestination which also concerns the problem of inevitability, but from

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initiative) and by which it acts. The key here is that sufficient grace is really sufficient for the salutary act such that the failure to respond to grace is not ultimately owing to the non-distribution of that *other*, efficacious grace, without which one cannot in fact act (in view of salvation). Moreover, the latter "function" (that without which one can do nothing positive in the salutary act) is not "absolute," or un-conditioned (*Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 204; 213ff.). (Cf. Colombo who offers the same solution, "La Grazia," 1644.) Behind this solution is a consideration of the act of the will as an *actus perfecti* which is "essentially the act of a power already perfected in act," by an antecedent "pre-movement" of the will by the good intentionally made present to it and by which the will has received everything necessary for an affective response and real union with it (through deliberative choice) without this, however, being infallible, or absolute (193–97; 187).

<sup>145</sup>Cf. Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 213–14.

<sup>146</sup>Cf. Colombo, "La Grazia," 1644.

<sup>147</sup>The principle that the love of God is the cause of goodness (cf. n. 67 and 137, above) means that the distinction between the goodness of the one who consents to grace and the one who refuses it is not between one who is predestined for eternal glory and one who is not, as it is between one who has received that love, and one who has subtracted himself from it.

within the nature–grace problematic. The objection takes its cue from the fact that the gratuity of the grace of predestination was established in part on the basis of its limited distribution. This limit showed that predestination was not “owed” to all, and confirmed the fact that predestination was granted prior to any foreknowledge of merit (*ante praevisa merita*). Now, it is clear that with the “re-situation” of the doctrine, the gratuity of predestination could not be more radically prior to human merit, or to any other grounds for a claim, since it precedes human action and the subject of it altogether. Yet, as some have suggested, the universal scope of predestination (in the form of a “natural desire for God” inscribed in human nature as its paradoxical final natural end), would put into question the gratuity of predestination and of its graces, not “this time” because it is “*post praevisa merita*,” but because it is “*post praevisa naturae*,” so to speak, following inevitably some necessity inscribed in nature, abstractly understood, its graces then being conflated with it.<sup>148</sup> It would be akin to that anthropological restriction—at polar opposites from Barth’s christological one—whose “supernatural existential” seems suspiciously part of the anthropological structure—the reason for which, then, its subject appears to be necessarily caught up into the net of salvation, whether he has been touched by it “explicitly” or not.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, God, it seems, in order to respect the regulations of a proper idea of nature and of grace would be compelled to limit the circle of the predestined only to some so as to illustrate the non-exacting nature of (the not so hypothetically pure) human nature in its contrast to the gratuity of an “elicited” supernatural final end (no less!).<sup>150</sup> This

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<sup>148</sup>Recently, R. Hütter, in confrontation with contemporaries, and behind them, de Lubac (who famously held, with more care than said contemporaries, the idea of a human nature, with a paradoxical single final natural end), has pressed limited predestination into the service of protecting the *gratuity* of grace and with it the integrity of nature, so as to “exhibit” in the non-predestined, an integral nature and the non-“requirement” of the supernatural end in this order (“*Desiderium Naturale Visionis Dei*,” 117).

<sup>149</sup>We refer of course to the Rahnerian thesis of “Anonymous Christianity” (cf. K. Rahner, “Anonymous Christians,” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6: *Concerning Vatican II*, trans. K. H. and B. Kruger [Baltimore: Pelican Press, 1969], 390–98).

<sup>150</sup>This is the argument of R. Hütter who, with a new twist on Thomas’ use of the Damascene’s distinction would have the “consequent will” (not the “antecedent will,” as for Thomas), bestow the *elicited* supernatural finality together

limitation, then would protect against the inevitability of a universal salvation (*apokotastasis*), by preventing from the outset even its possibility.<sup>151</sup>

We have already answered the objection by changing the perspective so that instead of looking first at human nature (or the sinful will) and asking whether or not it is "owed" a supernatural end and/or the means to attain it—it is not!—we ask about the reason for there being a created human nature in the first place. From that vantage point we see a gratuitous (un-"owed") reason for what is also not owed—the creation of a world—and thus a double gratuity, but one where the gift of creation is explained primarily by the gift of its reason (and not primarily the other way around).<sup>152</sup> There is then no reason to require God to be parsimonious in the bestowal of his "second," and then "third" gifts (of predestination and its graces) so as to "exhibit" their gratuity vis-à-vis the gratuity of creation, since the former is the reason for the latter. The problem, is not then chiefly that of showing what God "does not have to do," in a hypothetical order, so much as showing that which he has committed himself to in the actual one.

By way of clarification, a final point needs to be made. The predestination of men in Jesus Christ is not identical to the actual gift of grace, again, in the manner of a "supernatural existential" any more than the more generic paradoxical "natural desire to see God" is.<sup>153</sup> There is no conflation of nature (and of its end) with grace

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with the infallible means to persevere within it ("*Desiderium Naturale Visionis Dei*," 108f; 114–126). On the question of Thomas' use of the Damascene's distinction, see Antoniotti, "La volonté divine antécédente et conséquente," 60, 67, 68.

<sup>151</sup>Hütter, "*Desiderium Naturale Visionis Dei*," 117.

<sup>152</sup>Taking the "theological route" (to a concept of nature), Balthasar will note the insufficiency of speaking of grace merely in terms of what is "not owed," to a nature which is taken for granted in its "necessity." As he says: "The philosophical 'necessity' of a nature, upon which the theological 'contingency' rests, is not a kind of foundation to which the latter could be reduced. Theology is not a 'superstructure' built atop philosophy. Rather, the relativity of philosophical necessity becomes evident when it is set off (*dividitur*) by the contingent facticity of revelation" (*The Theology of Karl Barth*, 285). None of this, however, has anything to do with denying the possibility of the creation of intellectual beings without ordering them and calling them to the beatific vision as *Humani generis*, 26 requires.

<sup>153</sup>This conflation is suggested by L. Feingold in his critique of de Lubac, in

itself since the end in question (predestination in Christ) is given precisely in view of a kind of fulfillment which can only be given by yet another gratuity (a third one),<sup>154</sup> in short, within a drama, much like the encounter with a new friend, as Thomas had suggested,<sup>155</sup> which friend, in this case, is the historical and singular Jesus Christ.<sup>156</sup> Predestination in him is, as John Paul II said, a pledge, not the fulfillment. This comes only by way of the fullness which Christ is uniquely,<sup>157</sup> and then by being ushered into what is not merely the “name” of the general structure of history, but a novelty in it.<sup>158</sup> This was precisely the distinction that Irenaeus had in mind, said de Lubac, when he explained the “lateness” in coming of that fullness. There was a need for time, growth, and maturity, a “gradual education” in the need for what could only be given.<sup>159</sup> None of this, however, required him to restrict the universality of the

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whose paradoxical and historical nature he sees a “supernatural existential,” a supernatural element, that is, since, on his reckoning a natural end for something supernatural “must be considered to be somehow divine or supernatural for it to accomplish the role that de Lubac assigns to it” (*The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, 539, 542f/). Aside from the fact that de Lubac disavowed such a conclusion (*The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. F. Sheed [New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998], 31; 85–88), this argument misses the point of the paradox which de Lubac, following St. Thomas, sees in human nature, namely a final end which, unlike the end of other creatures inferior to him, cannot be achieved by the wherewithal of nature (*ST I-II*, 5). This achievement occurs, rather, through the “call of love,” that gratuitous novelty of grace which is not to be identified with the final natural end, however, much that has been prepared for it (*The Mystery of the Supernatural*, 222–38).

<sup>154</sup>On the three moments in de Lubac’s thought, see Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, 72, n. 36.

<sup>155</sup>*ST I-II*, 5, 5, ad 1.

<sup>156</sup>G. Moiola, of the “Scuola di Venegono,” was noted for his development of the theme of the “singularity of Jesus Christ” in view of the Rahnerian thesis of the “supernatural existential,” that diminishment of the “drama,” which went in quite the opposite direction of Barth’s “christological restriction.” Cf. his “Per l’introduzione del tema della singolarità di Gesù nella trattazione cristologica,” in *Scuola Cattolica* 103 (1975): 725–77 and his *Cristologia* (Milan: Glossa, 1989), 245–52.

<sup>157</sup>“The Mystery of Predestination,” 6.

<sup>158</sup>Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, trans. M.-F. McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 163–71.

<sup>159</sup>de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 128.



"predestination of the Church" rooted in the creation of man. On the contrary.

### Conclusion

Returning to the question about the Church's renewed sense of "openness to the world" in the Second Vatican Council, there has been much talk of this openness; and there has been much misunderstood about it. As Balthasar wrote in his book *The Moment of Christian Witness*:

The Council has undoubtedly made church matters more difficult. Those who seek mitigations in everything and express delight at the "progress" and the growing "maturity" as each barrier falls do not understand what the Fathers were concerned with. It was to direct into the secular world through the Church . . . the mysterious ray of Trinitarian and crucified love, wholly and completely.<sup>160</sup>

If the Church's openness to the world finds its ground in the mystery hidden before the ages in the "God who creates all things" (Eph 3:8–9), then the Church really can "raze its bastions" to face the *whole* world but not, in the final analysis, to accommodate itself to it and its novelties, in its "anxiety about being on top of the times,"<sup>161</sup> and in the spirit of a "bland and shallow humanism,"<sup>162</sup> so much as to direct into the secular world its novelty: "the mysterious ray of Trinitarian and crucified love, wholly and completely."<sup>163</sup> Having received the revelation of the Mystery for which the world was made, but does not yet possess, the Church bears a responsibility for the world. It now has the reasons to cast a wider net. At the same time, that net must always be dragged through the still narrow gate.<sup>164</sup> For this reason, its newfound "openness" will never be a

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<sup>160</sup>*The Moment of Christian Witness* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 125.

<sup>161</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>162</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup>*The Moment of Christian Witness*, 125.

<sup>164</sup>We do not put into question the possibility that those outside of the visible confines of the Church can be saved, but that they are is because they have been

matter of “pure harmony” with the world, as Benedict XVI recently cautioned.<sup>165</sup> It will always be, in its very openness, a “sign that will be opposed,” that is, a witness.<sup>166</sup> □

**MARGARET H. MCCARTHY** is assistant professor of theological anthropology at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America.

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“made partners, in a way known to God, in the *paschal mystery*” (GS, 22). There are no other surrogates, as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recently has reaffirmed (*Dominus Iesus*, 2000).

<sup>165</sup>“Address to the Roman Curia Offering Them His Christmas Greetings,” 22 December 2005.

<sup>166</sup>A version of this paper was presented at the conference, “Keeping the World Awake to God?: The Challenge of Vatican II,” at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., 12–14 January 2012.